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## ***COMMENTARY: Re-Imagining Self in a World of Change – A Conversation with Valerie Walkerdine***

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**Abstract:** *Valerie Walkerdine's "Using the Work of Felix Guattari to Understand Space, Place, Social Justice, and Education" examines a number of theoretical ideas derived principally from Felix Guattari's work with psychiatric patients. Walkerdine applies these approaches to educational settings where personal subjective change and transformation is desired. The central approach utilises imaginative work and a rethinking of subjecthood in an attempt to equip the individual to deal with what is perceived as a potential destabilisation, alienation, and perhaps disintegration of the self's sense of identity as a result of life changing educational inputs. This "Conversation" engages Walkerdine's and Guattari's work and reconsiders some basic tenets in their approaches and challenging the continuing reliance on orthodox theory concerning early childhood development, attachment, and the threat that change is thought to pose to ideas of self. While supporting Walkerdine's and Guattari's overall approach, particularly in relation to adults, I argue that there are significant flaws in conventional childhood development and attachment theories underpinning their method. Drawing on more recent findings in biological and brain science, I propose that it is today possible to abandon moribund psychoanalytic theoretical premises of childhood development and arrive at a more empirically founded, non-pathological understanding of both change and human development.*

**Keywords:** Walkerdine, Guattari, education, change, imagination, infant development

## Synoptic Overview

Felix Guattari first came to notice with his collaborative *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and *A Thousand Plateaus* which he penned with Giles Deleuze in the 1970s. Valerie Walkerdine's interest in the later work of Guattari is in pursuit of her work as an educator, particularly the “study of and intervention into space, place, education, and social justice.”

[1] Walkerdine contends that Guattari's schizoanalytical cartographies of space and place help to map the “possibilities for movement, change, and transformation” (Walkerdine, 2013:1) of self and subjectivity. For Guattari (as well as Walkerdine), the central vehicle for this process is the power to *imagine* new affected ways of forming and inhabiting space and place. The key concern of Walkerdine's work, then, is change, something I myself have been committed to both at a personal level as well as, in my more optimistic moments, to a broader social and cultural world.

I came across Walkerdine's article through my involvement in an International Reading Group which I was invited to join by a friend from the University of Canberra, Rachel Cunneen. Yet my background is not in education but rather creative and artistic practice and, in close conjunction with that, the production of culture. The role of the imagination has therefore been a taken-for-granted premise in my work. What I found more interesting in this article is that Walkerdine is able to identify and delineate a series of arguments in which the somewhat difficult work of a theorist like Guattari can be placed in a real world scenario and be shown to work.

For me, the mark of good theory is found in its ability to gain direct traction in the real world. Any theory that fails to do this is, in my view, a work of dubious worth even as fiction or fantasy. That is why I get excited when I find, in the work of a scholar, a clear and incisive application of theoretical knowledge in everyday real life situations. Walkerdine's essay does this, and my first reading of her essay left me very enthusiastic about it as I found I could embrace almost every plank in the argument she developed in what seems to be a credible approach to realising some of the socio-spatial transformations she wishes to achieve through education. As an artist and as an educator, these too are

indeed my most desired actualisations, to see real change come about as a result of my work in other people's lives as well as in my own.

Walkerdine begins by recounting a film in which one of her research respondents, Fiona, reflects, after moving away from her Glaswegian origins and into Thatcherite Britain's middle classes, that “I know where I am in that place [the housing estate where Fiona grew up], I am now who I am in that (other) place [Fiona's re-realised life as a social worker in Wales], but I don't know who I want to be, just for me”.<sup>[iii]</sup> Walkerdine then goes into Fiona's existential dilemma the shift in reality and status has actualised, describing it in almost schizophrenic terms as “two 'places' [...] split” (Walkerdine, 2013:1).

What Fiona herself feels she has lost in the process of transmigrating out of her class and out of her past, is “a sense of who she is” (Walkerdine, 2013:1). Walkerdine immediately goes on to recognise that in the modern world, identity is not linked to some essential qualities individuals carry within themselves such as history or familial or traditionally defined social relations. Rather, in part through greater mobility, modern society has realised a radical transformation of self in space and that “different places require and permit very different performances and practices of self” (Walkerdine, 2013:1).

As a migrant who has moved across and occupied widely dispersed social, historical, cultural, as well as spatial locations myself, I know all too well the realities of adopting new and sometimes radically different personas realised through actual day to day interactions in space concretise new living relations with the rest of a(n everchanging) world. Walkerdine immediately points out how difficult it is for migrants in the modern world (and we are all migrants now) to reintegrate these different selves into a satisfying and complete sense of wholeness without in some way compromising the personas we created for ourselves in at least some of these niches. This, it might be said, is the central problem that Walkerdine's essay addresses. She wants to go beyond these dislocations and suggests that Guattari's work offers a possibility to transcend the demarcations of self and dissociative “affective, body-mind experience” (Walkerdine, 2013:1) those dislocations bring about.

The means which she proposes revolves around the capacity to safely imagine new possibilities of who we are and how we might reconstitute ourselves in our new hybridised spaces of being. She ties this move back to education as one of the most attainable vehicles through which most people can actualise such self transformations.

While I remain sceptical of the need to re-cohere such a unified self (it would be much easier, for instance, to learn to live with ourselves as ever changing entities in a world full of contradictions), I am sympathetic to the extent that for many people there still seems to be an intrinsic desire to hold on to some immutable essence of who they are. It might be helpful if feeling a sense of coherency enables individuals to gradually migrate themselves away from self-perceptions as occupying fixed addresses and to assume greater flexible constructs both for themselves and the relations they have with the world around them.

To the extent that Walkerdine seeks to facilitate individuals' transitions into this ever changing world – and if that means having to find a way of reassuring ourselves that we will not suddenly disappear into an ether of unintentional superconsciousness contextually driven by impulsive action-response behaviour – then I am all for it. However, this seems to involve fabricating (“reterritorialising”?) what I believe is a transitory conceit, a self deception, that we are, or indeed ever were, fully reconciled or internally coherent in the first place.

Walkerdine begins a brief outline of the ideas she derives from Guattari. She starts by saying that Guattari has consistently applied the groundbreaking work he did with Deleuze to his work with psychotic patients by constantly seeking to conceptualise change as a positive open-ended move towards growth rather than understanding this as a form of pathology that more conventional approaches to psychiatry offers where change remains situated in anxiety driven states founded in childhood. She identifies three key motifs in Guattari's work, the first of which she calls “Cook for a Day” (Walkerdine, 2013:2) followed by “Schizoanalytic Cartographies” (Walkerdine, 2013:2-4) and finally the idea of “Waking Dreams: The Power of the Imagination” (Walkerdine, 2013:4-6). Walkerdine then rounds off by relating the value of Guattari's ideas in “Thinking about Class and Educational Transformation” (Walkerdine, 2013:6-9) before arriving at her conclusions

(Walkerdine, 2013:9) about the actual prospects of realising subjective change through education.

