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# Using the Work of Felix Guattari to Understand Space, Place, Social Justice, and Education

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## Abstract

This article considers the work of the radical psychoanalyst Felix Guattari in relation to the study of and intervention into space, place, education, and social justice. By understanding the ways in which Guattari's work understands space and place as central to existence, the article explores his schizoanalytic cartographies to think about the mapping of possibilities for movement, change, and transformation. As well as setting out a reading of this work, the article discusses what might be the implications for researching class transitions and for working within education to marshal the powers of the imagination and the inhabiting of new spaces and places.

## Keywords

Guattari, existential territories, class transition, affect

## Introduction

It is 1990. Several women sit in a room at the Women's Therapy Centre in London, having agreed to come together for the purpose of my filming them. They all grew up working class and became upwardly mobile through education. Fiona, who grew up on a rough housing estate in Glasgow, says, "I know who I am in that place, I am know who I am in that (other) place, but I don't know who I want to be, just for me" (Walkerdine, 1991). Fiona presents the audience with a strong sense of the central importance of place in determining who she is. The two places she is referring to are the housing estate where she grew up and the middle class existence of a social worker in Wales, which she now inhabits. Thus, she makes it clear that, through education, she has moved places, both literally swapping a rough estate for what she elsewhere describes as "greener pastures," and moving and changing her "persona," a sense of who she is, in that move. However, as she says, the two "places" are quite split—she has no sense of who she is "just for me," only that the two different places require and permit very different performances and practices of self. What we can understand from this and the range of literature on class transitions is how difficult it remains for working-class people, as with many othered peoples, to bring the two places together and integrate them into something which feels both comfortable and workable without jeopardizing the mode of subjectivity that is in each place (Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2002).

In raising the central importance of both the materiality and embodied and subjective experience of place for education and class transition, I want to use this example to think about how the work of the radical psychoanalyst Felix Guattari might help us go beyond a split between an actual place and space and our affective, body–mind experience.

The aim of this article is to present an outline of Guattari's conceptual apparatus to be able to think about its relevance to the study of space, place, and education. In particular, the complex relation of place to affect is considered as well as the central importance that Guattari attaches to the imagination. It is the power of imagination that Guattari evokes in relation to the safe possibility of movement and change into new space, places, and ways of being. This clearly has enormous importance for education, especially in relation to an understanding of feelings of safety and possibility of being able to imagine oneself in a new place and thus to be able to face new challenges in education.

## Introducing the Work of Felix Guattari

While Guattari is best known for his work with Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), his work alone supplies many

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of the concepts used in the joint work and offers a very sophisticated understanding of movement through time and space. Moreover, Guattari's work evolved out of his clinical practice as a psychoanalyst working with psychotic patients in the La Borde clinic outside Paris and as a militant political activist. He at first attempted to adapt Lacan for work with groups and in institutions and then developed his critique of Lacan both on his own and with Deleuze. In particular, he was interested in the possibilities for change and growth that opened up for people rather than simply understanding the basis of psychotic anxiety and breakdown in childhood.

### Cook for a Day

In Guattari's clinical practice with psychotic patients in the clinic at La Borde, he discusses (Guattari, 1995) the production of an environment in which patients are constantly challenged to try something new and to be part of a new set of relations of subjectification. Thus he describes in detail how a patient might get to try something new and different from what she or he has done before. In a wonderful description of becoming cook for the day, Guattari sets out the many things which have to be coordinated from nursing and medical staff, to menu planning, and so on, to allow this act of imagination to take place, but as he says, there is no sure fire conclusion—it might work and the patient may see something new or it may result in what Guattari (2000) describes as a reterritorialization, which means a kind of movement which lands someone back in a version of the place from which they escaped, a safe return but not a freeing one. We cannot know. This means that two things happen—the patient is encouraged in doing something new to move out of a crippling anxiety which might be expressed as a retreat into a safe fantasy (split off) and into imagination—the possibility of creating something new, making a new link.

This example, with its resonances of Foucault in its complex creation of practices and sites for action, but importantly going beyond Foucault in its evocation of fantasy, imagination, and sensory and affective experience, also uses the idea of the imagination to provoke the possibility of a creative approach to change.

