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KNOWING-IN-BEING A DE/COLONIAL-NEW MATERIALIST
COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY

*Creative-Relational **emergenc[il]es** of inquiring into Indian women's
materialities with/in Colonial-Patriarchal Intra-actions*

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2023

(Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Psychotherapy and Counselling)

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work contained within this thesis has been composed by me and is entirely my own work.

Some excerpts used in this thesis are transcripts of a voice over and an Artists memo of movements films produced as part of this research project and have been published online in the journal Liminalities (2021) and literary magazine TheAutoethnographer (2021).

Signed: Nandini Manjunath

ABSTRACT

In this thesis I invite you to join me on a journey into *knowing differently* as I explore the De/Colonial interruptions that emerge in *Knowing/Being/Doing* a Feminist New Materialist Collective Biography with/in a collective of Indian women. Holding the onto-epistemological assumptions of Baradian (2006) Agential Realism and using Davies and Gannon's (2012) methodology of Collective Biography, we begin this journey as an emergent collaborative inquiry into Indian women's bodies and our traumatic entanglements within patriarchy. But what are the ethics and tensions of doing such research and producing such knowledge about Indian women in a Global North academic context? I arrive at exploring these [un]ethical, De/Colonial tensions of the collective process and thinking diffractively with the 'data' gathered in our collaborative writing.

Baradian ideas around research as ethico-onto-epistemological Intra-actions within the world's becoming offers a home for tracing these disruptions and trans-paradigmatic emergences. However, rather than holding exclusionary onto-epistemological/theoretical positionings, I contend that it is embracing intra-disciplinary intra-paradigmatic incoherence, holding contradictory positionings in relationship, and letting ourselves shift and change within the process that allows us to materialise *different*, ethical worlds through research. Towards ethical readings/writings of the collective 'data' that offer more than the traumas of Global South women as written within Eurocentric representations, I think with Tuck and Yang (2014) to surrender *meaning-making* and embrace *Refusal as an analytic practice* in this thesis. At the core of this *Refusal* is Bhattacharya's (2021) conceptualisation of "De/Colonial" relationality that highlights my Coloniser/Colonised positioning within western academia. Within this context, I argue that the collective and I are instead uniquely placed to offer the shifts, disruptions, and entanglements of the process, that push us towards *becoming* differently, as a De/Colonial praxis that disrupts the Eurocentric, colonial research paradigms/practices we inevitably get entangled in.

Consequently, in closely tracking the process and exploring emergent theory through the lens of collective 'data', I offer the insights I/we arrive at as ethico-onto-epistemic *worldings* of De/Coloniality, produced in Intra-action with a multiply marginalised Global South collective. Ndege and Onyango's (2021) themes of Decolonising research methodologies become the

central thread here and act as a springboard to unpack and disrupt the methodological, conceptual, and paradigmatic notions of a New Materialist Collective Biography in the context of research with/about Indian women. We arrive from these disruptions to the ‘contributions’ of this thesis; a dynamic world of decentring, rhizomatic departures where we might not *know* the marginalised other but might learn to *know differently* in our *knowing-being-together* with the process of a minoritarian collective, and the diffractive resonances of a De/Colonial praxis that *refuses to end* within Social Science research and practice, research, and education in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Keywords - Decolonising Methodologies; New Materialisms; Barad; Collective Biography; Collaborative writing; Post Qualitative; De/Colonial; Refusals; Women of Colour; Indian Women; Intra-sectional; Intra-action; Decolonising Psychotherapy; Creative-Relational; Psychotherapy research; Therapeutic practice; Decolonising Psychotherapy research

Word Count - 54961

LAY SUMMARY

This thesis is about the process of a group of Indian women who, while exploring their experiences of their body in relation to patriarchal history of India, come into relationship with colonialism and how it impacts the practice of research. In particular, I trace the process of collaboratively working with this collective to explore ourselves and arriving at thinking about ethical dilemmas of doing this project in a setting rooted in colonial power structures. We use the methodology of Collective Biography, where we came together to discuss and collaboratively write about our experiences. The assumptions I make about the reality that I am inquiring into is one of relational interconnectedness - where the process of research, that which we study and the context that we do it in are all entangled and interconnected. In this stance research itself can be seen as part of the world's ongoing and continuous evolution and the knowledge we produce here is about how realities come into being through our interactions. I argue however that bringing improbable lenses and worldviews from different disciplines together allows me to imagine more ethical ways thinking in and doing research.

The ethical implications of sharing the 'data' we gathered as knowledge become significant here in the context of how Indian women are historically represented in the Western academic world. Towards producing different and more ethical knowledge, I employ a refusal to interpret the 'data' gathered through theories that are primarily based on the Western and Eurocentric contexts and offer instead our process of doing this research as a different way of thinking about the assumptions we have of the world, how and what we can know in research and what we can understand differently about the theories and practices we use; particularly in research with/about women from continually oppressed or misrepresented communities. Considering the importance of studying diverse human experience in the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy and the field's historical roots in the western, colonial contexts, I argue that the different ways of doing research and thinking about people's experiences are particularly important for thinking about how and what we can know about people and other communities, and how we can think differently within therapeutic relationships and in practice, education, and research. As a contribution of this thesis I finally offer a conceptualisation of our De/colonising work as a praxis that is applicable within different disciplines and as ongoing work that should ethically refuse to end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first and foremost give thanks to the collective of women who gave themselves so freely to this process and brought the sense of rich, relational kinship and rebellious dynamism into this project. The space we created together is one I will cherish forever.

I thank my principal supervisor, Seamus Prior, for his invaluable feedback, support, openness, and willingness to think-with and stay-with the chaotic departures that I took in this project, and for his capacity to stay with me creatively, generatively, and productively in the tensions, knots, and fraught moments that we inevitably got entangled in. I thank Dr Fiona Murray, my second supervisor, for her unwavering support, kindness, and the feedback and expansions she has offered in the multiple roles she has taken over the years, as a research supervisor, personal tutor and learning facilitator. I thank both my external and internal examiners for their willingness to step into my process and witness this emergent journey.

I thank my family in India for their love and care and for cheering me on and supporting me in every way they could, my journey here would have been impossible without them. I thank my partner, David Caulfield, for his love and support over the years and for being the stable ground I could rely on when I need it the most. I thank my peer Gael Bateman for being with me in every step and milestone of this programme and for the invaluable moments of dialogue, celebrating and crying together that held, cherished, and expanded my process. I thank Himadri Madan for her unconditional presence and support, her willingness to shoulder the heaviness and overwhelm with me and for holding the fort with everything I dropped in the other spaces. I thank Tim Vermeulen for offering me his time, his unwavering friendship and for being the best thesis buddy I could hope for from the initial days of chatting about research over coffee to sharing chapters, invaluable thoughts, and feedback. This project, this thesis and my journey would not have been the same without all their belief in me, my work, and in this project.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank the “The posts”, our thinking-reading-writing-group, for opening up my research world and for offering a relational home where I could grow and expand, the Theiya Arts Dance Collective for being a powerhouse of women who have always had my back and thank all my peers, tutors, students, other friends and family for enriching me in ways that are too significant to be captured in only a few short words.

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INTRODUCTION

DE/COLONIAL INTERRUPTIONS

- *Emergenc[i]es of Knowing/Being/Doing New Materialist Collective Biography as a Brown woman in Western Academia*

Dear Reader,

Perhaps you might wonder why I am writing to you in this way, or even who “I” am. I wonder the same. I wonder who “you” are even as I invite you to relationally enter into our collective process and my journey with this thesis. I wonder how “we” might meet in this, where “we” might clash and who “we” might *become* through these entanglements as Barad (2006) would say. I also hesitate to articulate us as the “we” here, there is something about this articulation of “me” and “you”, “us” and “them” and the “we” that creates particularly *different* Intra-actions; a dynamic force of relational co-implication (Barad 2006) like in the title above. But aren’t we already relationally bound in me entreating you into this process in this way? Aren’t you, as a familiar and yet a stranger, already relationally entangled with us in whatever brought you into this writing? There is a multiplicity of relationalities emerging between us here. Perhaps in this moment I talk to you as a benevolent other, a reader who joins me on a path into the unknown. There are parts of this work where you become a collaborator and part of a deeply enriching process. In other parts of the process you might be placed in the role of an “other”, who I resist and separate myself from. Perhaps sometimes I talk to you as though you are a voyeur whose gaze demands more than I can reveal. I also wonder how you might experience me and the collective of others I bring into this thesis. Contrary to this invitation, you might sometimes feel as though you are left at the doorstep, kept out on the margins of a

collective process. I wonder if you can allow yourself to experience yourself in this way, relate to us as a part of the collective yet sometimes on the outside, so that you might see differently as we do.

Are you already noticing what an unlikely introduction this is to a research project? I ask you to bear with me in the unexpected exploration that is this thesis and the way connections emerge non-linearly and unexpectedly to form new threads; much like the *rhizome* Deleuze and Guattari (1987) envision¹, spreading with no direction, no beginning or end. I know I give away very little right now, but I look forward to what we might *create relationally*, *Creative-Relationally* (echoing De Andrade, Stenhouse, and Wyatt (2020)), together yet apart in this moment, an intentional “beginning” where we come into a material relationship through these words. You might have also noticed that this is a thesis about methodological and paradigmatic concerns and you might wonder how we get *there* from *here*. Perhaps I should begin by telling you what this project set out to be, to be able to trace the threads of an unfolding, unfurling process to how we arrive here - an introduction to the thesis that is about De/Colonial interruptions (I draw from Bhattacharya (2021) here who uses the forward slash to denote a co-implicated inter-relationship between the Colonial/Decolonial processes) and a thesis about methodological, paradigmatic concerns of Collective-collaborative research with Indian Women.

I need to warn you that I am probably promising you more clarity than I can deliver. After all, I have always struggled to articulate what this project “is”, given its unfolding,

¹ See Footnote on Page 72 for ethical grappling about the use of Deleuzoguattarian ideas and their colonial historicity.

everchanging reality, and it might stand true that I fail to articulate some or much of what might be said. You will notice that in this project and within this thesis, I embrace a certain kind of productive narrative incoherence so that something new might surface. In this I cannot promise you how our journey will end or if you might find what you hope to see, because both this project and this thesis have arrived at a place where they take on a life of their own. I suppose I am getting a bit ahead of myself in speaking from hindsight. But, tangential as it might seem, this project was born as an exploration of Indian Women's embodiments in relation to the contexts of Patriarchy and Power (in its embryonic stages not yet gripped by the force of dynamic movement). In these initial stages, I came into relationship with research as a situated, perhaps naïve, Counselling and Psychotherapeutic practitioner/researcher, hoping to examine my subjective experiences towards producing coherent, rich and experience near-knowledge from the process. Underlying this was a hope for understanding and exploring (and perhaps reclaiming) my own corporeal entanglements within the oppressive cultural discourses of patriarchy and power in India and offering back this 'knowledge' to the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy.

As an interruption in its conceptualisation stages, further expansions of ontological, epistemological and paradigmatic grappling propelled me into the realm of Feminist New Materialisms (or New Materialisms as used interchangeably), particularly the work of Karen Barad (2006) amongst many others, and the methodology of Collective Biography as envisioned by Davies & Gannon (2012). New Materialisms and Baradian Agential Realism provided the paradigmatic lens that set in motion an expansion of my process beyond onto-epistemological positionings of a Relativist-Subjective lens to that of deeply entangled, co-implicated relational interconnectedness (or as Barad (2006) calls it "Intra-action"). Consequently, Collective Biography allowed me to have a framework where I could begin

envisioning this project expanding beyond my experiences to that of the *Collective-relational-entanglements*.

The initial chapters of this thesis, particularly the chapter “*Minor-acts*” and *Activism*, delve into the above expansions and emergences, to trace not only the process of conceptualisation but also the unexpected, rhizomatic entanglements that shape and form the world-making onto-epistemological/paradigmatic concerns of conceptualising a project. I make an argument in Chapter-I for being with the process and allowing for a certain sense of incoherence and not-knowing to stay in the process of conceptualisation, to be able to let ourselves as researchers escape that which would territorialise us into familiar ways of thinking about research. I use the “*Birthing*” as a dynamic concept, and draw from the *Creative-Relational* ideas around “*Desire*” as articulated by Wyatt (2018), to track an unlikely process of conceptualising, *re-turning*, and *re-knowing* from liminal moments of emergence that transcend linearity and immediate structuring. I recognise now, only with hindsight, that the seeds of what I will later understand as a De/Colonial praxis (building on Bhattacharya's (2021) work and detailed at the end of this introduction) interrupts me even in these stages of initial conceptualisation, through these moments of inexplicable disruptions of the “known”, that I conceptualise as *Minor-acts*, even if not overtly stated or present. Perhaps it is significant for me to highlight to you that closely following these tensions, shifts, and emergences in process has shaped this project and this thesis in myriad, unexpected ways and ‘the process’ itself has become the musculoskeletal foundation of this body-of-work.