In becoming a “cook for a day”, Guattari details how he 'challenged' his patients to “try something new and to be part of a new set of relations of subjectification” (Walkerdine, 2013:2) to encourage patients to imagine new and innovative performances to already known situations. However, as Walkerdine points out, Guattari found that there was no sure fire way of ensuring that his patients would gain new insight from this experience rather than merely 'reterritorialising' novel experiences back onto familiar terrains and responses. For Guattari, the reframing of old patterns of behaviour to new situations was “not a freeing one” (Walkerdine, 2013:2). What Guattari seeks is to place patients in new situations that resemble other older ones in which the patient becomes crippled with anxiety – only this time from the 'split off' distance of fantasy – and to give them the possibility of “creating something new [or] making a new link” (Walkerdine, 2013:2) in safety. Walkerdine concludes this short explication of Guattari's “Cook for a Day” by linking to Foucault's notions of “practices and sites for action” but suggest that Guattari moves his approach further by allowing for an integration between imagination and fantasy and the individual's “sensory and affective experience [...] to provoke the possibility of a creative approach to change” (Walkerdine, 2013:2).

Walkerdine's next exposition of Guattari's ideas is more detailed and complex. In introducing the notion of “schizoanalytic cartographies”, she refers to a dialogue between Guattari and family therapist Mony Elkaim in which they devised a diagrammatic representation of four regions of unconsciousness and four varieties of experience that confront and “overflow the ego” to deliver it and whatever residual ideas of self that might remain into an “expanded field of trans-subjective interaction” (Walkerdine, 2013:2). Guattari understands that the ego-self's construction of reality becomes fundamentally challenged by this overflow of sensory experience although, at this point, Guattari is principally interested in just mapping this process. Walkerdine continues to explain that the four domains of the map Guattari and Elkaim are “existential territories, material and energetic flows, rhizomes of abstract ideas, and aesthetic refrains” as they sought to identify the methods through which “unheard of ideas and proposals” (in other words new,

creative, innovative possibilities) become available so that the limited repertoire of responses the individual has to such situations can be expanded.

Grounding these maps in concrete experience translates the immediacy confronting an individual (“ground beneath our feet”), reality (“the turbulence of social experience”<sup>[iii]</sup>), the imaginary (“the blue skies of ideas”), and what I take to be an impulse towards Abraham Maslow's notion of the hierarchy of needs (“the rhythmic insistence of waking dreams”) so that a professional helper, following Brian Holmes, Elkaim, and Guattari, can assist the individual to conceptualise and understand innovative change while avoiding a collapse of novel experiences gained from becoming 'chef for a day' back into pre-existing epistemological paradigms. What is key for Walkerdine is Guattari's refusal to separate (but rather highlight) the relationship between “subjectivity and space, place, and movement” (Walkerdine, 2013:2). So Guattari provides Walkerdine with a way of interlinking the inside world of the individual with novel external environments that enable the individual to reconstruct their inner and external realities and the impact these have on each other.

Walkerdine then introduces the concepts of “Existential Territories and Incorporeal Universes” (Walkerdine, 2013:2) to think about how the self can be reconstituted in the way they (re)occupy space. Existential Territory takes Walkerdine back to pre-language interactions between self and environment and the way individuals “inhabit a space and time, through our affective and sensory experience of it, the ways in which we are affectively 'held in place’” (Walkerdine, 2013:2).

Here Walkerdine is trying to reconceptualise Fiona's experience of the dislocation between her inner sense of reality and sense of self along with an altogether novel external world and the subsequent sense of discomfort she experiences. The argument Walkerdine develops is that, ordinarily, there is a synthesis between the individual's emotional and sensorial experience of place and the actual geometric configuration of the physical environment. Referring to Guy Debord's notion of psychogeography as well as other ideas from Guattari such as the 'refrain', Walkerdine argues that the individual's affective “sensory engagement” (Walkerdine, 2013:3) with space, that is, the feeling of being in a familiar place, results in an embodied experience of territory which in turn forms their

subjectivity by overlaying internal psychological conditions (such as memory) with the externally derived sensory stimulus.

I have no objection to this argument per se except that Guattari's deference to Daniel Stern's theory of infant and early childhood development creates an additional problem that, as I argue later in this paper, Stern (and other childhood development psychologists) project processes as if these were taking place in fully developed individuals rather than in the bodies of young post natal infants and toddlers. This however does not prevent Guattari from arriving at a successful application of his approach because even though he bases his method on dominant early childhood development theory, Guattari applied his method to adult psychotic patients and not to young children. He did this by creating conducive environments to safely support and ground new patterns of action, interaction, and behaviour.

Notwithstanding, Walkerdine defines schizoanalytic cartographies as maps of “movement through time and space including the cartography of a dreamed of future” (Walkerdine, 2013:3-4) that incorporate both imagined formations as well as the individual's actual embodied experiences of themselves in a variety of spaces and histories. While Guattari's method is supportable when applied to adults, and can be evidenced in other change methods such as role-plays and psychodrama, it is the underpinning of this method by deference to early childhood development theory that creates the problem.

Guattari continues to rely heavily on the work of child development theories even when thinking about the imagination which Walkerdine outlines in the next section of her essay, “Waking Dreams: The Power of the Imagination”. Guattari's approach to the imagination is, according to Walkerdine, based on object relation theories which Guattari arrives at via Melanie Klein.

Object relation theory's relevance to creativity (which Guattari again comes to through Donald Winnicott, including his work on transitional objects) allows Guattari to conceptualise an idea of “incorporeal universes” (Walkerdine, 2013:4) which I take to refer to yet to be realised subjective realities. Walkerdine then draws a line back to Freud's

notion of “hallucination” in infancy in order to explain the importance of the theory Guattari is using.

It should be said that right from the start, Freud's approach to the imagination is rather traumatic, as one might expect, and projects on to the infant anxieties about its separation from the womb. I explore why Freud's theorising of early childhood is in itself an adult's hallucination of what an infant might experience later, but for the moment I shall outline the basic idea Guattari borrows from Freud, Klein, et al.