### Schizoanalytic Cartographies

In order to understand this example and its provenance, I want to turn to a series of seminars held in the 1980s, which included Guattari and others.<sup>1</sup> Guattari developed a method which he called Schizoanalytic Cartography. According to Holmes (n.d.), this approach began out of this series of dialogues. According to Holmes, what emerged from the dialogue between Guattari and Elkaim was a series of diagrams relating to four domains of the unconscious, four interrelated

varieties of experience, that overflow the ego to constitute an expanded field of trans-subjective interaction.

Each zone of a four-fold map is understood not as the definitive structural model of an unconscious process, able to render its truth or meaning, but rather as a meta-model, a way of perceiving and perhaps reorienting the singular factors at play. "What I am precisely concerned with," Guattari wrote, "is a displacement of the analytic problematic, a drift from systems of statement (enonce) and performed subjective structures toward assemblages of enunciation that can forge new coordinates of interpretation and 'bring into existence' unheard of ideas and proposals." (Holmes, n.d., p. 9)

The four divisions of the map deal with existential territories, material and energetic flows, rhizomes of abstract ideas, and aesthetic refrains. This translates as the ground beneath ones feet, the turbulence of social experience, the blue skies of ideas, and the rhythmic insistence of waking dreams. These kinds of experience are linked into a cycle of transformations, whose consistency and dynamics make up an assemblage (individual, family, group, project, workshop, society, etc.), thus, as Holmes puts it, to arrive at a procedure of "automodeling," which allows the construction of cartographies and thus of an analytic methodology.

Guattari's use of mapping or cartography brings into sharp focus the relation between, space, place, movement, and subjectivity. In using a metaphor of mapping, Guattari is refusing to separate subjectivity from environment, inside from outside and stasis from movement. The cartography is a journey of transformation in which the virtual, the imagined landscape of the new is as important and significant as the material landscape of one's location. Thus, this emphasis on movement together with the refusal to separate psychical from external reality in any simple sense presents us with way of looking at class transformation through education in which space and place are not simply external referents but are themselves creative of shifting assemblages, embodied, psychical, conscious, un- and nonconscious, and continually changing. To understand this further, I want to introduce the concepts of Existential Territories and Incorporeal Universes. The Existential Territory is, says Holmes, the place in which language collapses and we are confronted by skin and sensation—the place of sensory experience, of affect, perhaps best known in relation to object relations work on infancy (see Walkerdine, 2010). So we have to think of the way in which we inhabit a space and time, through our affective and sensory experience of it, the ways in which we are affectively "held in place." This could be a neighborhood, a home, but it could also be the experience of one's place in the world, what makes one feel alive, the places/experiences that bring a sense of going on being. According to Holmes, it is the experience of pacing, wandering, finding one's territory. In this, he makes a reference to Situationism in which Guy Debord (1995) worked with the idea of the drift in

which we might understand the psychic geography of a place through our actual wandering through it. Central to Guattari's view is the way in which our territories attempt to mark out our own boundaries in an existential sense. It is this issue which is crucial because our existence as separate beings in object relations terms is understood by reference to an experience of what psychoanalysts refer to as primary process, which allows us to feel held and as though we have a continuity of being (Bick, 1968; Walkerline, 2010). For Guattari, rhythms and refrains (ritornelles) constitute the affective basis, the feeling basis, of one's existence. In this he refers to Proust "In search of lost time," where there are evocations of feelings as memories—that is, the memory of dipping a biscuit in tea, the uneven feel of paving stones. These are the rhythmic and refrain-like traces so that any discursive chain bears the traces in terms of content and forms of expression. It is only through these repetitions that incorporeal Universes of reference, whose events punctuate individual and collective histories, can be generated and regenerated. In other words, it is the rhythmic, ritual, affective aspects of our existential paths which map onto what can be said (the subject of enunciation in his terms) and the discursive positions that keep us in place. Thus, psychoanalysis has a place in understanding this interiority. So, just as the baby experiences themselves through a sensory engagement with a holding environment, so it is the affective sensory experience of territory which makes subjectivity possible. The places or sites of subjectification are those which are experienced by the body as holding in a particular way and hence the reference to Proust and the idea of the memory as sensory refrain—dipping the Madeleine in tea is a bodily memory, which holds Proust in this place and provides a way of as it were holding him together (Bick, 1968). To further develop this conceptually, Guattari refers to the work on infancy of the psychoanalyst and developmental psychologist, Daniel Stern (1985).