It is through being with the process in this way that I arrive at what this project set out to be – A collaborative, New Materialist Collective Biography of Indian women’s materialities as produced by power and patriarchy. In its much more contained form (as opposed to where

we are now), the hope here was to explore how our entanglement within contexts of patriarchy and state/cultural power over feminine subjectivities shape and materialise our bodies. Within a New Materialist frame this included thinking also about *worldings* we produce in the doing of the project and what can we know from paying close attention to the processes of ‘Knowing’, ‘Doing’ and ‘Being’ (I understand *Worldings* here from Manning’s (2009) conceptualisation of “Ontogenetic worlding” and Haraway’s (2016, 12) writing of “Worlding” as an ontological, world-making process where the world/reality is materially amorphous, unfinished and always on the move). The project itself was designed to be collaborative in the sense that, a group of Indian women would come together to both conceptualise and “do” the Collective Biography. We had hoped to collate these explorations through a series of discussions and collaborative writing/documenting sessions. We envisioned beginning with our materiality and exploring and engaging with the themes/experiences around breasts, vagina, skin, hair, and blood. This thesis itself was to be a rendition of this collective work yet separate from the collective in that, its analysis and authorship would be done solely by me. Does this all sound relatively straight forward? You will see soon enough, in this introduction and in the further chapters, that while Davies & Gannon’s (2012) framework of Collective Biography offers us some flexibility here to conceptualise a methodology that evolves and morphs with the process, these tentative structures too are disrupted in the process and in our engagement.

In thinking about collaboration, it is perhaps here reader, that we begin to get a real sense of the tensions and interruptions that propel us towards something different. The tensions of “collaborating” and *creating* a project design *relationally* and the ethical tensions that emerge in the doing of such a project makes up the second chapter – *The Ethics of Collaboration*. A significant ethical exploration here is the expansion of the primarily Eurocentric onto-epistemological positionings, the methodological structures and the ethical

frameworks I was hoping to employ in an exploration of a marginalised community that is not only rooted within the patriarchal contexts of Indian culture, but also already entangled in a history of colonial oppression and consequently unidirectionally represented in Eurocentric discourse. I/we start to notice, perhaps only unconsciously, that these prescribed ways of thinking, knowing, being and doing (as expansive as they are), might not be fully conducive/ethical for working with a community that has its own ways of knowing, being and doing and its own locally situated pathways for such an exploration. We begin to embody here something of a practice and a praxis that is deeply ‘ours’. Mine and the group’s process here is dynamically interrupted by our very skin that creates a boundary we cannot help but engage with - the relationality of our *Brownness* as it exists in relation to the *Whiteness* of the spaces we engage in.

It is not just the brownness of the collective as a community that is the focus here. These tensions also bring the focus to our conflicting Insider/Outsider positionality as brown women from a colonised, Global South ethnic background and as [co]researchers in a Global North institution collaborating to research the experiences of a Global South collective. The ethical considerations that emerge to interrupt our conceptualised, if loosely structured, process here brings up questions of not only “how” we do such ethical and collaborative research but also “if” we can ethically do such a project and if so how do we *keep the problems alive* to disrupt the implicit entanglements of power (colonial, institutional or relational) that emerge in knowing, being and doing. My struggle here is to not get caught in the binaries and the exclusionary politics that make it as though there is a conflict that needs to be resolved so coherence can be achieved. Bhattacharya (2021) offers a way to understand and stay with this as an emergent De/Colonial praxis that can only be interrogated from within our situatedness. I reveal here something of how our practice and praxis of De/Coloniality is produced and how

it might produce us and this thesis in the *re-turns*. The holding of the interruptions and emergences this praxis brings alive, *creative-relationally*, with the paradigmatic positioning of New Materialisms and the methodology of Collective Biography, emerges here as the unexpected offering of this thesis.

Perhaps reader, you are wondering what exactly this project/thesis does then and why I am not focusing on Indian Women's bodies. I will reveal more about why the focus of this thesis is not Indian Women's bodies soon enough, but for now I want to draw your attention to how this "to do" forms the very basis of what we might think of as research. I have a slightly different proposition for you. Could we think of *what-else*² can this project do? And could this thesis *do differently* than the "*what-else*" of the project? I have to admit that I am taking you into conflicting, convoluted territories and I need to clarify that I draw from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) here to think of "*what-else*" as an ontological notion that sets in motion a continuous, dynamic process of *becoming-more*. As a dynamic practice that takes me/us into the unknowns we, as a collective, encounter this "*what-else*" in the process of being/doing our Collective Biography. Our process veers off, sometimes subtly and sometimes sharply, from the structures we had envisioned and the 'goals' and 'aims' that we or Davies and Gannon (2012) envision from the methodology. In hindsight, I notice how these shifts in the process takes us into embracing changes and employing more culturally situated, De/Colonial ways of knowing/being/doing.

² You might also see in the other chapters of this thesis that I mobilise the "*what-else*" as an emergent enactment/concept that acquires creative-relational dynamism in the process and diffracts, disrupts, and expands 'thought' into the unfamiliar.

In a parallel process, these changing paths also take me on departures to thinking-with³ “*what-else*” this thesis can *become*, rather than a regurgitation of what the collective produce of their materialities. While the collective process is that of grappling with being entangled within loops of representation and the non-linear, disjointed, and incoherent force of explorations that we seemed to get drawn into, my process as a researcher here is a struggle of making space for the incoherence and the struggles without forcing them into a particularly rigid onto-epistemological frameworks or structures. The Chapter-III, “*Knowing-in-Being*” a *Thesis*, tracks my process here as I too (and inevitably this thesis) am changed from being/doing with the collective. In this chapter, I explore the relationality of me as a researcher co-implicated and entangled in the collective process, but as both within and separate from the collective. I draw out the non-linear, incoherent moments of unravelling that implicitly shift us/me to being and becoming differently and more than we set out to do. The primary focus of this chapter however is to draw attention to flows of the process and disrupt the ideas we might have of onto-epistemologies, paradigmatic stances, ‘data’⁴ and “process” as something contained, collected and/or represented. I engage here with limitations that emerge for me in the process of embracing a particularly situated stance and how these exclusions too create further binaries and bounded worlds. I offer different mediums I use to think about and engage with the process and conceptualise how these different forms/timelines of engagement provide rhizomatic, disruptive and invaluable insights in allowing me to stay with the tensions and rigidity, and/or the difficulties of trying to transcend/escape it. We arrive at noticing the emergent moments where how I/we might engage with the process and ‘data’ is disrupted in the very process of engagement. I set out here the embryonic emergences of a framework for

³ I use “thinking-with” to hold Jackson and Mazzei’s (2013, 2022) conceptualisation of Thinking with Theory as an onto-epistemic encounter.

⁴ I use “‘data’” with single quotes throughout this thesis to hold a problematised notion of “data” as unbounded, unstable performative enactments.

‘data’ analysis, and this thesis, that is catalysed into *becoming* a reading of process and theory through the lens of collective ‘data’, rather than analysing the collective ‘data’ itself towards representations of the collective. It is also this chapter that begins to set out what *being/becoming-New Materialist* from within the localised De/Colonial praxis, and *Writing-as-worlding* a thesis looks like as it emerges in practice when we might not be fully aware it. I call such emergences *unknown-knowns*⁵ and hold the dynamism of such not-knowing close throughout this writing.

I know I talk about non-linearity, but it seems as though some of this writing is creating a world where our process can be seen as a linear progression. I reiterate that it not my intention here to claim linearity and I come into this writing from many spaces and many timelines, enriched by the hindsight of the world[ing]s we did produce and sitting with not-knowing of *what-else* we might materialise through this thesis and beyond. I however want to draw your attention to how this writing too has the potential to create particular world[ing]s. The Chapter-IV – *The “Writing” Story/ies* straddles this space of liminal non-linearity and explores the insights I/We can draw from the process of writing. When I say “writing” here I do not only mean that collaborative writing sessions that the collective engaged in but I also hold with it the process of *writing-as-worlding* this thesis, the different ways of knowin/being/doing beyond the written word, and inevitably also the moments of silences and refusals that remain unwritten. While on the surface this might seem like a chapter about ‘data’ gathering and analysis (and I am not denying that it is), this chapter is perhaps more about the disruptions and

⁵ My conceptualisation of “*unknown-known*” has its echoes in Bollas’ (2017) conceptualisation of “Unthought known”. While Bollas’ psychoanalytic conceptualisation offers a way to conceptualise unconscious material and their consequent representation in thought, I offer “*unknown-known*” as an ethico-onto-epistemological concept that produces something different from familiar ways of sense-making through remaining in the realm of “not yet known”.

interruptions that happen in the very process of collaborative writing and how paying attention to these charged moments of raging, witnessing, incoherent outpouring, silences, and refusals might allow us to materialise *different, productive, and ethical* worldings. I consider here also the tensions and the ethical issues that emerge in thinking about representation of marginalised communities and under-represented subjectivities. A significant emergence here is our problematising of *who this project is for* and *what we might ask of ourselves in the service of knowledge production*. Consequently, the primary questions that I explore here are “what does the writing do?” And “what does NOT-writing do?”. I arrive at Tuck and Yang's (2014) call to embrace “*Refusals as an analytic practice*”, to allow me to step away from reinstating the damages that colonial writing of marginalised communities can produce, and to make space for knowledge production that steers away from mining different cultures and communities for their experiences. I track both the *writing* and *[Non]writing* done by the group within different contexts, to make an argument for moving beyond representations of the collective to the ‘*what-else*’ we can know about research from the work of the collective.

We set out on this journey to explore our experience as Indian womanhood and particularly how the entanglements of power and patriarchy are materialised within our bodily being. *Our Collective Biography*, in its morphed, interrupted, and emergent form, did not go as we anticipated it to, but it did allow us to explore ourselves, albeit with a praxis that shifted the aim from the knowledge production that explicates our experiences to honouring the collective and its needs. The space of collective was not only a safe space to explore and engage with experiences of our materialities towards a transformative, therapeutic process but also allowed us to build relationships as a community that goes beyond this project. We end this journey in a space where I, problematise ‘using’ and ‘analysing’ this ‘data’ for dissemination in this thesis. I strongly argue however that, rather than claiming the project

could not do what it set out to, this opens up the space for unexpected, different knowledge to be produced. And this dear reader, is the crux of this thesis. In the initial 4 chapters of this thesis, I offer our emergent process to argue for a De/Colonial praxis to research that is *creative-relationally* iterative, ethical, and productive and invite you to engage with this as an *encounter* that expands the practice of New Materialisms and Collective Biographies towards more ethical, De/Colonial futures. You might now be wondering what exactly this De/Colonial praxis is. I cannot offer you much more than a reductionist summary at this stage as I conceptualise Decoloniality and the De/Colonial praxis as a force that *does* rather than a thing that *is* and this demands a detailed, in-process exploration. What I can however speak to is how I frame it in practice in this work, and Ndege and Onyango's themes of Decoloniality offers a framework that I use as a springboard to conceptualise our praxis of De/Coloniality as it emerges iteratively and relationally in our collective. In these particular chapters I reinstate, draw from and explore in practice the four themes identified by Ndege and Onyango (2021) towards unpacking the methodological, conceptual and paradigmatic tensions (of a New Materialist Collective Biography in this instance) as below –

- 1) **“Opening up space for free thinking” where we can challenge Eurocentric notions of research through local knowledge and experiences:** I understand this as being possible through process-based, emergent, and relational engagements that incorporate *different*, liminal ways of thinking about knowing/being/doing. In practice, we can see this kind of De/Colonial relationality coming alive in the practices we incorporate to honour the localised onto-epistemological and relational practices that emerge in the collective and in shifting of focus from foregrounding knowledge production to our commitment to the communities we engage with. I argue here that our practices and the knowledge we create from embodying these are inseparable from the different experiential contexts in which we were, and we

continue to be, produced. As Insider/Outsiders of these diverse contexts, we are uniquely placed to [re]think from the space of in-between of both Eurocentric and localised positionings.

2) **“Opening up spaces to critique positions of power and dominant culture” -**

Significant to this theme is the acknowledgement that I as a researcher take on the position of a *Colonised-Coloniser* just through my positionality within in the western academia and how critiquing myself here as the conduit of power of dominant cultures opens up a space of expansion/disruption. My refusal to reinstate unidirectional representation of Indian woman as victims of an oppressive third-world culture, or written “Under western eyes” as Mohanty (2003) argues, offers a space to incorporate this theme into our research practice and disrupt the representations that are created within these implicit entanglements of power. This refusal also includes the refusal of offering pain narratives and explorations of personal pain towards knowledge production and disrupts the epistemic privileges that furthers the colonial gaze of understanding and studying another’s pain to fortify and further “knowledge”. We, as a collective, come to a localised understanding here that our sharing of pain and trauma were for us as a group to hold and that we are not obligated to offer these up for further analysis. Instead what I offer in this thesis is localised knowledge produced about methodological, conceptual, and paradigmatic concerns as we can learn from the process of a historically marginalised/colonised collective and the *creative-relational* experience of knowing, being and doing New Materialist, Collective Biography. As a De/Colonial practice, I read/understand and put to work theory here through the

lens of the collaborative ‘data’ rather than sense-making/analysing the ‘data’ through theory.