Freud begins by suggesting that an infant is somehow able to already create a map of its life just after birth that understands its existence as an entity now forever separated from the womb of its mother in which it had previously harboured. Freud suggested that in order to cope with this dramatic change in its living circumstance, an infant creates an hallucination of “the mother's breast in order to stave off or split off from this pain and terror of separation” (Walkerdine, 2013:4). To this Klein adds an idea of 'object relations' in which an infant is supposed to develop a sophisticated cognitive map of the “sensory experience of the caregiver's skin, the holding, the nipple in the mouth, the touch of the breast, the smells and sights, and sounds of caring” (Walkerdine, 2013:4) through which the infant now reorientates itself in relation to the other and the world. This idea flourished amongst mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century early childhood development theorists and has grown into an impressive and extraordinarily elaborate account of infantile sensory and prelinguistic reality.

The problem with that theory is that this elaboration is entirely a fabrication for which empirical physical evidence about the actual construction of the human body during the first five years of its development does not support. But, as Gian Battista Vico's explanation of myth shows, human beings have a remarkable capacity to never let reality get in the way of a good fantasy.<sup>[iv]</sup> Again, I assert that while early childhood theories successfully explain how an adult responds to certain situations based on the workings of a fully developed human psycho-physiognomy, they do not apply to the realities of infants and toddlers.



I want to again stress that the veracity of Guattari's approaches and methods remains viable, however, as long as the theories he is dependent on are applied only to adults brought up under conditions nominally identifiable by the nuclear family structures that emerged in the 1950s and not to the actual potentiality of young children. It is important to make this distinction, for when we do, we recognise that if infants develop multiple primary object relations, to use Klein's term, with different caregivers, such as fathers, the infant experiences a different set of environmental conditions that become *hardwired*, as it were, in the deepest subconscious levels of future adults. Consequently future adults will be much more resilient to and able to deal with even the most fundamental changes in their environment without necessarily experiencing it as a dramatic traumatising threat to their sense of self and subjectivity. This multiple primary object attachment theory I am now suggesting in fact adds and strengthens both Guattari's work in trying to realise change in psychotic patients as well as supporting the fundamental objectives of Walkerdine's application of that approach to change within educational scenarios.

Returning to Walkerdine's essay, she now suggests that affect can be usefully equated to Guattari's idea of 'intensity'. In what is a partial move towards the condition I suggest is a more realistic portrayal of the infant's sense of being and reality, the idea of 'intensity' means that the infant's sense of self is not a discrete being separated from its mother/womb but rather more as an emerging existential consciousness which, the infant is starting to discover, it occupies when it finds itself in different positions that it identifies in different objects that it comes into contact with. These include the infant's repositioning to objects like the breasts and other tangible physical objects including, but not limited to, the mother's smell, touch, taste, and other parts of her body.

Drawn again from the work of Stern, the notion of 'intensity' starts to bring theory closer to what is actually going on inside an infant, that its existential reality takes place in a series of "flows, flux[es], or surge[s]" (Walkerdine, 2013:4). Importantly, Walkerdine acknowledges the pre-eminence of the experience of intensity and flows both prior to the formation of language as well as the gradual conglomeration of gradually founding notions that may eventually result in the formation of constructs pertaining to a child's sense of self

and identity. Walkerdine also recognises that the problem lies not in the factual existence of different intensities but rather the ignorance of intensities in adult discourses – what is actualised in and by language. Walkerdine could do more to recognise the significance of this, for it is possible to argue that it is only when an infant reaches the age of 3 or 5 years that it consciously starts to form its first mental representations of self and the rest of the world. This, it should be understood, comes at a time when the infant has already forgotten, or, more likely, never even had the mechanism and capacity to remember, what it experienced earlier in life. Is it not possible to acknowledge that what an infant actually 'remembers' and carries with it into later childhood and adulthood fails to take account of the emergent sense of self and identity as continuation of varying intensities that it might have actually experienced as an infant?

The absence of such physically embodied memories may consequently mean that instead of developing a sense of self based in experiences of varying intensities in the world, the sense of self that is formed becomes based on more rigid linguistic structures (including visual language, sound, smell, tactile memory) that the young child is now slowly starting to muster as it grows older. This does not obliterate the developmental path the child has followed, however, it merely indicates that the adult's capacity to remember that path has been lost. This is perhaps because it was never encoded in some form of language-semiotic structure in the first place, or if it was, such as in the form of embodied memories, adult human languages do not have a capacity or sensitivity to recognise or incorporate in adult constructions of self-other-world relations. That many languages in themselves tend to rigidify that which they capture and identify may also be another reason why an emerging sense of self structured along lines of differing intensities has so far remained elusive.

It is here Guattari makes another error, although this is at least partially brought on by his reliance on the logic of the theories he uses to arrive at his methods in the first place. This has to do with Guattari's need to establish a splitting off of experience and where the schizoid comes in. But isn't the splitting off that Freud supposes the child to have done at birth only possible when the phenomenon of birth and separation is re-actualised as an account that has happened only in language? In other words, would it not be more accurate

to say that the schizoid response the infant is supposed to elaborate in order to deal with the supposed sense of pain and separation anxiety created by birth more a statement that describes the inability of language to deal with a more fundamental non-fixed sense of existence, the sense of self in more fluid renditions of living and the experience of varying intensities?

What is also lacking in these theoretical suppositions and assumptions is a recognition that a decision not to embark on a process of change itself also results in the realisation of pain, albeit for different reasons. It would therefore be more productive if Freud and his followers were able to accept that pain is a part of everyday experience, just as other sensations such as joy and happiness are, and that these varied sensations accompany us through our lives irrespective of what decisions, paths, and futures, one follows.

In order to arrive at a more enabling (and I believe more realistic) idea of change, one that does not take the subject back to pre-existing relations and realities but rather on to new possibilities and actualised horizons, Guattari creates an elaborate but rather flimsy intellectual structure implicating “safety” as a counter to the re-emergence of painful sensation and existential angst. It is here where, in my view, the reliance on an idea of safety leads away from the real possibilities of cognisant change, which is, it should be said, always partial, and thus, always partially painful as well as potentially threatening in some sense or other to the integrity and shape of the body, self, and identity. Yet the move Guattari makes maintains a conceit that somehow it might be possible to realise change without having to deal with negative consequences arising from it, that at some level Fiona, to go back to Walkerdine's example, would not have to deal with some actual losses, or at least displacements, as well as real gains, in moving from a sense of self confined by the “holding” tenements of life in a housing estate in Glasgow to a middle class professional world South of the border. I argue that enabling individuals to acknowledge the real implications is ultimately more realistic and productive and therefore more responsible and liberating for those who would follow in Fiona's footsteps. For with the full knowledge of both the gains as well as the costs of change will the individual move on

with a growing sense and capacity of what they are embarking upon both with greater commitment and confidence.