How do we mark out ourselves, our space, how do we come to affectively mark the boundaries of our affective bodies? This is the place, Guattari says, in which subjectivity emerges.

Territories of existence . . . drift in relation to each other like tectonic plates under continents. Rather than speak of the "subject," we should perhaps speak of components of subjectification, each working more or less on its own. This would lead us, necessarily to re-examine the relation between concepts of the individual and subjectivity, and, above all, to make a clear distinction between the two. Vectors of subjectification do not necessarily pass through the individual, which in reality appears to be something like a "terminal" for processes that involve human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines etc. Therefore, interiority establishes itself at the crossroads of multiple components, each relatively autonomous in relation to the other, and, if needs be, in open conflict. (Guattari, 2000, p. 25)

Thus, the basic building block for thinking about subjectivity within Guattari's work is the concept of existential territories. If we take the above quote, we can see the sense that vectors of subjectification passing through individuals and the understanding of subjectivity as a relay point or vector of positions discussed by Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn, and Walkerline (1984) and Walkerline (2007) appear to relate to Guattari's approach, but his use of affect and sensation and indeed primary process is quite different and developed in important ways.

For Guattari, the subject is a terminal for processes that involve human groups, socio-economic ensembles, and data processing machines. So, what we see here is that these groups, ensembles, and machines are what is primary and interiority is what establishes itself as at the crossroads of these, which may sit alongside each other or be in conflict with each other. Subjectivity is an effect of these processes and not its cause. Guattari takes certain ways of working from discussions with the family therapist Mony Elkaim (Elkaim, 1997). In the cook for the day example, he takes the idea of dramatically staging scenarios designed to shift relationship patterns. This might, for example, include asking members of the family to do something together or differently, thus staging a shift in the patterns of relating in order to see what transpires. Of course, Elkaim, like Guattari, would stress that it is impossible to know what the result of this will be. Guattari's interest was in understanding how change might come about within an uncertain and indeterminate process and without backfiring to produce anxiety, which produced a stuckness that landed a person back to where they originally came from or a place very much like it.

He wants, he says, to use psychoanalysis differently, by taking the work out of a tie to an individual and collective past and directing it toward the future, to the virtual. The unconscious, he says, remains bound to archaic fixations only so long as there is nothing which engages it and can form an investment in a future. Thus, if we understand the existential territory as the embodied affective place or in fact places in which a sense of existing is produced, we can see that Guattari retains some aspects of the idea of positions in discourse or in discursive practices but goes way beyond them by concentrating not on discourse but on the basic sensory experience of being located and of moving through the space and time of the locations. Thus, affect becomes central: We experience our existence through our embodied experience of being held in particular moments, times, spaces. We have also noted that Guattari understands this in terms of the issue of how one moves forward and into the new rather than getting stuck in the old. Thus, the idea of a schizoanalytic cartography, the idea of tracing the possibility of becoming Other, of moving forward, of being different.

The schizoanalytic cartography is a map of movement through time and space including the cartography of a

dreamed-of future. It is in this way that schizoanalytic cartographies can extend beyond the existential territories to which they are assigned. Thus, it is a question of opening up the territories to new futures, without their author's prior recourse to assured theoretical principles, the authority of a group, and so on—that is, a clear path. In other words, if we want to support change, it is necessary to create safe but challenging scenarios which might open up a person or group to the possibility of movement into something and somewhere new.

So, transversal subjectivity (that is, subjectivity that crosses various territories) for Guattari involves a relationship between existential territories and incorporeal universes. The territories are singular, idiosyncratic, sensible, and finite and the universes are non-coordinated, trans-sensible, and infinite. During a process of chaotic unfolding, the subject oscillates between the two. So change (and development in his sense) is about being able to move beyond a personal world of constraints, limits, and coordinates (the existential territories) to universes in which those things disappear and one is carried along on something new, one is able to open oneself up to something new “I am no longer what I was before, I am swept away by a becoming other, carried beyond my familiar existential Territories” (Guattari, 1995, p. 93).