- 3) **“Considering the relationship of the researcher with the ‘researchee’”** - While a foundation of collaborative, collective research already disrupts the unidirectional power dynamic between the researcher and the ‘researched’, collaboration within the De/Colonial praxis goes deeper into making space for Non-Eurocentric, relational ways of *being* to take precedence over familiar expected ideas around research relationships. Disruption of notions around dual relationships, ethical frameworks, ownership, knowledge, boundaries, and methods as it emerged in the doing of our Collective Biography shows this De/Colonial praxis in its emergent richness. Additionally, in this thesis, I think of the dissenting voices and improbable relationalities of authors, the collective, the readers etc. as an emergent understanding of transnational collaboration and as opening up further layers of what we might think of as relational engagement that disrupts notions around exclusionary, contained, unidirectional relationalities. Given this sense of emergent relationality, my engagement with theory, literature and theorists in this thesis too is traced as it emerges relationally/collaboratively in the process as opposed to a pre-situated literature review and disrupts the hierarchal ways of engaging with and thinking about theory/knowledge⁶.
- 4) **“Unpacking disciplinary tensions and conflicts”**: This theme comes alive in bringing together improbable onto-epistemological and paradigmatic positions of

⁶ See Footnote 18 in chapter The Ethics of Collaboration

New Materialisms and De/Colonial praxis together, to be able to produce collaborative, productive, transnational, and transdisciplinary worldings. We might see these manifesting in a multiplicity of questioning and debating that emerge through holding tensions and conflicts in relationship with each other (for example in problematising the ethical implications of particular onto-epistemological positionings or concepts). Within this thesis I hold together multiple, sometimes conflicting and sometimes reconciliatory, positionings and concepts to be able to make space for the emergences of process. Within my research practice, to be within paradigmatic and onto-epistemological incoherence in this way allows me to shift the binary us/them and exclusionary politics that inevitably emerge in taking rigid positions.

The chapters “*Breasts, Vagina, Skin, Hair and Blood*” and “*Feminist Hauntings*” are rhizomatic departures that act as potential examples of what different readings of the Collective Biography ‘data’ within such a praxis of De/Coloniality might look like. My intention here is not to create monoliths, but to open up the space for knowledge production to be unexpected, non-linear, and yet creative-relationally productive; a space where the possibilities might be endless in their intra-actions and the worldings that might be produced. Both these chapters, to a certain extent, ‘use’ the ‘data’ produced by the collective and the process of our engagement, albeit in a way I can hold on to the ethical integrity that the De/Colonial praxis demands of me. Instead of analysing the collective’s painful experiences, the stories of the women and our process within the project becomes a springboard that can offer us more than the unstable, binary worlds where we “know” who these women are and what their experiences are.

The *Breasts, Vagina, Skin, Hair, and Blood* for example, explores not only our relationship to our materiality, but also offers insights about the relationality and the materiality of the collective and how we arrive at being able to interrogate our relationship to our bodies and its entanglements. *Feminist Hauntings* explores our relationship to Feminisms, particularly within the contexts of what we can know about Trauma and how thinking from within the Indian context allows us to arrive at different insights and paths of explorations. The focus in both these chapters is not the narrative of what traumas and painful experiences are held within our bodies, or naming and seeking justice from those who we see as our abusers. The focus here is how we come together in solidarity, distress, and dynamism to *relationally create* a therapeutic yet productive space for ourselves to do this project in and how we *know differently* from within these spaces. The focus here is our process that takes us out of representation of ourselves as traumatised victims who can only offer their painful experiences as knowledge or weapons for social justice (even within our own representation of ourselves), to women from marginalised communities who can have a voice in producing localised knowledge that might inform onto-epistemological, conceptual, paradigmatic and methodological debates about research within such contexts. It is after all our situatedness as both insiders and outsiders that allowed us to embrace and practice what we would later know as a De/Colonial praxis and this further highlights the need for marginalised voices to take part in these onto-epistemological, paradigmatic, and methodological debates that span disciplines, paradigms, and contexts.

It is such De/Colonial relationalities and dynamism that I offer as “diffractive offerings” from this project reader. The final chapters of this work – *Re-turning, Re-framing, and Re-researching* and *Going-on-being*, explore these insights of *what-else* that emerge from this project. As an interlude, I offer my entanglements within the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy, particularly speaking into the emergencies of De/Colonial response-ability and

relationalities with/in Counselling and Psychotherapy contexts and the framing of this thesis within C&P research. In *Going-on-being*, I hold the insights/concepts that we can draw from the other chapters of this work, and my process of writing this thesis, to think of the co-constitutions and ethico-onto-epistemological worldings we might produce in allowing ourselves to follow the unexpected. I conceptualise the De/Colonial praxis here as a dynamic relationality that *interrupts, provokes, and produces through refusing to end* and, coming a full circle, offer provocations and interruptions into Creative-Relationality, New Materialisms and Collective Biography from the insights of our De/Colonial praxis. To shine light on how we cast our gaze into hopeful futures I also track here the process of the collective beyond that of my project to what we are engaged in now and how the relationalities we produce can go on to create further fissures and creative-relational departures. In concluding I entreat that we keep refusing sense-making, concretising and specificity so that the De/Colonial praxis can “go-on-being” and offer an invitation for the dynamism of De/Coloniality to be put to work, mobilised, and fostered in other spaces, frameworks, and contexts.

I won't deny that this is perhaps a long, conflicting, and unexpected journey I am asking you to go on with me. I resonate with St. Pierre (in Richardson and St. Pierre 2017, 821) here when she says that in her work she has developed a certain incompetence in being unable to “write a text that runs to meet the reader”, or text that can comfort through gratifying the interpretative entitlement to know. It is a loss that I perhaps have to bear in the worlding of this thesis in this particular way that I might not give you reader what you might look for or even what you long to know. For now, in closing this introduction, I want to leave you with Bhattacharya's (2007, 1107) words – “I realize that there will be multiple moments where you and I will/will not come together in the same spaces of epistemology and methodology. In those moments, we will always already be an Exotic Other to each other”. My intention here

is not to “other” you through these words but to reiterate that I cannot stop myself from entreating you once more, to pay attention to and stay with all these moments; the moments we meet and the moments we might clash, so that we might, even when we are tied together in the tensions of an improbable/clashing collaboration, produce something *different*, relational, and expansive together.

On behalf of the collective,

The Author

CHAPTER-I

“MINOR-ACTS” AND ACTIVISM**- A Creative-Relational ‘Birthing’ of the project**

I wish I could begin at a simple, concrete beginning. I *want* to begin by telling you about how this project came into *being*. The beginning of the journey so to speak, but unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), I have not been on a path that begins and ends at concrete points or the even kind of journey that follows a linear path and ends at a predestined conclusion. I wonder about the certain struggle I feel in articulating this non-linearity; after all, I can argue that I have lived through, been with and *become* from the conceptualisation of this project and I/we am [re]born from it as much as I/we have birthed this research process. But even as the above wondering makes it seem as though the articulation of conceptualisation is a matter of recounting something that is in a sense finished, I come to this writing not from a particular moment in time, a beginning, but from the entanglements of future, present and past. I trace my process here of beginning engagement with this project from its embryonic stages and set out how I arrive at the onto-epistemological, paradigmatic, and methodological underpinnings I had envisioned for this work. However, this writing draws from a multiplicity of timelines by *plugging-in* (as conceptualised by Jackson and Mazzei (2011)) the process and its emergences and is not written as a linear, chronological depiction of the process. I have to also remind you reader of what you know from my introduction - even the tentative conclusions I arrive at towards the end of this conceptualisation are not something we can depend on to stay unchanged. While it might seem like I am making conclusive arguments for a particular stance or a methodological framework, it is only so that I can stay with the *unstable knowings* and *not-knowing* of my process as it was during my grappling, without jumping to the destination.

Consequently, rather than the focus being where we land after the long tumultuous process of conceptualisation, my hope here is that we stay with the process of how such a project comes to be materialised (and continues to be materialised differently in each ongoing chapter), so that we can make space for the tentative knowings, incoherence, the not-knowing and the iterative *re-turning* that allows us to go beyond ourselves and that which feels familiar. Ultimately, my offering in this chapter is this sense of iterative, multiple, and ever-changing *knowing-in-being* within the process of conceptualisation that has allowed me to, in hindsight, arrive at *Minor-acts* of disruption that will evolve and expand into the more widely disruptive De/Colonial praxis in the later chapters of this work.

Perhaps leading with naming this chapter as being about ‘birthing’ also evokes the sense of linearity I am cautioning you against; an idea of conception, nurturing, growing and being born into a ‘going-on-being’ until death and beyond. My intention of invoking the idea of ‘birthing’ here is multi-fold, given the context of this thesis and its foray into materialising emergent methodological/paradigmatic insights, the not-yet and the new; I offer **“birthing”** here as a *Creative-Relational* concept. Here I relate not to the linearity and the constancy of birth and death, but to the materialising, affective resonances of ‘birthing’ as a Creative-Relational (Wyatt 2018) process where we can pay attention to the way this ‘concept’ gets rendered as material in practice. I think of **“birthing”** as that which initiates a catalytic ‘desire’, a pull into the relational in its conception, becoming-different in the ongoingness of the process and the ensuing changes, the growth, the sickness, swelling and intrusiveness, the labo[u]r, the contractions and expansions, the pushing, the relentlessness of pushing out to *create* new relationalities, the world and the multiple *timespacematterings*. I think of **“birthing”** as a foray into the uncharted, an ontological middle space, a transitional space that produces something new in diffractions (as Barad (2006) conceptualises) from the expected and the familiar.

Perhaps then I should start with *re-turning*, a turning over and over to produce anew as opposed to *returning* to a static point according to Barad, to a particular *mattering* of this desire (my stance here is that I cannot ever fully know/recount the precise *mattering* or the moment of desire but only what it creates in its intra-action within the present).

The Autoethnographic rendezvous – Re-turning to the cracks and the shifts of a catalytic conception

I began a similar writing years ago, an embryonic research conceptualisation, with the below excerpt.

I am ten years old; I am an Indian girl... I hear, see, and live the narratives of women having to keep their voices down, looking straitlaced and always do as the men in the family/society ask them to....

I am fifteen years old, on the cusp of womanhood, I know to keep my body covered, I know to be ashamed of any thoughts I have of being in or even thinking about being intimate with anyone, I cannot be curious...my being curious is not being virtuous and my virtue belongs first to my family and then to my future husband's family....

The men can see the shape of your legs they said... my body is to be hidden underneath multiple layers of baggy clothes.... I have to think first of what the men around me see, there is no room for any personal comfort, only the unrelenting sexualisation of my body...

“Breasts” ...

*“Hush don't talk about breasts, cover them up like they don't exist” ... “Menstruation” ...
“no its not be spoken of but it does make you unclean and untouchable”*

I am nineteen years old... we don't even talk about my body anymore... we do not talk about my Sexuality or anyone else's for that matter... but we do talk about warnings of how the sight of my body and my actions induces men to be sexual predators, absolving them of all guilt as they speak about my body like they are entitled to it and how it is my responsibility to be fearful of the impact of my feminine body, of my voice and of my choices

Memories, stories, they tumble out of me... I read Cixious and she calls to me. She calls to me to embrace the "dangerous" woman inside me, to write my body, write with my body and write through my body. But I always end up with anxiety and retreat to silence. Each time I try and talk into, write into, or think about my identity, the Indian feminine identity, I hit the wall. Silence is familiar, comfortable, and known - though I don't know if it is the silence, being silenced or silencing myself that feels familiar.

- *Provocation for a preliminary conceptualisation of this project*

Reverberating through my process, this Autoethnographic text has perhaps been more of a rhizome, a conception that does not grow into an embryo or a plant in the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 24) but takes me on multiple, consecutive, ongoing departures. In this encounter, my *desire* to make something known of the context of my body's materialising, to myself and the other, my *desire to embrace the dangerous woman inside, to write [with, through] my body* and to resist the silencing, acts as a dynamic, creative force that pulls me into a relationship with myself and the other[s]. To *re-turn* to this moment of dynamic creation, I will have to step back into a tangential, paradigmatically incoherent departure away from New Materialisms or De/Colonial frameworks but bear with me for a moment.

My foray into my research interest started with a desire to *know more* about the aliveness of discourses of power, patriarchy, and the lived experience of bodily and sexual oppression in my embodied and relational being. At the 'beginning of this journey' (arguably Lather and St. Pierre (2013) would claim that entanglements of 'this journey' were always in

becoming and therefore could not have a beginning), I hoped to explore, understand, and deconstruct the discursive roots of my experiences in the context of trans-generational and cultural transmission of bodily, patriarchal oppression in India and perhaps 'reclaim my gendered voice' through this exploration. I started by positioning myself and the project within the ontological and epistemological assumptions of Relativist ever-changing reality and a Feminist standpoint epistemology (see Sprague and Kobryniewicz (2006)), that dialectically bridges the feminine as the collective subject rooted in the lived experience and the socially constructed object rooted in discursive practical wisdom (Anderson 1995). In initial conceptualisations, to look at the context of my culturally rooted, gendered body and the way these discourses become embodied, the Feminist Post-structural paradigm, thinking with Foucauldian idea of power as permeating realities and creating discourses (Foucault 1982) and Butler's Outside-to-Inside model of performative identity (Butler 2011; Meehan 2017) created a lens through which I could grapple with and identify tentative methodological stances and ethical concerns and provided the avenue to align myself towards deconstruction.