Compounding Guattari's mis-step, Walkerdine follows suit in acknowledging that every time an individual faces change in life, they in some way or other become psychotic, an admission she makes in concluding this section on page 6, even if that psychosis is only temporary or at a marginal level of consciousness as the individual learns to deal with the emergence of “terrifying pain and sensations” (Walkerdine, 2013:5) of separation. This is the coping device psychoanalysis identifies and avails to its 'patient' to manage with the phenomenon of change.

Feeling an urgent need to alleviate the situation, Walkerdine introduces a notion of play which, according to Segal, brings with it a less traumatised prospect of “testing reality which can be modified” (Walkerdine, 2013:5). Yet again, this avoids the fact that once a particular change has come about in reality, there may be few prospects for modification. Thus to me, it seems more preferable to move forward into various futures with eyes wide open about the consequences. For this at least results in a clearer understanding and fuller appreciation of the actual possibilities and changes that tampering with present reality and life necessarily entails. Whether these changes are deemed to be positive or negative will always be tied to the subjective realities the individual experiences as they move through time and different spaces. Yet even here, as anyone who has experienced change knows, our subjective appreciation of change can itself change in time. There thus appear to be no fixed points from which the prize of 'sought for' change can be claimed without also making space at least for the possibility of pain it may entail. Better too to accept that pain may eventuate no matter what we do, and instead start to re-evaluate the need to retain fixed notions, sensibilities and the formations of stable selves and identities that may ultimately be the actual source of the greater problem.

One could now argue that the habitual formations adults cling to as essential markers of everyday life and the formation of sensibilities they attribute to themselves fails to understand the central role of culture as a formation of practices associated with different ways of living but which are in fact neither intrinsic nor natural or essential to maintaining life as such. In reality a culturalist approach enables an understanding that

such markers are merely different elaborations evolved by individuals as they come to terms with the more basic need to maintain their autonomous existence. Born on the back of education and culture, the source of patterns of behaviour, even in relation to pain and pleasure and change, are not endemic to fundamental 'facts' of existence but rather the result of choices people make, or once upon a time were forced to make, in staying alive.

Recognising the inherent weakness of his theoretical framework, Guattari now establishes two sets of territories – re-territorialised assemblages and de-territorialised assemblages – in which the former merely reproduces existing global relations while the latter actively reconfigures and reconstructs new subjectivities by imagining something new or novel in them. Returning to Klien's object relations, only now as partial objects – seen from an other perspective, this can logically be regarded as a further elaboration of the infantile world as the child moves from an absolute sense of totality in wholeness to gradually start to distinguish a composite world made up of many different parts, some of which appear to be connected and which sometimes form wholes within themselves – Guattari's objective now is to alleviate the pain the infant is presumed to experience as a result of their cognizing the loss of their womb, an anxiety presumed to be so great as to threaten to annihilate it.

Yet it is possible to imagine other potential realities in which the baby's separation from the womb does not bring with it an infantile realisation that a new born child understands that its existence is in any way threatened as a result of being born away from the mother's body. For the moment, however, I only want to ask what if the trauma and the pain that psychoanalytic theory assumes the infant experiences is entirely an adult projection because adults can no longer imagine, no longer have the capacity to recall, what existence is really like for infants?

Following accepted psychoanalytic theory, Walkerdine instead suggests that this forms part of what Freud labelled “primary processes” that are said to be central to the infant's ability to construct its sense of “feel[ing] alive, with something to hold onto” (Walkerdine, 2013:5). Yet again, this seems to be such a negative way of approaching the question of existence, as if, even as infants, individuals need to remember that they are really alive! It seems much more plausible to assume that as an infant, the individual

experiences no need to *feel* itself 'alive'. Rather the new born infant merely accepts its own existence and its present reality as a given fact and without the shadows of either Freud or Heidegger or even Nietzsche to generate any sense of angst. Given also that in all probability, the infant can neither actually recall a moment when it did not exist, or even the moment of its own genesis, it is highly unlikely that it will jump to the conclusion that it may at some point or other in future cease to exist. Such propositions sound too much like an adult talking, one who has learned that life is not guaranteed to continue, and that death does exist.

This is not to deny that infants experience distress, however, but rather one should acknowledge that distressing situations are always present but as long as the child remains alive, so too does the possibility that it will eventually move from feelings of distress to feelings such as happiness or even desire. Where theorists would do better to recognise that flow and movement are indeed the basic elements that underpin the infant's existential reality, they instead remain fixated on trying to justify the stabilisation of its world in response to adult experiences of pain and loss as an avoidance technique the infant is supposed to have as it is presumed to deal with the anxiety of separating from the womb. As Walkerdine puts it, the infant is “holding the parts of the self together” (Walkerdine, 2013:5) as if in a desperate struggle to stave off obliteration.

To solve this problem, Guattari adapts Winnicott's idea of transitional object such as a child's security blanket – interestingly he associates this with art and art making – as a technique to overarch and tie what are experienced as discontinuities and disconnections in the infant's existence (such as the separation its mother) while exposing the child to circumstances and situations that it can learn and grow from without relying on the mother's presence to do so. With the transitional object in hand, Guattari maintains that real change becomes possible as the transitional objects “hold” the sense of subjectivity at the same time as allowing the individual to radically re-work and reshape it. Walkerdine thinks that this is what Guattari means when he talks about the subject's move from their existential territories and on to the innovative incorporeal universes they have imagined.

Here again both Walkerdine and Guattari show that they are deeply committed to helping individuals achieve real change in life by supporting these transitions without

leaving the individual vulnerable to recapitulating to pre-existent patterns of action and behaviour. The extent to which both have gone to identify how this supportive process can be realised demonstrates their serious intent to do so successfully. And I agree that these strategies are consistent with adult behaviour, particularly when such adults are raised from early childhood to only feel safe in conditions where things remain stable rather than in states of constant change, and this is why I believe Walkerdine's work, as well as Guattari's, is intellectually supportable and empirically valid.

Walkerdine begins the final section of her essay by acknowledging the importance of understanding the indeterminate processes of change “without collapsing into anxiety and thus getting stuck or remaining where we are or a version of that place (even in a new geographical location)” (Walkerdine, 2013:6). Here again one can adopt a slightly different (but fundamental) approach if one were to accept that even in infancy, the anxiety associated with change is neither avoidable yet neither does it actually threaten the infant's existence. In arriving at this, we need to accept that it is possible to raise children in a world where they are constantly dealing with change rather than opting for formative structures such as “primary care givers” and “mothers” which inherently form the infant from the earliest of age to become reliant on singular, stable entities (embodied by the structures that the infant encounters, namely the mother's body) in order to feel safe and comfortable and that its needs and future are secured.