### **Waking Dreams: The Power of the Imagination**

To understand this, we have to think about what he calls the power of waking dreams, that is, the imagination. In particular, his arguments could be understood in relation to object relations approaches to creativity, particularly the work of Klein (Segal, 1986) and Winnicott (1971). Guattari is stressing the central importance of creativity and to explain this we need to understand both object relations and Winnicott on creativity in relation to anxiety and psychosis and imagination.

Segal writes that while night dreams are a way of resolving a problem in phantasy, day dreams and play have other functions. Play allows the symbolic connection to be made between phantasy and reality and people can play together. To this, Winnicott adds the central importance of play in creating a way of engaging with and going beyond anxiety about loss, especially his work on “transitional objects.”

Guattari draws heavily on the idea of imagination and day dreams to think about what he calls the move to incorporeal universes. To understand this, we need to think about the importance of imagination to object relations psychoanalysis and then to understand how Guattari works with these concepts and transforms them. Freud postulated the idea of hallucination and splitting as something that first occurred in infancy. How, he asked, could an infant who had gestated for 9 months in a constant environment cope

with having to be separate and to experience lack of warmth, food, and human comfort, even if at first for brief periods? He surmised that the infant formed a fantasy that he called a hallucination of the mother's breast, the source of food, in order to stave off or split off from the pain and terror of separation. Freud understood this in energetic terms as a discharge of tension. It was Melanie Klein who introduced the idea that this process was also about what she called object relations, in particular 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. It is these “objects” that Klein introduced and that in fact Deleuze and Guattari make much of.

Subsequent analysts in this tradition build upon the importance of sensory experience of the Other and the environment to build an account of infant sensory and prelinguistic experience. The related part of Guattari's conceptual apparatus refers to the work of the psychoanalyst and developmental psychologist Daniel Stern (1985). In particular, what I want to draw attention to is Stern's work on vitality affects, discussed by Massumi (1995). This work alerts us to the central importance of intensity. To explain this further, Massumi equates intensity with affect, in the sense that there is a realm of potential (the virtual) that escapes confinement by any particular body and limitation by emotions or perception, but is one's sense of aliveness or vitality. It is here that Massumi refers to the psychoanalyst Daniel Stern, who argues that an infant's sense of an emergent self ignores the boundaries of and opposition of self and other. Stern refers to vitality as amodal perception, by which he means that quality in which an experience can be intense (he got up from the chair explosively) but we cannot easily say what emotion attaches to the experience, or indeed if there is a specific one. It is the bodily intensity, which is key. Stern derives this from the sense that an infant, with unclear boundaries of self and other, experiences a sense of intensity in relation to experiences, which is not confined to the infant's body, which is not itself felt as separate from that of its caregiver. It is in this sense that we can say that intensity is an experience before discourse and identity, which is experienced relationally but not as clearly belonging to one body or other, but more as a flow, flux, or surge within the relational setting or in a group, as in this case. Understanding this allows us to explore the central importance of intensity work as a significant precursor to identity work. Thus, the sense of affecting and being affected is understood as the movement of intensity through bodies, when we cannot know who exactly experiences what except the contagion of the intensity itself. Massumi argues, following Stern, that this is an early or archaic phenomenon, which is more elemental to human experience than language and discourse precisely because it draws on very early and very elementary experience, establishing patterns that exist both before language and a bounded sense of self. That is, before we

think about identity in space and place (Kofoed, Walkerdine, Haavind, & Andenes, 2013), we might think about the intensity of sensations to which any situation gives rise, thus confronting us with the primacy of sensation in understanding transformation. Our embodied reaction in place thus is one in which intensity is key and primary. Of course, as adults we learn to explain ourselves, but the primacy of intensity remains, though it has been ignored in discursive approaches.

This is what Guattari alludes to with his account of the *ritournelle*—refrains, that is those patterns and rhythms that are evocations of basic connectedness. If unconscious fantasy is central to psychoanalysis and to the idea of the defenses, we see immediately the central significance of the split—the fantasized place or image in which one is safe, split off from the painful world of reality. That is, it is a way to manage pain. But, what Guattari warns is that it is fantasy that can take one back toward a re-territorialization, which does not open up but closes down. To understand this, we have to recognize that it comes from his work with psychotic patients. It speaks of the tendency to split off a painful reality and enter into a world of fantasy in order to feel safe. Thus, it is not surprising that many moves outward or to make changes often result not in opening something up but in closing it down, because of making a move to a new territory which repeats some of the traps of the old. Thus Guattari makes a strong distinction between de- and re-territorialization.