In such a conceptualisation and in the above quoted excerpt, I begin by writing myself as a bounded autoethnographic subject and create static boundaries between the 'I' and the relational other - 'they'. I initially fall into the dualist traps of the cartesian separation between the mind/body, self/other and the material/discursive in wanting to 'know or reclaim a *bodily* self' that has been subjugated by the discursive and relational other. I desired to know something of what was happening and what had been happening to my body in relation to patriarchy and within the dynamics of power, of how my body was constituted 'as it was'. There was also maybe a need to capture and hold that which creates my bodily reality and there is a sense of ontological and epistemological rigidity in these needs. Perhaps there is also the beginnings of a methodological/paradigmatic incoherence and disruption here in that, in

looking towards a Feminist Post-structuralist stance, I enact a contradictory *desire* to question the tangibility of my experiences, my ability to fully know, my capacity to articulate and make myself fully known outside of the discursive entanglement. As seen in the excerpt below, these shifts and disruptions are further materialised in a movement film I created from the process at a later date (as a diffractive emergence) and make space for pathways to emerge from this disruptive materialisation and the fissures it creates.

I am now finally stepping into the contradictory tension between the individual and the collective; the self and the other; between feeling disempowered and powerful and of course the “auto” and the “ethno”. These tensions take me into complicating the “I” of the autoethnographic self, the assumption of self-knowledge in its endeavour of studying the existing cultural practices through narratives of the self and the impossibility of knowing, writing, and talking into the self in such a concrete way. I am ...even now... in and of this tension... too entangled in the experiences and interactions of then and now to be able to move past the chokehold into the actual voicing and the reclaiming. So, can I even seek to “reclaim” my voice and body in speaking into it? Could I reclaim “my” voice when the act of reclaiming itself threatens the ontological security of this reclamation and pushes me back into the chokehold? And what is created in these acts of reclamation and resistance or the inability to do so?

-Voice-over from movement film Reclamation_(Published: Manjunath 2021a)

I understand the above disruptive departures as entangled acts that at once are created by and create *Desire*; as Wyatt (2018, 42) would say *Desire* that is “the push and pull, the draw, the force of the creative-relational; the force that connects, the force that leans us towards (the) other, towards becoming-other, towards movement, towards change”. My process of a relational engagement with myself and the study in its co-constitution here allows for an opening up of the stuck places and chokeholds, it pushes the focus onto the processes in which these dynamic acts of agency that are produced from the materiality of my body, as it relates,

creates and produces differently through its very resistance to be known (or Agential Acts as Barad (2006) would call them), are entangled with/in that which is created by these acts; to thinking differently about my research and qualitative research itself. I ask myself here – How do I make sense of what my body is doing here in resisting? How do I make space for what my body *creates* as it reclaims, resists, or withholds? How do I conceptualise and *know* a body that dictates how I know it or How do I conceptualise a body-self that while unstable and perhaps unknowable *desires* to know itself and produces this project through that *desire*? The questions I ask of myself here are inherently destabilising, they push the boundaries of ontological and epistemological grappling to allow for multidirectional relationalities to emerge. There is movement here in disrupting the idea of conception itself, in making space for the very process of the conceiving and *re-turning* to propel me into the disrupting. Perhaps as Lather and St. Pierre (2013, 631) claim, in producing me and the study as being in and of a constant, dynamic flux, these grapplings render “humanist qualitative research as [I/we] know it unthinkable”.

The changing, stretching and the swelling - Becoming-Differently with/in Post-qualitative and New Materialist Frameworks

In the midst of the turmoil of the above contradictory explorations, I had my very first brush with the chaotic disarray of Post-qualitative research (Lather and St. Pierre 2013) in a reading group discussion on a wintry morning over steaming cups of coffee. We (a group of doctoral students with a faculty member who facilitated our reading expeditions) had earlier in the year embraced the revolution that was the Qualitative turn and experience-near practitioner research (Bondi and Fewell 2016) and traipsed unawares into *the mire* of post-ontologies and non-methodologies. The aim of the reading group itself was slightly divorced from my doctoral research in its engagement with wider learning and “purely for pleasure” academic context. As we gorged on Jackson and Mazzei's (2011) *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research*, I

remained blissfully blind to the onto-epistemological shift that was brewing in my approach to my project. Thinking with Foucault, Derrida, Spivak, Barad, Deleuze and Cixous about the discourses of marginality, power, agency, and the body and thinking-with Jackson and Mazzei (2011) about thinking *differently* with theory was invigorating and enchanting in its newness, aliveness, and critical disruptiveness.

Perhaps it was my allegiance to the ‘Posts’ in the Post-structural deconstruction that got me onto the bandwagon of Post-Qualitative research; to reach from the space of the “old new” towards the “new new” (Lather and St. Pierre 2013) and the space I can (un)fondly think of as that of anarchy and of ambiguous disruption of structure and linearity. Identifying myself with a disruptive stance was perhaps the first and easier step before I actually got down into the mire. *The mire* – its full of unknowns and incoherence, its full of paradoxical, seemingly unmarriageable positions and it gets stretched to limit in my grappling with the tensions of moving from a qualitative framework of ‘*knowing*’ and ‘*designing*’ to the Post-qualitative framework of ‘*being*’ and ‘*becoming*’. However reader, I need to acknowledge that at this juncture, given the contexts I was being produced in as a researcher, I had remained (perhaps blissfully) ignorant of the significance of De/Colonial and Postcolonial frameworks to this project. With hindsight, I can see that these “new” emergences of research as ‘*being*’ and ‘*becoming*’ also speak into what emerges later as a De/Colonial praxis in paying homage to different, non-Eurocentric ways of thinking about research that might feel more familiar within other/non-western cultural contexts (Rosiek, Snyder, and Pratt 2020; Bhattacharya 2021) and was perhaps speaking to the colonial entanglements of research that I had not consciously become aware of.

I step back into the idea of *Desire* here that propelled me into a certain disruptive space, even if only unconsciously. When Lather and St. Pierre (2013, 631), speaking about what they

term Post-qualitative research, ask “whether we have become so attached to our invention – qualitative research – that we have come to think it is real. Have we forgotten that we made it up? Could we just leave it behind and do/live something else?”, I feel a familiar pull, a movement towards change, a surge towards *what-else* or *becoming-more*. There is an affective reminiscence here of the body changing, growing, and becoming leaky in its swelling to make space for new life. My desire to disrupt the representational, dualistic bindings, to become-post the qualitative paradigmatic frameworks that leave me stuck and unable move outside of impermeable boundaries, is an emergence that is created in and creates the relational. Much like the skin that becomes malleable, even stretching and pulling itself apart in seams and stripes to grow and change for something bigger than it can hold and my body produces this conceptualisation even in its resisting and withholding, this *becoming-differently* allows me to move away from bounded, unidirectional spaces of subjective, objective, material or discursive “I” to more relational, multiple, and unstable positionings. At this stage, it *stretches me* to step into a space of *emerging* through and being in relation to the wider entanglements of the female body, the “Indian Female body”, and leaves material ramifications of new, expansive departures that shape, contour and disrupt existing *matterings*.

Within the space of this expansive newness, a particularly productive emergence was my relationship with Barad and their contributions (2006; 2014) to the field we know as New Materialisms (see Truman (2020) for a brief genealogy). Within Barad’s Ethico-onto-epistemology of Agential Realism, my onto-epistemological position expands from a bounded, relativist subject-dependant stance to that of the relational and the intra-active. Like in my grappling with tensions created by *What my body does?* in the above section, thinking with Barad allows me to make space for how this very conceptualisation is being produced from the reclamations, resistance, and withholdings of my body as I try to know it and it is here that I

begin to move away from Feminist Post-Structuralism to the Feminist New-Materialist Paradigm⁷.

Taking a Baradian stance and thinking-with their concept of “Intra-action”, a co-implicated dynamism of entangled forces beyond the ideas of pre-existing entities interacting with one another, I go beyond myself in holding subjectivities as always intra-actively produced and entangled with the other (Barad 2006, 815). *This relational* onto-epistemology also disrupts the boundedness of imperialist, individual subjectivities (Murriss and Bozalek 2019) in a way that feels resonant with the inevitable entanglements of the collectivist society of India and the ongoing and mutually constituted *collectiveness* of the “Indian Female body[ies]”. Essentially, ‘I’ become co-implicated with/in the process of the research and the other and become unbound through *becoming* within these relational bindings. The inseparability of the ideas of knowing and being, the individual-collective, the material-discursive and the nature-culture (Barad 2006) are brought into a sharp focus here in holding that “entities [and processes] do not ontologically pre-exist relationships, but rather that entities *come into being* through human and more than human relationships” (Murriss and Bozalek 2019, 874). I feel the affective resonances of such a co-implication in the pregnant possibilities it creates. My process here swells with dynamic potential that is at points painful and, like I would in checking the stretched folds of the skin for swelling and bruising, leaves material indentations (however ephemeral) in relating to the process in return.

I explore more about the folding together of ontological and epistemological understandings into an “Onto-epistemology” and what this looks like in practice in the chapter

⁷ See Footnote 8

“*Knowing-in-being*” a Thesis, but my claim here is that the conceptualisation, the ‘birthing’ of this project is an ongoing ‘being/becoming’; it does not happen prior to the study or in preparation for it but is co-constituted and produced in the doing of it, in my/our relational engagement with the study in its process and in this writing of it and beyond. In this sense, I am perhaps not *using* or positioning myself (as a bounded individual subject) within the Post-Qualitative and New Materialist stances. I do not come into a relationship with these paradigmatic frameworks and disruptions as a separate *other* who *knows* beforehand of the worldview I embody. Instead, this is a relationship of permeable boundaries, enmeshment, and the transitional middle space of a dynamic, leaky process. I *become* Post-qualitative and New Materialist in the process of reading about, knowing through and doing, just as I/we *become* De/Colonial iteratively in the knowing, being, doing and writing later on⁸. The relational space is made dynamic in at once being, *thinking-with* (Jackson and Mazzei 2021) and ‘becoming’ through the very thing I wish to study and that which is yet to emerge from it. In the same way I am changed, constituted as a particular kind of researcher - a Post-qualitative, New Materialist researcher, the research, the posts, and the New Materialisms are changed and reconceived; through what I/we can know in the being, and that which is produced through this intra-active relating. I argue here that it is this *Desire* for disruptiveness, as an iterative, dynamic process of *co-constitution*, that allows us to make space for later emergences of the De/Colonial praxis as a powerfully disruptive force that can take us into the *what-else*⁹.

⁸ I argue here that my shift away from Post-structuralism to New Materialisms was produced relationally in the emergences of the process and my grappling with *What my body does* as I tried to know it. Reader I am not claiming here that the Post-Structuralist paradigm would not provide productive pathways for unpacking these questions. However, my engagement with New-Materialisms here, in offering a conceptualisation of material-discursive relationalities where there is no ontological prior, offers me a springboard to hold the ongoingness of my process in how my body and my engagement with it creates this process and this conceptualisation as I try to produce a project that explores my materiality.

⁹ See Footnote 19

From “I” to “I/We” – Towards the contractions and expansions of a creative, methodological de-centring of the ‘Self’

Perhaps by now, you the reader have a sense of the catalytic chaos and anarchy that reigns for me in engaging within this premise, but I am yet to share with you my process of how I arrived at Collective Biography as a methodological framework. I have been talking about my process of going beyond the subjective ‘I’ for a while now and the pregnant possibilities that emerge from this going beyond. It is time to delve a little deeper into the emergences of such a disruptive conceptualisation and the material consequences of methodological expansions in practice. The “I” in the *mire* of post-qualitative thinking is a site “of dislocation, of internal disorientation, of fragmenting and scattering, of contradiction and instability” (de Freitas and Paton 2009, 484) and highlight’s Gannon’s (2006) call for decentring of the “I” as the knowing subject towards a disruptive stance where self-knowledge can only ever tentative, contingent and situated. This ‘decentring’ has further ethical implications within a De/Colonial frame that I explore in detail in the next chapter. For now I draw your attention to the affective resonances of this straying away from ‘knowing’. I have to confess, I am no stranger to this affective sense of dislocation, disorientation, and fragmentation, or even contradictions and unstable incoherence. I might be writing about this process as a vibrant emergence, an expansive transformative force in itself, but perhaps I have failed to pay attention here to the gnarly moments where I contract, retreat into myself, the unbearable newness growing within me kicking at my insides, resisting against the transitional confines of who I am *becoming*. In these moments, it is perhaps that the cultural trauma that I seek to unpack requires me to hold still, to not disturb or shift the still air around the fortress of cobwebs that have been built around the fragmented, dislocated, contradictory “I”. As Tamas (2009) reiterates, the trauma here renders me and my experiences not only potentially unknowable but also inaccessible. Like in the excerpt below, there is an affective

sense of aloneness here, an emptiness of relational space that shuts down the dynamism and movement.