If infants were allowed to constantly experience changes in the sources of such provisions, but at the same time, come to realise that the Universe as a whole is not out there to prevent it from living, but is rather an elaborate totality in which the infant's ongoing presence becomes an intrinsic part of life, then, I suggest, people will move beyond the restraining needs for safety and security, and the associated fear of anxiety and deprivation, and realise that actually we are all part of a greater whole. What is more, it would now be possible to assert that the survival of that whole necessarily involves the survival of the infant in order for it to play its part, whatever that might be, in the on-going perpetuation of life in the Universe. While this is certainly a much more cosmic and ecological view of existence, it does challenge us to revise our understanding of the way nature actually works, not as a competitive race between different organisms, but rather as

a hole which is always greater than the sum of any of its separate parts. I do admit that abandoning such entrenched concerning an infant's survival, even for the radical thinker like Guattari, involves a closer re-examination and critique of how deeply social Darwinism has penetrated Western epistemology and which both shapes and constructs individual as well as collective world views.

An ecological shift in not only thinking about the world, but also in experience and perception, is necessary if we are to move from the paranoid pathologies identified by Freud and Darwin and start to recognise that change is not our enemy, neither is anxiety, and neither is the world out trying to get us. Rather these are all elemental parts of life with which we must learn to deal on a daily basis. This includes, of course, the ever present possibility of our own existence coming to an end. But this is not and does not necessarily entail a rigidifying of self into a conceptual straightjacket that can only result in death, for only death itself is capable of reproducing the stultified dulling movements towards a pathological re-enactment that returns the individual to a past where one knows or thinks or re-members existence as both safe and secure rather than moving into unknown and uncharted futures with only their intelligence, spontaneity, and innovative creativity to make the most out of the opportunity.

Yet as long as infantile introductions to the world are presumed to focus on anxiety, paranoia, and fear of abandonment, so issues of safety, disintegration, and reactive (re)formations of and into pathological, maladaptive, repetitive behaviour will remain. It is not surprising that Walkerdine adopts Guattari's flimsy apparatus as she seeks to help the individual to move beyond inertia and embrace an inability to change in the face of an ever evolving world. This is a logical conclusion of assumptions made – commencing with Freud and others – that continue to influence the way people respond, even though it is now possible to think about the relationships between self and other that are no longer tied to fear, anxiety and the externalisation of terror. This radical shift of boundaries needs however to take place at the most fundamental stage of human development, and not as an afterthought.

Most people only arrive at an idea that nothing in life is stable much later in their development as human beings. Very few individuals in our society today are capable of



retaining the infant's first *experience* of life outside the womb as constant change. For individuals taught from the moment they are born to cling to objects in their world in order to achieve a sense of security, selfhood and identity, the sense of change as a *practical living reality* is difficult to apprehend. This explains why individuals continue to need the 'security blankets' Guattari and Walkerdine try to provide them, even though there is ample empirical evidence to show how unreliable such methods are in achieving real change. These remedial post event attempts can now also be seen as rearguard actions that at best only partially undo the damage done by the reproduction of early childhood structures that are presently encoded in culturally habituated forms of parenting. That the perpetuation of a culture of dependence based on the sole goodwill of the "mother" might be counterproductive to the longer term existential health of the infant is never considered. What is important is to maintain what might be termed as *life as we know it*.

It is therefore logical that Walkerdine spends the following pages coming up with examples of what distinguishes Guattari's approach from much of the work of others in the field of transitional change. Stressing these differences is Guattari's future oriented imagining of novel innovative developments, of the emergence of new possibilities in self and subjectivity, and the role of imagination and creativity. Walkerdine again argues that Guattari's method provides a more integrated and holistic approach that shows how radical ruptures with the past are possible, and that they can be managed in ways that maintain a sense of comfort, safety, and continuity in self and identity.

While Walkerdine argues that transformational change that re-incorporates the entirety of the individual at the same time as radically restructuring the subjectivity involved is possible, she does not actually address the contradictions the adherence to such theories creates. The continued adherence to predominant assumptions about human development and behaviour restrain individuals' ability to radically step outside constraints set up by social as well as psychological predeterminants. In this sense, such an approach can only be said to have a partial capability of making successful interventions that help the individual arrive at a new innovative sense of place and space and who they become.

Instead Walkerdine moves on to make the equally important case about how present day UK educational policy devalues even further the role of creativity to help

students realise their dreams and aspirations. Walkerdine has an important point to make here, for what she shows is that the rational education policies pursued by much Government Policies reinforces extant social and economic hierarchies and which actively prevent individuals from using education as a way of changing their lives. That individuals like Fiona, Nicky and Christine have succeeded anyway in assuming new social personas is not at issue. What this belies, however, is that the underlying performance these women actualise maintain and reinforce the underlying social structures of society while giving the impression that the individual can succeed if they are prepared to work hard enough. Yet while Walkerdine's commitment to education as a means of enabling individuals to realise themselves and their dreams is unquestionable, the theoretical assumptions she makes means that the outputs she imagines remain contained within the existing structures of society.

Nevertheless, Walkerdine can positively conclude on the specific performances of women like Fiona, Nicky and Christine and how they have, to varying extents, re-imagined their lives and attained goals otherwise precluded from them as females, she has not yet found the traction to deeply criticise the social dimension and the real transformation of society Deleuze and Guattari were concerned with. This is a qualified attainment of change within specific subjective domains, but it does fall short of the fuller realisations and transformations that are possible. In the end, society remains intact and the class system continues to hold in place – if not Fiona, Nicky and Christine – then certainly other unnamed brothers and sisters with whom they grew up. Concluding at such a point is, in my view, a disappointment, and for this reason, I would like to continue to imagine other potential scenarios this valuable excursion into practice-led theory might evolve.

### **Re-imagining the World of the Child**

I like Walkerdine's article. It explains things that seem intuitively to be true. It makes things clear in a process that I myself, sometimes as an artist, have used in imagining then realising various projects, from dreams in my head to things in reality. It also cuts across things that some social scientists, some sociologists, some psychiatrists, and some social theorists, as well as some politicians deny – the need to change social and

cultural formations. From this perspective, Walkerdine's is a timely and political intervention.

I also like the article because it elaborates and explains Deleuze and Guattari's work into a novel context. I like, for example, how this essay expands the notion of 'schizoanalytic cartographies'. Walkerdine also gives good ground to terms like 'refrain', 'territorialisation', 'deterritorialisation', and 'reterritorialisation', and 'assemblages'. Broadly, Walkerdine understands the work of Deleuze and Guattari and has concretely developed ways of thinking about and applying their work.