It is here then that we need to understand the splitting of psychosis and the centrality of the attempt to escape terrifying pain and sensations. To understand Guattari's role for imagination, we have to understand the psychotic as trapped inside a protective envelope (Anzieu, 1989) which attempts to keep the person safe.

Segal documents this well when she makes a distinction between “as if” and “what if” fantasies. The point is that the latter involves the possibility of testing reality which can be modified and is therefore a form of play. The day dream in this form is a form of imagination. Thus, in Guattari's clinical practice with psychotic patients in the clinic at La Borde, he discusses (Guattari, 1995) the production of an environment in which patients are constantly challenged to try something new and to be part of a new set of relations of subjectification, the creation of new assemblages. This means that two things happen—the patient is encouraged in doing something new to move out of a split off fantasy and into imagination—the possibility of creating something new, making a new link. It is in this sense that he says that his approach looks forward rather than backward to the cause of the problem but attempts to think through how the new might be fashioned. Thus, as Segal tells us, the move to imagination is absolutely central as is play to the possibility of moving forward in safety from the terror that the splitting protects from. Segal tells us that such imagination in both

forms of “day dream” and play (cf Winnicott) are central to the working out and expression of conflicts thus in learning and mastering reality. Segal argues that the artist uses this imagination to go further, that is, to face and find expression for the deepest conflicts and translate them into reality. In my view, this is why Guattari makes art and creativity so central to his politics and his clinical practice. The move to an incorporeal universe is the work of imagination in which one creates the possibility of movement to another place.

To understand how this works, we need to think about Guattari's use of the idea of part objects and transitional objects. Part objects in Klein are about the infant's using a part (the mother's breast) to stand for the mother, for example. This is developed as we saw above in later object relations work by thinking about the very early environment of infancy in which touch, sounds, smells, tastes, and so on can help to keep the infant from annihilating anxiety. Guattari argues that our engagement with existential territories takes place at the level of what Freud called primary process. This means those aspects of feeling, affect, unconscious processes which exist outside of or before language. So we could say that fantasy, sensation, perception, and so on usually associated with infancy are central. This is a territory as he puts it beyond black and white or good and bad. It is simply that which allows the subject to feel alive, with something to hold onto. Esther Bick (1968) puts it as the infant's frantic search for a containing object—a light, a voice, a smell, or other sensual object which can hold attention and therefore be experienced if even for a moment as holding the parts of the self together. This is where part objects come in—the nipple in the mouth is a part object, but it makes a connection which holds. I believe that this is the sense in which Guattari is thinking about our connection to territories.

We can relate this to the rhythms, traces, and so on, so that in our existence we are constantly connecting with things to which we cling, ways of doing things, the little gestures, the refrains, the embodied patterns, that make up our existence. Lacan (1977) also used this idea but called it “*objet petit a*” and linked it very much also to the mother and to structuralism (i.e., the role of the phallus as both an object in relation to the infant's desire for the mother and that which becomes the basis of signification). Guattari also wanted to get beyond this structuralism. He adapted Winnicott's notion of the transitional object in which an object (e.g., a comfort blanket) can help a child as it were to carry part of the mother with it and help it feel safe while playing without the mother having to be present. This play is creative; it is the link between the inside and the outside and is the central basis in Winnicott of the possibility of creativity and so change and newness. These objects can in fact be groups or other relations (Guattari mentions faces and landscapes) that make one feel safe and anchored while trying to change. This is I think what Guattari means in

terms of being able to move from the existential territories to the incorporeal universe. This is what makes the person feel safe as they move forward. We should not, in Guattari's terms, simply associate it with the mother, but with the process and possibility of change. He calls this process "fixing into being" and "only relates to expressive subjects who have broken out of their totalizing frame and have begun to work on their own account, overcoming referential sets and manifesting themselves as their own existential indices, lines of flight" (Guattari, 2000, p. 30).