Each time I try and talk into, write into, or think about myself, the Indian feminine identity. I hit the wall. Silence is familiar, comfortable, and known - though I don't know if it is the silence, being silenced or silencing myself that feels familiar. These narratives, they pull at me, demanding attention. But the attention implies exposure and makes me shy away from thought of being seen, or seeing, bodily or otherwise and the shame elicited in that exposure. I want to be seen and don't want to be seen, I want to see but don't want to see, I want to be heard but don't want to be witnessed. Underneath it all lies the voices of shame, always ready to pounce. Do you see my struggle in thinking about reclamation and voicing now? This is the toxic relationship I spoke of. It starts with a questioning of the validity of my experiences, inevitably leading to either their dismissal or hiding, like the leaves of the mimosa plant that shutdown the minute they are touched... essentially, I gaslight myself... What then is the value of speaking into my experiences? What is the value of voicing? Or writing? It's a stalemate, more of a chokehold in fact. A fragmentation that sets in the minute I start to speak into the experience itself. Of course, I can hide behind theoretical understandings. But I can't feel into my body without touching the shame, so I hide. Oh the hiding is easy, I hide like I was born to do it. Wait, was I? I am not sure if I was born to hide, but I sure was taught to hide. Hide myself, hide my body, hide my power - all this or hide my femininity. It's an either/or spiralling upwards out of the body, way of being I am so familiar with.

- Voice-over from movement film Reclamation (Published: Manjunath 2021a)

I ask a lot out of myself here. In hoping to research my experience, in *being* with myself, I enter a place of intense affect. I risk stepping back into the trauma, into shame and into exposure and risk. I wonder about the ethics of this *responsibility, desire*, and the obligation to expose myself and with hindsight I can tell you that this ethical grappling about obligation and exposure become the cornerstone of De/Coloniality in practice. However in my process of conceptualisation here, I search for safety in what emerges to be an expansive but potentially risky process. I ask myself – what would allow me to experience myself in this? How can I write a fragmented, Intra-active “I” and yet stay with the tensions and expansiveness that is

being evoked in me through the emergences of this project? How do I find a relational home that allows for some safety, somewhere I can explore even these risks, responsibilities, and obligations?

Perhaps my sense of contraction and aloneness emerges from the cuts I enact in envisioning a study that looks to open up and seek the traumatic entanglements of myself as an individual bound in the collectiveness of a collectivist society, but from a place of *relational*, material isolation from the collective. I do not just mean here the 5000 odd miles that separates me from the boundaried land of India. The longing here is for relational others of the collective who I can engage in an interconnected relational process with; arguably much in the way generations of Indian woman have gathered in solidarity and sisterhood. What I was asking of myself in the above excerpt was to essentially step out of localised, situated and culturally entangled ways of being that I bring to this project, to become an individual who can somehow embrace the onto-epistemological currents of the contexts that I learnt about research in. In envisioning a stance that goes beyond the individualised “I”, I cannot help but long for a research practice that can foreground relational interconnectedness and collective *knowing-in-being* and embrace the context of the collectivist society of India as a paradigmatic space.

In practice, these wonderings highlight for me the inseparability of my dynamic, ever-changing entanglements with not only the research practices of ‘being’ and ‘knowing’ but also the inseparability of myself as a leaky subject from wider entanglements of the collective world in its ongoing becoming; of the Indian collective, the collective of women, the collective of researchers, theorists, the human, the non-human and so it goes on. It would then become necessary for me to conceive of a project where the tensions and entanglements between the “I” and the “We” can reside together relationally and be made productive in being put to work

in practice. Thinking within this frame of decentring and Baradian intra-active entanglement then, the relationship between the individual and collective is in itself co-implicated, in a sense the singular of the subjective identity is always tied up with a simultaneous “being-with” or the “singular-plural” (Nancy 2000) of the collective Identity. Nancy (2000) thinks of this “being-with” as a de-centring apparatus wherein the “I” is not prior to the “we” and the “singular-plural” becomes a mutually constituted co-implicated entanglement; where neither individual subjectivities nor collective identities have primacy but are equally made productive in the *becoming* of the study and co-constitution itself. Here it seemed to me that, particularly in relation to Indian women’s bodies and the context of this study, such a decentred collective approach would allow for thinking about the ways in which bodies individually and collectively continue to become materialised within contexts of patriarchy and power while also iteratively producing these entanglements themselves. In this, such a stance goes beyond dualisms of individual or collective and dualisms of mind and body or; it seeks and allows not a capturing or holding still but in a creative-relational departure, expanding towards “doing justice to the fluidity of *process*” (Wyatt 2019, 1). It allows me to ask the questions of what a study that works into co-constituted spaces might look like in its emergence? And how could I make space for the emergence of a research design where all these tensions and becomings can be held in their iterative, chaotic co-constitutions?

Expanding from “I” to “We” into thinking about this co-constitution and encountering St. Pierre (2021) allowed me step into the space of thinking of methodologies. In thinking-with Barad and St. Pierre, research based in the onto-epistemology of Agential Realism and its foundation of intra-action implies a co-constituted reality (Barad 2006) that is always in the process of its becoming and aligns with the “not yet” premise of Post-qualitative and Posthumanist stances that St Pierre (2019) calls for. In her call for the “new new”, St. Pierre

(2021) essentially ‘gives permission’ to think flexibly and *relationally* with Post-qualitative onto-epistemologies to arrive at the newness of a methodology that is created for/in/by an enquiry. The extensive works of Davies and Gannon (2006; 2012) in the realm of Collective biographies, which they identify not as a methodology but as a set of emergent possibilities based in collaborative writing and memory work, captures me here in the focus on flexibility and relational emergence. Being firmly aligned towards disrupting even its own roots of Feminist (Gannon and Gonick 2019), Post-structural and Post-qualitative premises (Davies and Gannon 2012), Collective biography makes space for the “yet to come” in its focus on collaborative work that is aligned towards studying the co-constitution of subjectivities and bringing participants into diffractive relation with one another, human or nonhuman (Davies et al. 2013).

Stepping back into thinking-with St. Pierre (2021), the premise of Collective Biography, in its initial conceptualisations (Davies and Gannon 2006), set out to disrupt the “I”-ness of the Autoethnographic writing (Gannon 2006; Gannon et al. 2014) in shifting the focus from the self/narrator to unpacking “knowledge about the ways in which individuals are made social and are discursively constituted in particular fleshy moments” (Davies and Gannon 2006, 4). But bear in mind that, like everything of the mire, Davies and Gannon too disrupt themselves in their ongoing engagement with Collective Biography as an emergent, evolving methodology (See Davies and Gannon, “Collective Biography and the Entangled Enlivening of Being”, 2012). While a collective and collaborative premise to autoethnographic research might step into the space of “broadening [of] the gaze from the lonely traumas of the self to the shared experiences [that might] reveal systematic oppression and cultural scripts” (Lapadat 2017, 599), with Davies and Gannon (2012), I diverge from this aim of ‘revealing’. A Baradian perspective to Collective Biography then would not be interested in the autobiographic lives

and what we can reveal about them (though arguably a multiplicity of paradoxical *knowings* might be revealed) but in individually and collectively putting “individualised, liberal humanist subject under erasure” and “deconstructing the concept of a subject whose stories might reveal a life” (Davies and Gannon 2012, 357). This is a stance that embraces dynamic movement and the flux. Collective Biography as conceptualised here does not look to capture a truth or write of pre-existing individuals or collective discourses; it pays attention to intensities that move us and it seeks to “document the way life continually evolves through the flows and intensities of encounters, encounters that “disrupt, dislodge, disconfirm our usual modes of being, our habitual sense of the way things are or ought to be, including our sense of ourselves”” (Clarke/Keefe 2010, xiii as cited in Davies and Gannon 2012, 359). While a stance as expansive as this might seem incoherent with the idea of ‘memory work’ that Collective Biography calls for, I have to clarify here that, over the years, Davies and Gannon’s (2012) idea of ‘memory work’ has transformed to a more diffractive apparatus; here memory is not a “record of a fixed past that can ever be fully or simply erased, written over, or recovered” (2012, 372) or analysed as reflexive work. A diffractive approach to ‘memory work’ then would be “not remembering and representing a self as it really was in some fixed state, but the mo(ve)ments encapsulated in particular memorable moments of being. These mo(ve)ments can be the repetitive citations through which an apparently fixed pattern is achieved and/or the line of flight¹⁰—the moment when everything changed” (Davies and Gannon 2012, 371). It is in this allegiance towards diffraction, movement, and change that Collective Biography meets the essence of Creative-Relational Inquiry (Wyatt 2018). I embrace Collective Biography here as a *creative-relational*

¹⁰ Drawing from Davies and Gannon’s conceptualisation “Line of Flight” here, I use Line of Flight in this thesis as ethico-onto-epistemological engagements and Creative-Relational departures where *different* relationalities emerge.

premise that opens up possibilities of a dynamic, collaborative space to explore the entangled, collective relationalities in our explorations of our bodies.

At this stage, I was wondering what the methodology of Collective Biography within a creative-relational departure would look like in practice. Davies and Gannon (2012) make space for ample flexibility in their methodological ideas, they do not presume a particular, pre-emptive way Collective Biographies *need to be done*. Instead, what they offer is a set of possibilities, explored through what they have come to *know in being and becoming* with their process. I sit here with the poignancy of them saying that in Collective Biographies “we become each other’s stories” (Davies and Gannon 2012, 369). Perhaps much like the way I *become* from the stories they share of their process, the resonances of this and other iterative becomings echoes throughout this thesis, holding within them also the struggles of embracing such diffractive approaches. How could I then tell you what Collective Biography as a methodology looks like in this project without stepping into the relational encounters of the doing and the interruptions, struggles, shifts and expansions that took us into disrupting and *becoming-more* than mine and Davies and Gannon’s (2012) conceptualisation here? I suppose I have this whole thesis for that and there are multiple stories to tell here of resonances and disruptions. Like with the other stories of these encounters, stories that “highlight, exhibit, and make evident the entangled structure of the changing and contingent ontology of the world, including the ontology of knowing” (Barad 2006, 73), what I am hoping for here is putting the methodology to work (Wyatt 2019); to produce through the writing of thesis a methodology that is *our Collective Biography*, a uniquely disruptive De/Colonial, New Materialist Collective Biography, as produced in our iterative becomings in the project.

‘Minor’ acts and Activism - *The Labo[u]r of research*

I have been speaking of the process of *“birthing”* this project, perhaps there is a bit of space here to think about what we can know, in hindsight, from thinking of the process, the moments of incoherence, and not-knowing as unexpected, rhizomatic entanglements that shape and form the world-making onto-epistemological/paradigmatic concerns of conceptualising a project – what I frame here as *“the Labo[u]r of research”*. My intention of laying out the process of conceptualisation has been to draw your attention to the potentiality of different worlds that can be created in the process of conceptualising, in *being-with*¹¹ the process and allowing for pathways to emerge differently; for “research-creation” (Manning 2016) too to become something we research. It is perhaps fitting then to think of this *‘being-with* the process’ as both *Labour* and *Labor* (I use different spellings to denote the Noun and Verb forms of Labor/Labour), to highlight the work that might be required of us and the difficulties of stretching and pulling, the contractions and expansions of working in this way without *knowing* where we might end up and what worlds we might create (while also holding the loss of worlds we could/did not produce). In hindsight, I too carry this loss in where we have arrived with this thesis. Perhaps my unlikely hope here, at this stage of conceptualisation and without the benefit of hindsight, was to produce a world where we, a collective of Indian women, could explore ourselves and voice our experiences to create some form of social change through allowing the reader to witness us; essentially for this project to become an act of activism. Reader, you already know that this does not come to pass in this particular way. You might be wondering what is this something ‘new’ that I am envisioning here as the act of activism. Afterall multiple

¹¹ I draw from Nancy’s (2020) ideas around *being-with* as an individual-collective co-constitution to enliven and use *being-with* here as a concept that attends to the relational encounters and goes beyond unidirectionality to paying attention to the mutual co-constitution.

Post-qualitative, Posthuman and Postcolonial scholars have been calling for “being with the process” towards escaping the binds of structure that we seem to have imposed upon ourselves in research creation and practice. It is here that I arrive at thinking of the multitude of “*Minor-acts*” that becomes my/our acts of agential activism within this work.

Manning (2016, 11), in her book “The Minor Gesture”, asks a question that opens up the space for ‘new’ in thinking of reframing how knowledge is produced and practiced – “how does [one] practice that involves making open the way for a different idea of what can be termed knowledge?”. For Manning (2016), a minor gesture is a force that disrupts the normative and structural that is organized around what is predefined/familiar. Much like Spivak (1993), who highlights that deconstruction of the structural can only happen from a positionality that is at once both inside and outside the margins of a structure, Bhattacharya (2021) who speaks of De/Coloniality that emerges from her Insider/Outsider positionings, and Fiona Murray (2020) who speaks of emergences/emergencies of process, Manning (2016) too offers ‘The Minor gesture’ (the unnoticed, unknown, the implicit shifts, interruptions and disruptions of process) as a dynamic force that creates fissures and opens up new tendencies in *being-with* the majoritarian tendencies in a way that can turn in on itself and make its limits felt. I embrace Manning (2016) in her call to notice these disruptions, to straddle the lines between the ‘Minor’ and the ‘Major’, so that we might make the lines between tremble and give a little, not in a staggering sense but in a more implicit kind of activism.