I am also in general agreement with the general thrust of the essay even though I do not agree with some of the major premises it makes. I agree that the role of imagination is crucial to the performance people actualise, either collectively or singularly, in what is sometimes called the advancement of human arrangements.

Having stated my all round support for this article, there are things I do not agree with. However, in my view, these do not defeat the method's overall ability to hold 'true' and to explain the process of change as well as to enable a greater capacity towards emancipation, emancipation of the individual from the "certainty" that contemporary society is determined to hold as their lot and station in life while the world becomes increasingly subjected to and overdetermined by accountants, social security brokers, and law makers to ensure that nothing unexpected happens.

Having staked a general position in relation to the article, I want to make a case against the problematics that are imbedded at the same time as reinforcing the general thrust of the role of imagination in changing people's views and expectations about their world. I think it is important to flesh these out for the sake of clarity and for the sake of getting rid of excess baggage that I believe add nothing (or very little) to the credibility of the approach Walkerdine – via Guattari – is promoting, or indeed, may be foreclosing it.

The description of Melanie Klien's (and others) approaches to early childhood makes it seem that to a child, birth brings the traumatic realisation that for the first time in its short (though indeterminate) life, the infant's needs are not going to be met by the world in which it lives (or lived in before), what is called the womb, within which the child is

said to feel its existence was assured. The assumption seems to be that a baby somehow knows that inside the womb it had everything it needed – on demand – but now that it has been expelled, that happy equilibrium is gone and baby now has to assert itself to get its needs met, has to demand the attention of its mother-provider, who may or may not now be able or willing to remain at its beck and call.

I find assumptions adults make about infants strange, bemusing, and sometimes offensive. Not only that, but they actually also fly in the face of empirical evidence which can be observed of young infants, human or otherwise, caught in the throes of expressing a need for nourishment or sustenance, a need for warmth, protection, and affection, to be comforted, and other desires that arise.

Child development theories following the tradition of Freud are full of adult (read also the analyst's) fantasies and projections on young children and they overlook basic elements in the evidence the new born gives about their early postnatal existence. First of all such theories assume that a young creature of just minutes, hours, days, and months of age is able to somehow conceptualise a relationship it has with its world, and to already experience something about its position in that world, even though there is no evidence to support such a claim.

On the contrary, the science concerning early brain development in humans indicates that the infant's brain is not able to do a lot of the things adults take for granted until it reaches at least the age of five. This is how long it takes the nervous system to develop and enable the brain of the child just to process the information it receives through its senses.

At this point I can see that one might object to the point I am making and rejoin with an age old argument about where human consciousness resides – in the mind or in the soul or in the body, or is it in the brain? I don't want to get drawn into a discussion about consciousness – mind, brain, or elsewhere in the body. And neither is it relevant to my argument.

For if the brain is understood as being a primary receptive organ for the processing of information that the mind uses to arrive at its sense/state of feeling, thinking, and

continuity of consciousness – what is sometimes described as a sentient, conscious, cognisant being – then even if we assume that a child is born with a fully developed mind (or soul, or higher self, or whatever) in the way we understand as adults, the fact that an infant does not yet have all the sensory processing power that an adult has to perceive and deal with the world means that the child is not yet as capable of dealing with the cognitive constructs such as “being”; or attachment; or a feeling that it needs security. What's security? A sense of comfort; love; etc?

Unlike adults, an infant has neither the information or the means or the history to develop such mental images, imaginations, constructs or assemblages. Or whatever other constructs one might choose to point towards the mental cognisant formations associated with the ever evolving notion of mind.<sup>[v]</sup>

Meditating further on Guattari's recognition of the importance of imagination, it becomes obvious that the very idea of imagining something different or “other” to one's present understanding of reality depends on a sentient being's dual capacity to develop at least one alternate model or conceptual framework for itself as well as understanding or possessing a sense of its (pre-)conditioning (pre-)existing past and/or present experience and reality. For an infant to develop such a mental-conscious-semi-conscious-unconscious-preconscious image of what it is like to be outside the womb, it has to already have an image of what it was like inside the womb as well as being perceptually cognisant of the world that it now occupies outside it, including some sense-perception of what might happen now that it no longer has the womb to rely on or to protect it. This requires a high level of cognisant intelligence that presumes far too much of what babies actually know and understand about the world they enter as they are born, not least because it has inadequate sensory data to assemble such a picture of its reality. Babies might learn fast, but not that fast.

Having already outlined a case against some of the child development theories Walkerdine uses to support her argument, let me add that I am not going to revert back to earlier psychoanalytic approaches that give children all sorts of complexes and conundrums, as if such complexes and conundrums (think the Oedipus and Electra complexes for example) are hard wired in the baby's mind.

A more realistic projection, in my view, would suggest that along with the inception of an embryo, there is, as part of embryonic and early childhood development, the formation of qualities that this primordial being needs (barring mutations or deviations) in order to reach full adult status. This includes the development of mind and a sense of being (in the sense that philosophers like Nietzsche, Sartre, and Heidegger speak about existential “being”), including the formation of consciousness, the unconscious (what all matter in its free floating and unformed state *experiences itself(?)* as), and all states in between leading to the formation of what humans understand as “their” sense of self or ego (a sense that is at least partially shared by higher forms of life as we move from fish to lizards to birds to antelopes to cats to humans).

Many years ago, Jeremy Cherfas and John Gribben published *The Redundant Male*, a book about the role of sex in the evolution of life.<sup>[vi]</sup> Amongst other things, this book develops an idea that makes it possible to parallel the evolutions of species with the evolution of embryos in the womb. What struck me at the time as I was reading it is that looking at a human embryo at 8 weeks of age and a lizard's embryo at the same phase of development, there is no discernible difference in the apparent physical structures of either organism. In other words, the early human embryo and the early lizard embryo seem to have (at least in appearance) the same capability and structures at certain points in their development. It is genetic coding that determines which evolutionary path each of those two creatures will follow. It seems logical that at this stage either could become an adult of either species if it were somehow possible to replace the genetic code of either species with the code of the other. If it can be imagined that the genetic code could be replaced, then it is possible to imagine that the embryo might well continue to develop to adult status of the introduced genetic code, and not the original.

What I want to suggest in making a comparison between a lizard and a human is that it is wrong of adults to assume that a human child is born with the capability to understand the world from which it came, and what it itself is in relation to that world, based on its previous history – even if one were to assume that an infant can somehow maintain and access a sense of its past through memory. It would be equally wrong to assume that such a baby already has at least a foreshadowing of how things not that the

infant is no longer inside the womb. Just as it would also be wrong to presume that a newborn infant has developed a sense of time.