However, as he notes, this is risky because too violent a deterritorialization could destroy the current holding together (assemblage is the word he uses) of subjectivity. The deterritorialization must be gentle in order to find a process "whereby assemblages can evolve in a more processual fashion." He says that an a-signifying rupture is at issue but that lack of expressive support can lead to the possibility of remaining passive, leading to anxiety, guilt, and psychopathological repetitions. In other words, people cannot change unless they feel held, otherwise the change is too frightening and it implodes and this creates the possibility of a catastrophic falling apart of the subject. But in a positive sense, the rupture can call forth incorporeal objects and so on that make their presence felt as if they had always been there. They are catalysts (existential catalytic segments) which then act as new existential refrains, rhythms, and so on that re-anchor subjectivity.

So even negative and destructive fantasies sometimes need expression in order to "re-anchor existential territories that are drifting away," as in the treatment of psychosis (Guattari, 2000, p. 38).

However, this move toward the possibilities of creation could, I think, be characterized as a kind of development, so long as we separate it from the reterritorialization within a fixed form of subjectification implied by a pre-ordained developmental pathway or a certain view of maturity.

These, said Guattari, are linked to a cycle of transformations whose consistency and dynamics make up an assemblage (individual, family, group, project, workshop, society). The aim is to appropriate existing models in order to construct our own cartographies, our own reference points and methodology for life and so the future. So, he says that groups, acting on their subjective territories, can put together experimental formations, cartographies, following the compass points of their own desires. He develops ideas from Sartre to think of how a "subjected group" moves to being a "subject group," capable of making their own choices. Later, Guattari came to see this as too restrictive and linear (and, I may add, neoliberalism has appropriated choice). So he was interested in the passage of transformational thresholds. Through understanding (or modeling as he calls it) chaotic processes and through pragmatic experimentation, groups would understand how to move themselves to moments of bifurcation.

We are in a situation and this is full of affect—we can be engulfed by this, by the sensations and so of anxiety. This is the schiz, the split, break, rupture, which is capable of destabilizing the ego and opening up a "chaotic void of subjectivity." This can either resolve itself into verbal expression or retreat into anxiety. The fourfold cartographies try to map the material situations, places, practices, and so on that can draw subjectivity out of its chaos, which unfold into social flows and projects that are themselves reshaped and shifted through time and other encounters. This is the temporal flow which leads to deterritorialization. In this sense, schizoanalytic cartographies map out the existential and the social grounds in which affect becomes thinkable, through its implementation in new contexts of expression, making new transformations potentially possible.

We have our dreams and fantasies of what could be, but they must be enacted in the world of what is possible both to imagine and then to create. The opposite would be to retreat into a psychotic world in which we are split off existing in a world which we cannot control and have therefore made a parallel world of our own. Alternatively, we would move from the anxiety into a cycle of repetitions, which would take us back to a version of the place that we started from, in order to make ourselves feel safe again.

### Using Guattari to Think About Class and Educational Transformation

I have attempted to map out a way of thinking about complex trajectories that include both the "real" (bodily sensations in place) and the virtual (acts of imagination). My reading of Guattari is that change and transformation are not possible without understanding the chaotic or chaotomic (i.e., indeterminate) process through which we might move from one place to another without collapsing into anxiety and thus getting stuck or remaining where we are or a version of that place (even if in a new geographical location). This is why Guattari, following Elkaim, constructs situations such as "cook for the day" mentioned earlier. The theatricality of this might make new connections possible and allow movement forward, but even then the de-territorialization might be too violent, too sudden, and push the person back into anxiety.

Thus, the question which we can address is how to support change in the face of anxiety, how do we allow someone to feel safe enough to harness their imagination to move into something new? These are questions that are hugely significant for all those working with transformation and change in whatever way. Thus, I argue that potentially Guattari not only provides us with a way of mapping that process, that schizoanalytic cartography, but also provides signposts for a method that allows us to stage the possibility of transformation in a process that can never be determinate, but through which cartographies of desire can be created.