Through being with the process in this chapter, I have argued for paying attention to disruptions that emerge as paradigmatic and/or narrative incoherencies and become agential acts towards the unknown and unexpected. Could we think of such disruptions and implicit acts of activism as *Minor-acts*? I offer now that it is these *Minor-acts* that allow me to embrace

my situatedness as both an insider and outsider in the Eurocentric onto-epistemological, paradigmatic, and methodological frameworks I am produced from and I employ in this project. In this I *become* minoritarian in the multiplicity of disruptive, creative acts/enactments that emerge within the process, as dynamic *Minor-acts of De/Coloniality*, to later shape themselves into what I can argue for as a De/Colonial praxis with/in New Materialisms and Collective Biography. I go a step further than Bhattacharya (2021) here to say that De/Coloniality here becomes *intra*-relational; my/our relationship to coloniality in research practice does not pre-exist our acts of Decoloniality but emerge relationally, co-implicated in *mo[ve]ments* of unstable knowing and disruption (drawing from Davies and Gannon's (2012) articulation of "Mo(ve)ments" I use *mo[ve]ments* as dynamic De/Colonial moments that relationally create unexpected *movements*). *Minor-acts* here then becomes a dynamic enactment that also embraces a sense of intentionality and is agential in producing us as disruptive and *becoming-minoritarian* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

While perhaps not explicit in this chapter, there are a multiplicity of *Minor-acts* that disrupt for me, and I hope for you, the familiar and expected ways I could engage with research. For example, you know from my introduction that I go on to disrupt and problematize the very arguments I make in this chapter about knowledge production, about exploring our materialities and about what this project seeks to *do*. Collective Biography as a methodology that I argue for is too disrupted in how we as a collective shape and engage with it; we arrive at the end of this project in not offering the 'data' we write about our bodies as material for analysis or as knowledge. Instead it is these *Minor-acts* that become knowledge in the hope that our acts of activism can be that which dismantles even what this project set out to be and *become-with* (I am not claiming here that this is 'better' knowledge than knowledge about Indian Women's bodies, only different and Decolonial). The conceptualisation I arrive at here is laid open for

the disruptions to take root, and indeed it does in putting us and the frameworks we employ to work its limits. My beginning with the *desire* to research myself, my expanding and shifting to thinking about my interconnectedness and entanglement within a collective, the creative-relationalities I build here with Barad, New Materialisms, Collective Biography, with myself and the envisioned others of the collective are also already *Minor-acts* that break open from within and will continue to both disrupt and be disrupted in further chapters to *become* the De/Colonial praxis that emerges from a minoritarian-collective engagement. It is perhaps as Manning (2016, 13) warns that “what emerges from study will never be an answer... What emerges will be another mode of encounter, another problem, another opening onto the political as site as yet undefined”. And perhaps the biggest disruptions of them all will be that I disrupt myself and you in where we emerge from here, hopefully always into a space of unexpected newness and unlikely collaborations. It is in this vein that I invite you into my next chapter, *The Ethics of Collaboration*, where I explore further *Minor-acts* of how we can iteratively stay with the trouble of collaboration and ethics to produce further ethical worldings.

CHAPTER-II

THE ETHICS OF COLLABORATION**- *Diffractive disruptions, emergenc[ies], and 'keeping the problems alive'***

There is something alive in *becoming* from the troubles and *keeping the problems alive*. Reader, I pick up the threads of conceptualisation from the last chapter here and I begin this chapter hoping to answer the questions on how I 'do' collaboration and ethics in this project. What have I learnt from the collective engagement? How did we do our collaboration and the Collective Biography? However, I resist writing a straightforward response here that answers the questions of what the ethical considerations of this project are. I find myself unable to step out of the messiness of ethical engagement in a leaky process of collaboration. I find space for the messiness of process, in thinking of ethical engagement and conceptualising a collaboration, through taking a stance of *keeping the 'problems' alive*¹². Arguably the ethical engagement in research (be it in how we design, collaborate, build research relationships, engage with communities etc.) does not finish either in conceptualising, doing or writing of the research; it dynamically and iteratively lives on in the relationships and worlds it goes on creating. I come up against this "response-ability" (Barad and Gandorfer 2021) in writing, in making something matter (matter not as a thingifying but as a dynamic enactment). I struggle with what might end up mattering from this project, my writing, the ethics and risks of "producing" this "knowledge", and the worlds that are [not] materialised. Ultimately, it is

¹² While "*Keeping the problems alive*" might evoke resonances with Haraway's (2016, 136) "Staying with the trouble" that offers rich posthuman possibilities of collaborations, kin-making and entangled relationalities (and I relate to Haraway later on in this chapter), I draw from my therapeutic practice of staying with the uncertainties and not-knowing as a productive form of relational engagement that refuses easy resolutions, to conceptualise "*keeping the problems alive*" as a creative-relational force of ethical engagement.

through my *knowing-in-being* with the collective, in conceptualising our work together and allowing for our collaboration to shift and change in disrupting itself, that I/we come into being/doing ethics and collaboration differently. This chapter then is not only about giving an account of ethical engagement and methodological framing of collaborative Collective biography, but it is also about the ongoing ethical engagements that happens as *Minor-acts*, as moments of jarring, disrupting relationality in process, of the not-yet-known and yet to be. What this chapter does is to bring the messiness and troubles of tracing the entanglements alive and turns the gaze to how I/we become from these problems producing the worlds that is made to matter from these [un]ethical engagements; in the *mo[ve]ments* that make me/us depart, to step outside of the boundaries and think otherwise. I have to confess reader, that it is my intention to arrive at telling you more about the De/Colonial dimensions of this work by the end of this chapter, at least the beginnings of the praxis as it emerges in process for us. However, in staying with the not-knowing that characterised much of my/our process, here you might find that I speak as though I am without hindsight in the first few sections. My hope here is that, through this staying with the sense of not-knowing with us, rather than jumping to where we arrive from these disruptions, you might be able to get an affective sense of how *'keeping the problems alive'* propels us into *knowing/being/doing* ethics and collaborations differently.

Ethico-Onto-Epistemology – Towards Response-able engagements with/in research practices

Perhaps I need to begin with exploring the ways my idea of ethics in research shifts before I step into how our being/doing of the project is interrupted through our ethico-onto-epistemological engagement with the process. I begin with understanding ethics, particularly relational ethics in research practice, through multiple lenses. While research ethics can draw from a multiplicity of paradigmatic frameworks, fields and theoretical orientations, the idea of

ethical engagement in qualitative research draws upon accustomed ways of conceptualising and practicing research ethics in Social Sciences and qualitative research (contextualised within the Global North academic spaces that shape and produce me as a researcher in this doctoral programme). Mauthner (2019, 5), traces the entanglements of historical approaches to ethics as “implicitly, if not explicitly, informed by the main philosophical traditions that have guided social scientific inquiry” and in “following the logic of naturalistic inquiry, ethics has been concerned with ensuring that research provides objective and unbiased (value-free) representations of the world, and that it does so without causing harm to research participants”. With Mauthner, I understand how these give rise to institutional mechanisms of review boards and ethics committees that oversee and regulate research ethics and integrity. It is also significant to note here the further set of ethical concerns we derive from Social Constructionist approaches in recognising the subjectivity of researchers, the power and value-laden nature of historically and culturally-situated epistemological frameworks/research practices, and ideas around researcher reflexivity that allows us to account for our influence on what we research and how we do it. The development of participatory research models and practices hope to disrupt this through involving research respondents as co-producers of knowledge towards empowering participants and harnessing their knowledge.

The ethical frameworks explored above speaks to my embryonic relationship to ethical engagement during the initial stages of this project. I had arrived at Collective Biography as a potential methodology and hoped to employ a collaborative design that would allow me to work closely with a collective. The institutional ethical review done for this project pays attention to the concerns of not causing harm, seeking ‘informed consent’, maintaining confidentiality and ‘data’ protection during the research process and the writing of it. It further also makes space for protection of both the ‘researcher’ and ‘participants’ through in-depth

engagements about accessibility, risk of participant withdrawal, potential dual relationships and their ‘impact’, privacy, dignity, support, complaint procedures etc. In addition to the institutionalised and historical frameworks of research ethics Mauthner (2019) explores, counselling practice offers another lens and allows me to be with an idea of ethics that foregrounds the relational and revolves around care, intersubjectivity and reflexively making space for the other to come into relationship fully (See for example Burman (2003) and Benjamin (2006) for ideas around Intersubjectivity and Bondi (2013) and Etherington (2017) about reflexivity in Counselling practice and research). My lived experience of relational Counselling and Psychotherapy practice (and research) is one where the personal, political, historical and material are held as entangled threads. Through my entanglement within the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy, my Embodied-Psychodynamic-Person Centred (I hyphenate these to imply dialogical ‘integration’) therapeutic practice shapes the idea of ethics and relationality in this research process in both implicit and explicit ways. Within this lens I think about ethical engagement in research practice as a coming into relational contact as we would in the therapeutic space, to trace and interrogate the relational happenings so we might know something about the relationships, the project and ourselves even as we become something new from the engagement. In employing this idea of relationality, I engage with the ethical questions of how I/We can create/facilitate such a productive space in the research process and what would facilitate the safety and openness that would allow me/us to interrogate the relationality itself (I explore further insights and links between therapeutic practice and our collective process in chapter *Intra-active Interlude*).

Within the context of this study and its focus then on Indian women and entanglements of patriarchy and power, it felt particularly important to think also with Feminist research ethics. Aligning with how we might relationally engage with the other in the therapeutic space,

Preissle and Han (2012) note that taking a Feminist perspective to research ethics places emphasis not on resolving the ethical conundrums but engaging with them relationally in the process of the study to trouble the tensions and shed light on the that which might make accustomed approaches to ethical decision-making more complicated. Being deeply grounded in the core principles of emancipation and justice, contemporary Feminist ethics (Preissle and Han 2012) allows for the materiality, the ethics of care over knowledge production, and cultural situatedness to further complicate the universalised ideas around experiences, and demands for attention to be paid to the consequences of academic/research practices. While Material Feminisms allows me to think about disrupting the traditionally valid forms of ‘data’ in calling for an inclusion of the historically invalidated body, the sensual ‘data’ and material world and its materialisation as valid explicators of knowledge (exploring from within different paradigmatic positions Cixous, Cohen, and Cohen 1976; Ahmed 2004; 2014; Meißner 2016 speak into the inclusions of Materiality in research processes), the Postcolonial and Transnational Feminisms (for example see the works of Spivak 2008; Mohanty 2003; Fernandes 2013; Bhattacharya 2021) allow me to track how colonialism, capitalism and the global world shapes onto-epistemological practices, and conforms and restricts us even in what we can know from universalised emancipatory, justice-oriented methodologies. Outside of the western onto-epistemological traditions and Eurocentric ethical frameworks, my entanglement within the Indian context offers another set of ethical frameworks that hold at its core an intra-connected, entangled idea of relationality which cannot be separated from the historical, colonised, philosophical, and localised ‘Indian’ ways of being. While thinking-with Bhattacharya (2021) and Singh (2021) offers me resources for ethically delving into these entanglements in the context of research about Indian women and allowing for these marginalised contexts to be included in the world-making processes of research (which I explore later as part of the De/Colonial praxis), Johnson and Kraft (2017) allow me to

complicate essentialist framings and the ethical, political and material implications of envisioning a universalised Indian experience as a guide here.

Although the 50 odd pages of the institutional ethical review offers ‘protection’ and support for both me the researcher and collaborators or “participants”, and ensures that the project can be completed ‘ethically’ in line with the institutional regulations in place, I keenly feel the absence of its capacity to hold the multiple complexities and or emergent ethical tensions (or “*emergencies*” that relationally-create as Murray (2020) frames them) that come up in the process. For example, a collaborative study in this academic, institutional context still requires that I proactively conceptualise the study design, provide a rationale for the design and put in place measures for how I recruit collaborators or participants to be part of the Collective Biography, and what happens in the process of ‘data’ collection, analysis and writing the thesis itself. There is a sense of directed relationality here that feels hard to step out of within the context/limits of doctoral work. Within my process of being/doing, other ethical/ontological/epistemological concerns emerge iteratively; like Post-structural and Post-qualitative idea of unstable, unknowing selves and how these come into relationship with the idea of a “knowing” researcher who writes the application for ethical review, Feminist and Decolonial concerns of representation, marginalisation and universalisation that come up in the writing and analysing of the collective-collaborative ‘data’, the potential/risk of epistemic injustice and violence, the ethics of knowledge production as an ontological concern in itself, colonial entanglements that make it imperative to hold a De/Colonising ethic towards research practices etc. The absence of space for the above emergent complexity in institutional ethical review procedures reinstate the thinking about ethical engagement in this project and in research as anything but straight forward. I am not claiming here that traditional/institutional practices of thinking about ethical concerns and decision making are something to be looked

past or discarded. My argument here is that the different paradigms we employ and different lenses that shape my understanding of ethical engagement takes us on different, sometimes conflicting ethical pathways. However, when held collectively and relationally, they shed light on and allow us to trace the entanglements that are crucial to the conceptualisation of this project, its doing and the knowledge that is produced from it.