Such presumptions strike me as absurd. They project on babies – especially in their first three months of life – adult assumptions and expectations about what an infant needs and wants and who is best placed to fulfil those needs, according to an order of things in what is generally accepted as the hierarchy of knowledge – what could be termed the hegemony of the mother<sup>[vii]</sup> or the tyranny of the titty – a concept as simplistic as Darwin's assumption about the competitive nature of life.<sup>[viii]</sup>

This also raises problems about where we place the role of fathers too, or the phallus, as it is put, in (adult) discourses that surround and engulf the young child's emergent being. The central motif of 'the breast that feeds' is only part of the opposing set of structural socio-linguistic relations that underpin adult-centred binary logics.

Yet using Guattari's own method – I already said I fully take on board the broad approach as I understand it, tho not necessarily all the baggage that the article (and Guattari himself) conjoin with it – it is important to imagine other potential scenarios including a scenario where we can instead assume that a new born infant does not have the conceptual apparatus, the cognitive processes, or the sense of time or wilfulness and consciousness of will to put together notions that if it does not get fed, it will perish, if it gets cold it will die, if it is not loved, it will develop into an anti-social being incapable of recognising that its own success in the world depends entirely on the co-operation and success of others.

I want to imagine other realities, and especially ones where, as a young and rapidly forming being, a new born infant still has no sense of death, no sense of hunger or deprivation, and no sense of will, or having that will denied. Imagine what it might be like to have no consciousness, or unconsciousness, or even preconsciousness? What is it like to sense one's self not as being different to and separate from the rest of the world – the distinction between self and everything else around us that puts us sometimes in very complicated relations not only with inanimate objects, but also with other equally sentient, sometimes more powerful beings – but rather a sense of being in a continuum, of

connectivity, with everything. This is how I think a new born infant experiences itself and the world around it.

What an infant's early life demands us to imagine what it might be like to be a being that does not rest on a sense or an awareness of self in any way we understand our selves to be. Rather, imagine a sense of self as if it always was and is and will be, eternally, forever. Not a “now”, not a “then”, and certainly not a “maybe”, but rather, everything as simply that it “is”. Just think what the world would be like if – for an instant – we could imagine a world stretching out forever, an eternity of a fractal geometric shapes and patterns, receding into every direction through time and space. Interestingly, Henri Bergson tried to imagine such a sense of consciousness as well as the creative evolution need to make such a world real. I don't think it is a co-incidence that Deleuze, at least, if not also Guattari, were influenced by what still seems to many as a completely incoherent idea of the universe and evolution.<sup>[ix]</sup>

Yet might this actually be closer to what a new born child actually experiences? And nowhere in that world is there a distinction between mother/other, phallus/womb, or the surrogate mediating nipple. There is no need or desire, nor plenty or scarcity. Everything just is, as it was and always has been, a complete totality in an eternal continuum. In such a state, there is no need or precognition of distress, for there has never been distress in the first place, not even an ounce of it. And even if the environment inside the womb was in fact subject to distressful situations, the burgeoning sentience of the unborn child was incapable of cognitively re-cognising it! The ability of an infant to feel distress, if what cognitive and neuronal scientists propose is true, is itself a capacity yet to be fully developed.

What we do know is that we know nothing of what a newborn experiences, or how it cognitively deals with the experience of having just been born (traumatic or otherwise), let alone whether it distinguishes itself from the environment within which it now rests and is held, as distinct to the environment – the womb – from which it came. Even the capacity to remember and to distinguish time from past and present is only something that the majority of us develop around the age of three or five, at least in the way that we adults



think of time and memory. These are assumptions adults make on behalf of infants, having themselves forgotten what it is like to be an infant.

Yet all the theorising about infants is actually immaterial to a discussion about the role of the imagination in the formation of equity, social justice, space, and education and the processes of change. What is clear, however is that imagination is a fundamental quality without which every aspect of human consciousness and awareness would be impossible. So in the end, my argument with early childhood development theorists does not weaken the case for Guattari's or Walkerdine's approach. Rather, I think it strengthens it.

### **The Problem with Class**

Another issue I have with this article is the continuing strong identification of categories such as class. Through cultural studies, it is possible to move beyond such categories and start to relate to individuals in the process of learning. If we do move beyond class – and just imagine what a classroom would be like if it was emptied of a class of students, or just the walls to contain them in were taken away – we would have to start to think beyond categories, hierarchies, and systematised structures of organisation.

But yes it would be difficult for our societies to deal with this idea at all, especially as we are, all of us, becoming more accountable for everything we do, and for which there needs to be some form of “empirical” measure. Not only that, but with ever shrinking budgets devoted to education in general, as well as to other basic social and human needs – all in order to continue supporting a flagging economy that demands that the bottom line has a particular look about it – just the thought of being able to devote the time and attention needed to ensure that every child – and also every adult – gets the education it deserves to enable them to make the most of the opportunities that are presented to them becomes impossible.

And yet, this is precisely the problem.

If we are to move towards a system where girls education (and boys too) is going to be focused on the individual child's needs, and in particular the need to imagine a life future where the possibilities of self realisation – in terms of what the child itself imagines

rather than what society thinks is realistic or achievable for it – are at least given a chance to be realised constructively, to be role played and modelled positively, to be actualised in safety, and to form the ground for real and lasting change, then it is the particularities of the individual we need to focus on and not the classificatory system that groups and shepherds people towards ends that the system within which they happen to be performing in at that particular time can deal with.

It is possible to imagine other classroom scenarios in which individuals are able to imagine different futures for themselves, and do it in a way that does not require the entire system to be focused on them and them alone as individuals. As Walkerdine concedes, these possibilities exist in the use of techniques such as theatre, art, creative writing, and so on. Indeed, many of the skills that are needed in educating people to use their imagination have been around probably as long as our species have existed, or at least ever since we started imagining that other forms of existence are possible. And there are other allied practices such as psychodramatic and improvisational role plays which can contribute to our knowledge of what best practice in this form of education for change and self realisation might be.

For if society has evolved to such an extent that it now feels it can start to dictate what and what is not possible for a young child to achieve, we really have reached the end of the line for our culture, for what this really and ultimately means is that we have lost completely now the capacity to imagine, to change, and to mutate into entirely unpredictable new futures. This will not, however, spell the end of the human species. It will simply mark the end of a particular way of living as a human, our way, which takes us back to how dysfunctional our society has become. This is precisely the issue Walkerdine is trying to confront in the British class system.