If we return to the example I gave at the beginning of the article, that is Fiona's sense that she did not know who she wanted to be just for herself, but only a split between what was required in one place or another, we might think about this in terms of the achievement of subjectivity that Guattari talks of. What we understand is that Fiona does not feel safe in either location and cannot bring them together, because they are split off from each other. If she is the girl from the Glasgow estate, she cannot be the middle-class social worker and vice versa. Indeed, we could almost say that in both locations now she "passes." The negotiation of the affective experience of otherness is a central one therefore in thinking about a transformation that also feels safe. In which all that one has and is does not feel lost, but conversely one does not feel trapped. In the film in which Fiona participated, other women also talk of the difficulties of upward mobility through education. Christine describes wanting to be and then becoming an au pair and then eventually becoming a lecturer in media studies, but says she works part-time so as not to earn too much money that would take her away from her roots.

In research on a de-industrialized community in south Wales (Walkerdine & Jimenez, 2012), one young woman had the fantasy of becoming a police officer, like her father but with an added sense of the adventures of a female cop from television shows. Another young woman wanted to pursue a degree in graphic design, but felt unsafe traveling to another town and gave up the possibility of higher education for work in the town, in which she felt at home.

In the data from the Transition to Womanhood study (Walkerdine et al., 2002), a number of examples of working-class women's attempts at upward mobility through education bear scrutiny. For example, one young woman had the ambition to be a judge despite not having done well at school or knowing how to prepare for studying law. Clear reference is made to the television series "Judge Judy." Her family and her further education (FE) tutor knew about this ambition and supported her. Yet, at the same time, the young woman was having unprotected sex with her boyfriend and her mother was sanguine about the possibility that she might get pregnant, effectively putting paid to her ambition.

And finally, as explored in an earlier article (Walkerdine, 2011), Nicky from the above study first imagined the possibility of higher education through watching an American television drama about students and wanted that life for herself despite not doing well at school. Yet, she was spurred on to work hard to get to university and eventually pursued a research career.

It is the facilitation of that movement through acts of imagination that is key. I want therefore to draw attention to several points of imagination for Nicky, the young woman whose trajectory is mapped in Walkerdine (2011), which utilizes an analysis undertaken by Agnes Andenes<sup>2</sup>:

I suppose I just got the idea from all those American programmes you watch on telly about University life. I just wanted to know what it would be like and to give myself the chance of doing it. I've always wanted to go to the Uni. I don't know why. I have to do a bit better for myself.

The virtual territory in the TV-program enabled Nicky to open up to something new: "swept away by a becoming other, carried beyond her familiar existential Territories" (Guattari, 1995, p. 93). The fantasy of going to University was made even stronger by two possible territories to avoid: the Burger Bar and the Mental Home. To Nicky the Burger Bar represents a place to get stuck if you just let go and don't try:

'Cos a lot of people my own age in my family a bit younger, a bit older or, all they've done is, well a lot of them have dropped out of school early and gone and got themselves a job that's got absolutely no prospects to it, like working in a Burger bar or something. And I just did not want that for myself. I wouldn't see myself spending the rest of my life stuck in a Burger bar. I just knew I had to get out and do something a bit better.

The second territory to avoid is the Mental Home, underlining the personal importance and seriousness of continuing on the education track and keep staying in Seatown:

... so if I'd failed both my A levels and my GCSEs I probably would be in mental—mental home by now (laugh) no it's important to me that I get good marks and that I get—it was important to me, it always has been important to me that I got to university—that has always been my ultimate goal for as long as I can remember. So yeah, if I'd failed them it could have been bad.

Nicky finds her territory from the TV program and then tries to hang onto this to mark out her boundaries in an existential sense. Her dreams and fantasies of what could be are enacted through her ensuing dedication to the hard work necessary for her to get to university. She has not done well at school and so the effort needed to make this happen is considerable. The investment in this path is very strong.

We can begin to see, with these small examples, just how space, place, materiality and virtuality, fantasy, and imagination, come together to provide a potential trajectory for Nicky.

All of these examples taken from previous research projects present us with the central desire for something else, sometimes mobilized by media presentations of what is possible for women. Yet, moving toward these possibilities is not straightforward and it makes sense to think about the difficulties and ambivalences in the terms that Guattari sets out for us. That is, that in thinking about a forward trajectory, rather than an account of difficulties, we have to think about anxiety and safety, of how new situations and experiences might fire the imagination, but the tricky path that



means that this may all backfire into a return, a reterritorialization to a place not unlike that already left.