Thinking of these from a Baradian perspective allows me to conceptualise the idea of ethics and ethical decision-making in research processes as onto-epistemological boundary making enactments, as agential *Apparatus* (Barad 2006) that produce certain ethical *worldings* at the exclusion of others. Consequently, a collaborative, Baradian approach to ethics, while not replacing or claiming a position of superiority from other ethical paradigms, allows for relational engagement in the middle space of that which is enacted through being with these differently-entangled lenses; in paying attention to this onto-epistemological materialising of the world where processes of ethical engagement are complicated to make space for ‘knowing’ the way particular, dynamic ‘realities’ come to be/become in the very process of engaging with ethics (Mauthner 2019). The conflation of ontological, epistemological, and ethical concerns (being, knowing and ethics) here offers for an Ethico-onto-epistemological (Barad 2006) engagement not only with the relationships we engender with participants and how we can go about paying attention to care, inclusion, privacy, power, risk, and ethical representations in the research process. It also offers space to be with onto-epistemological explorations of the consequences and ethics of such practices and how these ideas around ethics itself comes into being, and is constituted by and constitutes the world in particular ways. I begin to embrace here Barad’s (in Barad and Gandorfer 2021) call for a *response-able* ethico-onto-epistemological engagement that opens the very basis of ethics, ontology and epistemology to critical, dynamic disruption.

Conceptualising-Disrupting ethical engagement with/in collectives and collaborative work

I re-turn to the threads of my process with Collective Biography now with the above framing of a collaborative, iterative ethico-onto-epistemological praxis. In the last chapter I made the argument for situating this project as a New Materialist, Creative-Relational Collective Biography (which in itself has particular ethical implications within a De/Colonial praxis that I will explore later in this chapter). While a theoretical exploration of Collective Biography makes space for its dynamism and expansiveness in terms of its capacity to hold the not-yet and the collective-relational, the doing is a more convoluted process. I feel this affective convolutedness in the way ethical tensions iteratively emerge as explored in the above sections and shape the project to be more-than and different-than in a continual process of becoming. I turn to Fiona Murray's (2020) thoughts on "emergencies" and Creative-Relational *Hyphen* (de Andrade, Stenhouse, and Wyatt 2021) here to articulate my thoughts about the being/doing as an ongoing ethico-onto-epistemological engagement.

When I say that I hope to arrive at a methodology that is *our Collective Biography*, as it emerges in the doing of it, I am co-implicated in the tensions of what is, what might be and what I/we come to *know* in the doing and writing of it. The practice of this deeply relational, collaborative work is in essence led by "emergencies", as Fiona Murray (2020) writes, that are fraught with ethical complications, messiness of relationships and the politics and ethics of research itself and that which is made to matter in it. Drawing of Murray's ideas of the "emergencies", I now hope to give some elbowroom to the messiness and complications of collective, collaborative research in the context of Indian Women's materialisations. The creative-relational *Hyphen* acts as a home to this messy grappling and opens up the in-between space of productive relationality, to think with and bring together-apart the *emergent ethical*

“*emergencies*” that demand to be paid attention to in the process (or *emergenc[i]es* as I have come to call them).

As explored in my previous chapter, Collective Biography emerged as a methodology from within the Feminist perspectives (Davies and Gannon 2006, Gannon 2015) and has been remade through disruptions of itself from within the Post-qualitative and New Materialist turns (Davies and Gannon 2012). Reminiscent of Participatory-Action-Research methods that promote community-based and collective led inquiries (see Heron and Reason 1997; Lykes and Hershberg 2012), Collective Biography, in my initial encounter with it, allows me to envision a research design that can be collaboratively created and decentres the institutional and the researcher as ‘knowing’ experts of the research or the knowledge produced within it. In practice what this means is a project that can be designed, produced, and explicated by/within the collective and a project that shifts the focus away from the researcher as sole designer, leader, and writer of the process, and the academy as the seat of knowledge production and dissemination. In ‘designing’ this project, I begin with grappling with tensions of - am I studying and writing *about the collective* or producing/engaging *with the collective*? What does it mean to take a stance of an inseparable co-implication - *not just becoming but always a “becoming-with”*? Staying coherent with such an onto-epistemological stance of destabilising power structures demands a methodology that allows for thinking flexibly and relationally to collectively arrive at a conceptualisation that emerges for/in/by an inquiry (St. Pierre 2021).

While the idea of a methodology being created *in* the study is liberating in a way that I have come to associate with Post-qualitative enquiries, some ethical and practical questions emerge as an ethical urgency. How do I practically do this? How do I ground a study that is

richly relational, non-linear, disruptive, and flexible within the framework of a doctoral project that needs to meet certain criteria? Is that not in itself stepping away from the fluid, post-qualitative premise of no beginnings, middles or ends? I am all for emergence, but how could I engage in a truly emergent process when I am limited by the structure of institutional policies and the limited time I have to do the study and write my thesis as an International student in the United Kingdom? I am aware of how I take a stance of leading the process here in my questioning and my use of an agential “I”. So, how could I do a truly collaborative study that had co-researchers instead of participants in an individualised setting where I had to make pre-emptive decisions, design the study, and gain ethical approval before I could even recruit or meet with the collective, and have sole-authorship over the thesis that is going to be written. Even though the premise of Collective biography itself is versatile and allows for the workshops to be the site of ‘data’ gathering by the ‘lead researcher’ where the collaborators could be not involved in the later stages of ‘analysis’ or co-authorship, and I can jump into the comfortable place of ethical ‘knowing’ in acknowledging these as limitations (as intentional cuts) and moving on, thinking-with and allowing these ethical and onto-epistemological tensions to reside in conceptualising and doing of the project, makes room for us to step into the *what-else* and allows for new ways of thinking/doing to emerge.

I step back into thinking-with Murray (2020) again. The above tensions arrive as *emergenc[i]es* and interrupt my process of ongoing becoming with Davies and Gannon (2012). Perhaps a ‘resolving’ of these ethical tensions would allow me to step back into the ‘frame’ of how Davies and Gannon do Collective Biography but staying with Murray (2020) and the Creative-Relational allow me to stay with the dynamic force of movement and change. I think of change here as a disruption, as *Minor-acts* of negotiation that come up against the hegemonic research structures which territorialise the collaborative, collective movement. The Baradian

perspective on these tensions would be that of an emergent, co-implicated, co-constructed premise that would make space for a dialogical continuum – in essence allowing room for the project design and ethical considerations to emerge relationally and iteratively while also disrupting the practice and praxis of our engagement in itself. This aligns with the Post-qualitative/New Materialist standpoint of *being-with* and ‘enacting’ of these ethical concerns in shifting the stance from the space of “reviewing”, “resolving” and “managing” to “being in/becoming from the trouble”.

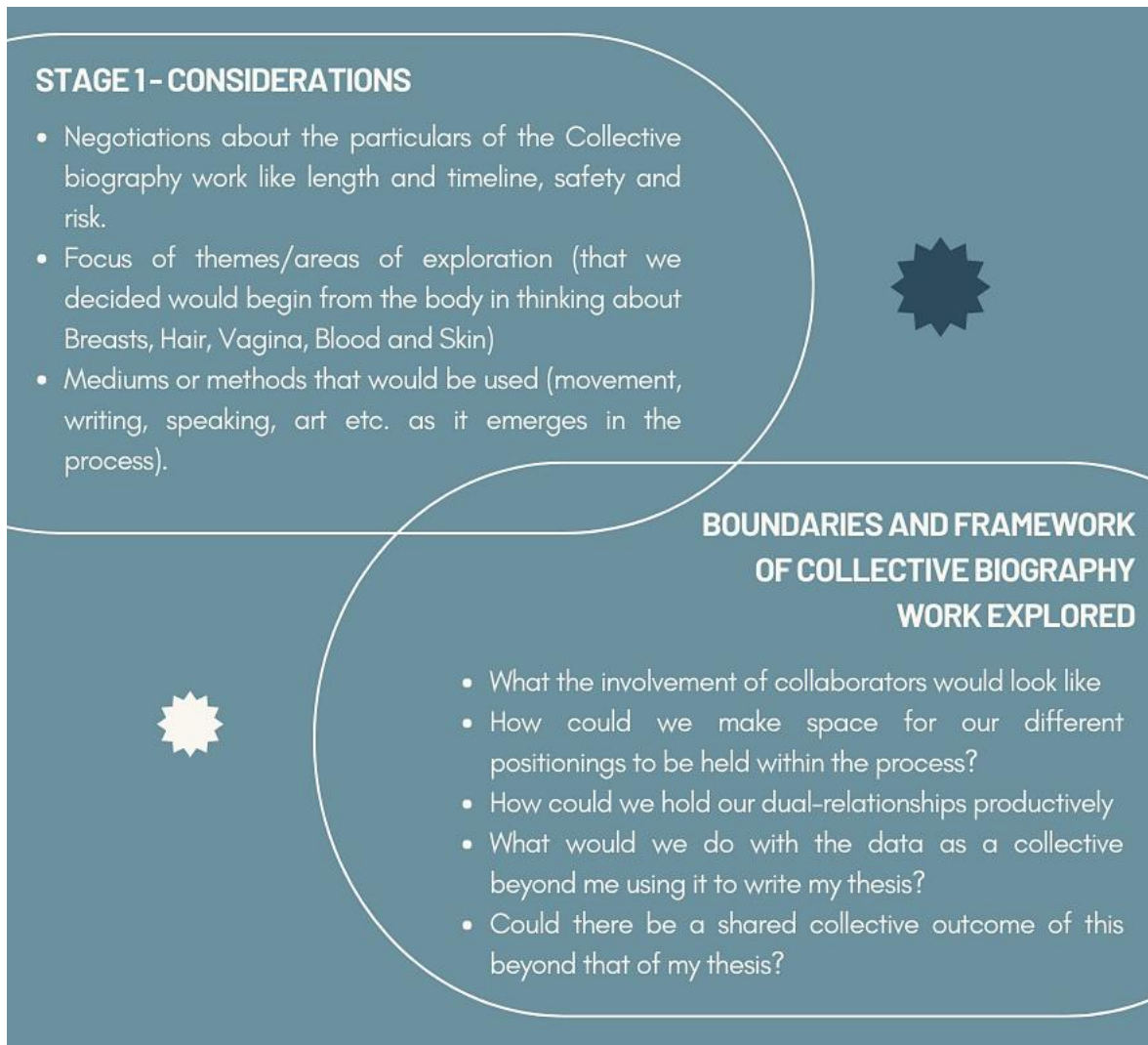
The context of my project here further requires a challenging and disrupting of what it means to navigate these tensions within an institutionalised, collaborative context and how I/we intra-act with and enact our agency dynamically in doing this within the context of research. Ethical and methodological considerations in this premise brings into diffractive relationship not only my process and my topic of study but also allows me to map the emergence of my various entanglements. In this sense, conceptualisation of my study becomes a space of intra-action of colliding premises that all demand to be interrogated and traced; of bodies, therapeutic practice, of my collaborators, their entanglements, of supervisors, of the social and political, the ethics committee and their onus of safety and care, the university, the colonial undertones of research/knowledge production in such an institutionalised space, regulations for international students, of Covid-19 pandemic policies etc. It is a complicating that makes it possible for me to see how all these intra-act and enact *differently*. Holding these colliding premises in a relationship and envisioning a “slow” conceptualisation that can attend to the *emergenc[i]es* iteratively, allows me a way out of structural limitations. Drawing from the therapeutic practice of “contracting” and towards staying with the emergencies and giving them some breathing space in process, I arrive here at a Two-stage methodological process. I understand these enactments as emergent negotiations that straddle the tensions of the study

being rooted within its collaborative premise and yet contained in a way that could meet the criteria for the doctoral project and institutional ethical-review processes. The below info-graphs embody this design of slow conceptualisation before I go on to speak about how these become both disrupted and disruptive.



(Fig. 1 – Info-graph of project design, Stage-1)

The first stage of the project (detailed in Fig. 1 above) included gaining ethical approval for and meeting for a ‘contracting’ session with recruited collaborators¹³. This was a space where the tensions could be opened out and engaged with/in the co-constructed space of an ethical framing and decision-making meeting, to co-create the project design and think about further ethical considerations collaboratively, as explored in Fig. 2 below.