Having come full circle, I accept that classrooms need not be sacrificed in order to achieve some social justice in our education systems. As with everything, it is what happens in our classrooms that really matters. What is still problematic, however, is the notion of a general classification of people even when they are still children. Given that Western society remains so rigidly rusted on to classifying things through which nature as well as society are rationalised, perhaps this is 'unavoidable' (of course I'm being ironic) at

the present time.<sup>[x]</sup> It is encouraging to see a recognition in Walkerdine that certain individuals can and do attain their goals even when they are entirely coming from the wrong classes. What is yet to be achieved is a critique of why this only happens in exceptional cases, and why the education system has not yet transformed the entire class of people of whom these few lucky individuals come to represent.

Yet as Walkerdine suggests, we do need to support those individuals – immigrants as we are today, whether we migrate from place to place or we migrate from one strata in society to another – and as they move from places they were born and sometimes raised into to places they imagine (quite reasonably I might add, despite whatever 'realists' try to say about their dreams) or were drafted to by strange co-incidence or contrived design, whether or not such aspirations are deemed attainable.

That a world of fluid relations between individuals and groups does not meet with the approval of the rulers of society should not be too surprising. That such 'authorities' do not support a method of education that avails all sorts of possibilities to those it is educating is also not surprising. For such an idea threatens the social order with the possibility that even positions at the top of the heap are, and remain, flexible. As David Harvey<sup>[xi]</sup> points out, one of the facets of modern society is an ever increasing mobility realised not least through technological innovation. Modernity has facilitated a hitherto unheard of freedom through time and space (and even social status).

I don't want to conclude that there will always remain conflict in this world between those at the top of the pile and those further down the pecking order. Just as I don't want to conclude that such conflict will continue as long as there remains the threat that failure to reach the top progressively removes from individuals the ability to determine their own futures.

What is needed to avoid such conclusions is a recognition of society in which even those at the lowest end of the power and political spectrum can still realise their dreams and aspirations just as effectively as those residing at the top. When people no longer fear failure, or fear falling through the system and becoming increasingly powerless as a result, people will embrace trying out new things, new ways of doing, rather than avoiding them.

But I am not advocating socialism either, for as we know, it doesn't work, not even on a minor scales. More than anything, the answer rests in anarchy – not in the populist social Darwinian portrayals of anarchy as a state of disorganised chaos, non-co-operation, and selfish bedlam in which violence predominates and power is the domain of the strong – rather anarchy in which the State is made subject of the people and not the other way round. The anarchy some imagine is a condition in which human arrangements upturn the relationship between society and the State and returns the real power to the people, who, in protecting their interests, refuse now and again and once and for all any argument to remove power from the individual and empower instead the institutions which are said to be there to protect him or her and invest that institution with the right to commit even the grossest violation against them in preserving their so-called 'sovereignty'.<sup>[xii]</sup> This is the classroom that no longer seeks to regulate the unruly behaviour of individuals, but rather, enables each and every individual to realise their potential.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Valerie Walkerdine, “Using the Work of Felix Guattari to Understand Space, Place, Social Justice, and Education”, *Qualitative Enquiry* XX(X) 1-9, Sage, published online 30th September 2013

<sup>ii</sup> Walkerdine (1991) cited in Walkerdine (2013) 1, square bracket text my own.

<sup>iii</sup> I describe this as reality for as human beings exist fundamentally in social relations, our reality is, and should be described, as socio-cultural. The conflation of these domains does not deny the material facts of the worlds in which humans exist, but it does inherently acknowledge what is often denied; the human capacity to interpret the physical world is the result of both inherent cultural as well as social conditioning.

<sup>iv</sup> See Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, London, Methuen 1982, pp 11 – 15.

<sup>v</sup> There are many different philosophical approaches to the idea of mind, but I like cognitive science's general theory for at least it tries to reconcile both the physical as well as the computational and metaphysical potential the human mind appears to possess. Howard Garbner's *The Mind's New Science* offers an excellent introduction to the field of cognitive science. See Gardner, H. (1985), *The Mind's New Science*, New York, Basic Books.

<sup>vi</sup> See Jeremy Cherfas and John Gribben's *The Redundant Male: Is sex irrelevant in the Modern World?* (Granada 1985). However, I understand from a recent reports that present day research into sex differentiation suggests that the development of typical girl and boy brains is highly conditioned by cultural factors. For example, the typical sizes of the corpus collosum and hypothalamus in boys and girls is at least partly the result of conditions

under which each child is brought up and the education and inculturation they receive. That is to say that the actual size of corpus collosum and hypothalamus in both boys and girls varies depending on the sorts of everyday tasks such as games they are asked to play. This again points to the highly plastic and malleable nature of the human brain, and the immense mutability of the human mind/sense of being.

<sup>vii</sup> I am aware that Anne Moir & David Jessel's *Brainsex : the real difference between men and women* (Mandarin 1991) argues that there are intrinsic differences between the sexes and that such differences predispose mothers as essentially better equipped to fulfil the role of primary care-giver. Their conclusions are based on interpretations of empirical data derived from social situations which, they argue, show that no society has interchanged the roles of father and mother as primary carer. Such assertions can be contested however on at least three grounds; 1) Moir and Jessel do not take adequate account of the role that culture plays in forming such expectations, both in terms of the cultures to which they refer to as well as to their own readings of such cultures, 2) that just because they are not able to find examples to the contrary, one should conclude that such practices are universal and should henceforth always remain the same, and 3) they continue to reduce the primary care giver to some essential, biologically preprogrammed factor which returns their discussion to a reassertion of essentialist dogma that somehow predetermines human biology. I will not document the arguments that challenge to those assertions here. I merely draw attention to the fact that such assertions are contestable.

<sup>viii</sup> Richard Dawkins expressed some interesting views about this in a radio programme dealing with competition. Dawkins said if politically we were living in a Darwinian society, we would be living in a very unhappy state. See "The Why Factor: Competition", first broadcast on BBC World Service on the 23rd May, 2014. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01z6f6n>

<sup>ix</sup> See Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (Allen&Unwin 1929) and Giles Deleuze, *Cinema 1 & 2* (Athlone 2002).

<sup>x</sup> Of course, nothing is completely "unavoidable". Everything has at least the potential of being rendered decipherable and understandable. Indeed, much of the deciphering and critique that confronting the "unavoidable" here is already available and within the grasp of present knowledge, so much so that it is possible to point to the work of Foucault for some of the more prescient tools needed to carry out this task. See Foucault, M. (1986), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, Tavistock.

<sup>xi</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Blackwell 1990).

<sup>xii</sup> Pierre Clusters' studies of South American Indian societies is seminal here (see *Society against the State, Zone* 1989) and more recently James C Scott's *The Art of NOT being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (Yale 2009). See also John Grech, "Paradise Regained? The Work of Mediation Technology in an Age of Open Communities", *Transformations* No 15, November 2007

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