While a significant amount of research has focused on class transitions, it has tended, and I include my own work here, to focus on “hidden injuries” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972), the difficulties of hybridity and movement (e.g., Lucey, Melody, & Walkerdine, 2006), often using an approach that understands the effect of the past on the present, using psychoanalysis. Or it uses biographical methods to understand how biographies and transitions are shaped by structural factors and how a narrative of the self is reworked over time (e.g., Thomson, 2009). What is different about Guattari is that firstly, the affective is central and place is not separated from experience. In other words, what have been called structural factors are not understood as separate from biography or narrative, but both are presented as part of the production of an assemblage that contains elements that might have been considered as separate or as part of an inside and an outside in previous accounts. In addition, as I have discussed, much of the psychosocial work informed by psychoanalysis tends to look backward whereas a key feature of Guattari is to think about the creation of a forward trajectory. Thus, potentially, it offers a new and hopefully productive way to think about transitions and movement.

Because Guattari saw imaginative processes produced through dramatized and novel scenarios as crucial and because he understood that creativity works through the production of new assemblages, in educational terms, we might think of the central importance of understanding that the imaginative source material does not matter—I wanted to be an air hostess and could never have imagined being a professor! That novel scenarios are risky but might help produce movement and that assemblages are created together, stressing the central importance of social production.

In the present British context in which the arts are threatened in secondary school and higher education, the possibility of supporting children and young people to make such imaginative journeys is threatened. While there have been attempts to support creativity in education in the past, most notably in the 1960s in the wake of the Sputnik crisis, creativity was viewed then through a psychological lens that understood it as a possession of the individual (Simonton, 2000). Guattari’s vision is quite different.

This suggests that imagination is a key for educational practice. The young women discussed above often displayed an imagined aspiration that might have been frowned on by current government thinking and initiatives, which stress the importance of suitable and attainable aspirations. Thus the idea of becoming a judge, for example, may seem unrealistic, but Guattari stresses that it is the act of imagining something in the future which is central. Through the kinds of work that he is presenting, other imaginative possibilities may emerge that may seem more possible, finding a way through the dichotomy of a feasible aspiration and a

fantasized success and visibility, such as that presented by TV talent shows or celebrity culture.

Guattari’s account of transversality also allows us to recognize that works with others to create something together, using imagination, visions, and talents shared, is another important aspect of his practice. He worked a great deal with groups both clinically and politically. We might therefore think about how groupwork in education might be developed so that people with different kinds of precarious lives can begin to recognize each other and to recombine their efforts in order to produce a new vision, a new autonomy, creating something together.

## Conclusion

Guattari’s schizoanalytic cartographies provide fertile ground for the development and enrichment of practices that attempt to understand relation to place and space but also to think about the central importance of change and transformation possibilities, especially in relation to the various manifestations of othering. The careful attempt to understand what might traditionally have been described as subject and environment, inside and outside, present and future, as one continuous process understood through mapping, shows us the necessity to support change by both the creation of novel situations and challenges, but in so doing, to understand that the process is indeterminate, plays upon complex unconscious and affective processes, and demands the centrality of safety to allow for imagination and experiments to be handled safely. Thus, education can be a place of possibility, but without safety as discussed in this article, and change leaves subjectivity vulnerable, avoiding change and feeling stuck or changing but feeling split as we saw in relation to Fiona. Thus, it is imperative that any intervention pays very close attention to all the parameters mentioned by Guattari. The cartography can be a means of mapping possible transformations and of supporting them. It can act as an analytic method for understanding transformations but also for supporting them into an uncertain future.

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## Note

1. The sociologist Robert Castel and the psychiatrist Françoise Castel, the Italian psychiatrist Franco Battaglia, the physical chemist Ilya Prigogine and Isabel Stengers, who was then working with Prigogine in Belgium, as well as the psychiatrist

and family therapist Mony Elkaim, who at that time was working in New York.

2. Agnes Andenes (Oslo University) was part of a team at the Centre for Advanced Study, Oslo, Norway, who worked with the author on using the work of Deleuze and Guattari.

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