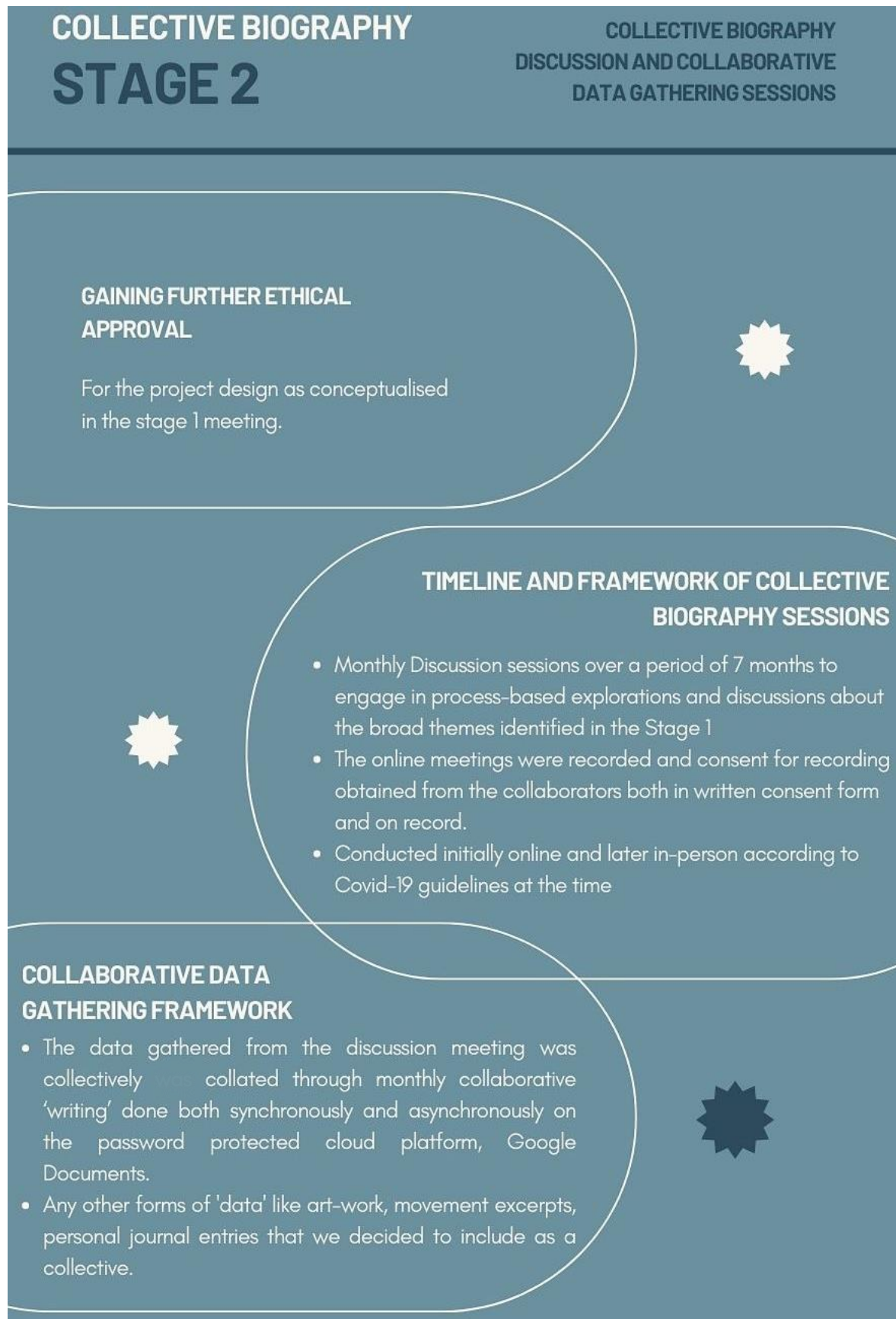
(Fig. 2 – Info-graph of project design, Stage-1)

¹³ The advert for collaborators was shared on university networks and my personal networks. 3 women who identified as Indian and expressed interest in the project were offered participant information sheets that detailed the commitment and the collaborative design of the project and “recruited” without any filtering processes other than criteria mentioned in the Fig.1 above.

While the aim of this initial stage was to decide how we could work together and what would be included in our inquiry, in thinking-with Barad (2006), I also stay mindful here of the idea of ‘agential cuts’ that take place in co-creating the framework, “to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad 2006, 178) through these intentional cuts. For example, we not only pay attention to the significance of boundaries and frameworks we create as a collective (the involvement, limitations, dual-relationships etc.) but also to boundaries that were already set prior to the stage-1 meeting (final “‘data’ analysis’ and authoring of the thesis would be done by me as a requirement for the programme) as significant entanglements to interrogate.

A significant emergence from this meeting was the open negotiations that led to collaborative agreement about ‘data’ gathered in the collaborative discussions and “writing” sessions as belonging to all participants for future use. This made space for the Collective biography workshops to be a space that could stay emergent in continuing beyond the scope of my doctoral project if the group/individuals decided to. In this sense the project was co-created in/for/by the collective premise and enacts a disruption of the institutional or researcher’s exclusive ownership over ‘knowledge’ and ‘data’, through offering back what we gather to the collective.

The Stage-2 of the project (detailed in Fig. 3 below) was our Collective Biography workshops and ‘data’ gathering sessions as it was designed collaboratively; towards collectively exploring how our entanglement within the contexts of patriarchy and state/cultural power over feminine subjectivities materialises us, and engaging with the processes of this materialisation.



(Figure 3 – Info-graph of project design, Stage-2)

While the project design, as it emerged here, sets out a structure for the Collective Biography, we leave ample space for the sessions to shift and morph as might be required in the process. Rather than limiting ourselves to a particular kind of ‘data’ production, at this stage, we had envisioned a ‘writing’/‘data’ gathering process that would be fluid, roughly following the structure of telling, writing, reading, re-reading, re-writing, and re-telling as Davies and Gannon (2012) call for, but allowing for iteratively working out how we might want to engage differently and depart from the structures. This engagement hoped to disrupt the fixed ideas of ‘data’ and allowed our collaboration to produce anything from writing to personal journaling, art or movement or recordings as it emerges in the group process. It was collaboratively decided that any data we produced would privilege the collective, collaborative voice and obscure individual narratives. Through all of us responding to and editing material collaboratively as a group, we hoped to create a cacophony of unidentifiable voices so that individual identities would be protected in the light of close-knit community contexts of the Indian diaspora that might make writers identifiable through their experiences. This further aligned with the New materialist troubling of individual-collective dichotomy in producing data that held the entanglements of individual-collective voice”¹⁵.

While there is also much to explore here about the disruptions and De/Colonial interruptions that we enact implicitly here, I explore more about the disruption of linear,

¹⁵ This collaborative privileging of the collective voice and obscuring of individual identities in the writing makes it impossible to segregate how much of the ‘data’ was written by which collaborator (though some excerpts might have narratives that we the collaborators might be able to identify as written by a particular member). While this might bring up ethical questions of how much of the data was written by me the “lead researcher” and therefore “directive” of the collective process, creating the very sense of colonial ventriloquism that I resist in this thesis, the collective process included frequent check-ins and discussions around inclusions/exclusions from the writing and the final version of the collaborative writing ‘data’ produced was “sense checked” and relationally engaged with by all the members in our last meeting so that we might collaborative agree to where we had landed and what I would use for the thesis.

contained forms of ‘data’ production and disruption from/of these structures we had envisioned in the next two chapters. For now, what I want to highlight is the disruption of the ethical review process into two stages to make space for the *emergenc[ies]* of thinking of a collaboration within doctoral research and institutional settings. I argue that through allowing for the project design to emerge from the dynamism of ‘*keeping the problems alive*’, we arrive at this splitting of the ethical decision-making into two parts and make space for dialogical, collaborative, and relational foundations to be established in these initial stages of the research project. It is through making further room for what the project itself ‘becomes’ through these collaborative entanglements that we also make space for our practice and praxis of a New Materialist Collective Biography.

Messy Entanglements of a fraught Creative-Relational-Collaborative-Praxis

I might have outlined the research design as we arrived at for the institutional ethical review above, but echoing the introduction to this chapter, I struggle with the simplified rendition of the conceptualisation in the above info-graphs. What are the ethics of this mattering, of this writing and its exclusions? Perhaps the ethical review process demands a certain level of clarity and confidence that transcends the messiness and uncertainties of the emergent process of the being/doing and it is this sense of simplified clarity that is reflected in breaking down the process to mere sentences and bullet points. Here I feel as though I have forced a formless ever-growing, slippery, leaking mass into a neat round hole. This struggle extends to getting onto paper and into words the messy, fraught, sometimes unarticulated yet rich and deeply collaborative relationalities that make this particular collective work go on *mattering iteratively*. To unpick and unpack these relational happenings, I turn my attention to the Creative-Relational *hyphen*.

“The hyphen. A line indicating a space between two words (or bodies?) connected yet separate, bounded, each meaning something in their own right. The hyphen. A space in which our subjectivities meet, where the conscious loses control of which aspects of us are on “display” to the other. Bodies speak, or leak, into the space demarcated by the hyphen. Bodies, speaking without words into the spaces, in-between bodies. Bodies speaking without words, alongside our words, as we respond to each other, as we inter-act. The hyphen allows us to recognize separation and connection as a dynamic, fluid way-of-being”.

de Andrade, Stenhouse, and Wyatt (2021, 33), in articulating the relationality of the *hyphen* as above, take me to that middle space between messy-fraught and productively collaborative. The hyphen in the writing-knowing-being-feeling-process of the collective collaboration. The hyphen as the relational middle digital-cloud-space of us, the collaborators and I, meeting in that Microsoft Teams room, our screens flashing between us, echoes not just of audio feedback that we frantically try to resolve, but also of our lives from behind those closed, “confidential” doors, and the multiple entanglements that intra-act with our engagement in designing and conceptualising this project. We come into the space as Indian Women, already categorised as identifying within certain criteria for the project (English-speaking, over 21 years old, Indian, Woman). We bring our bodies in from different spaces without a shared sense of physicality, carrying with us all the places we have walked and *become* in, relegated to the physical rooms of our homes we join the meeting from, boxed into our little boxes that has our names spelled out on them, housed in a bigger digital box named “BMPP – Stage-1 meeting” or “BMPP – Stage-2 Session x”.

We also bring with us the leaking and messiness of our differences, of how we relate with our leakiness and exceed our boundaries and boxes (digital and otherwise). All of us identify as researchers having had access to higher education and working within the Western

institutional/community contexts and note the onto-epistemic and economic privileges that we are thereby afforded. Another collaborator and I are Psychotherapists practicing in the Global North but each with different disciplinary backgrounds in Engineering and the Performance arts respectively. One of us is a Bioethics researcher (having grown up and educated in the Global North but deeply rooted in diasporic cultural entanglements, and worked for 15 years in the Global North academia) particularly working within the Decolonial, Transnational, and Intersectional frameworks and coming into the project from a conflicting yet relationally productive paradigmatic stance. Another is a Postmodern choreographer, performance artist, and a researcher who works primarily with the moving body and within the community context. Another of us has had a childhood of living in multiple different cities in India. We all come from similarly privileged economic class, geographically diverse upbringings yet upper-caste privileged backgrounds in the context of Indian historicity. We embody our “Indianness” differently due to the diverse economic and structural contexts of where we grew up, and the generational difference between us (aged between 25-45 during Stage-1 meeting). All of us also identify as Feminists, even though we acknowledge and pay attention how we might ‘do’ Feminism differently.

The call for collaborators for this project was advertised on institutional networks and my personal social media networks. Consequently, given the selective and directive relationality of these spaces, there is a certain affective meeting in the personal values and attitudes we share towards life and research. Perhaps untraditionally so (within the context of Eurocentric research and traditional qualitative enquiries), we share other close relationships between the four of us outside of this research context and we hold them close to us as the relational foundation of the project, as opposed to claiming an objective unfamiliarity with each other. The deep friendship, a kinship that becomes familial relationships in the diasporic

context, both constitutes and is constituted by what brings us together as a collective. We engage deeply with the ethics of this, what these dual relationships might do relationally, and collectively decide how we might be with and allow it to aid us in our commitment to the collaborative premise, rather than try to boundary and bracket ourselves within the digital box space we meet in for this project.

To a certain extent, I notice here that we are led by our process into making-sense of (and making) ethical and theoretical frameworks, rather than only making sense of our process through theory and pre-established frameworks. For example, the institutional review asks us here to boundary our dual-relationships and make sure we are informed on how these might become detrimental to the project. However, in being together we notice that trying to boundary this sense of deep kinship, the very thing that provides affinity and safety for us, is perhaps more detrimental for our collaboration. The power moves differently and iteratively within this group context – from the institutional and the structural, diffracting through each of us into the middle space of relationality to entangle with our ongoing *becoming* and our commitment to engaging with ourselves in the collective-collaborative, reforming into co-constituting the collective, the institutional and structural through the materialising of this project. The multiplicity of sameness of experience we claim in identifying ourselves within certain criteria here is co-implicated within the differences we bring as situated but co-constituted individuals and the ways we exceed these bounded ideas of sameness and difference.

As Thorpe, Brice, and Clark (2020) notice in their New Materialist collaboration, there is a collaborative ethic in this exceeding of sameness and difference, the “being-acting-feeling [and becoming] together” (MacLellan and Talpalaru 2012 as cited in Thorpe, Brice and Clark 2020) here that propels us into the unknown and reorients us to the ‘creative’ and ‘disruptive’,

even as we slip back into familiar ways of being, knowing and doing research. There is an embodied and relational sense of “staying with the trouble” (Haraway 2016, 136) to “stitch together improbable collaborations without worrying too much about ontological kinds.”. What is created here instead are multiple destabilised ethico-onto-epistemological matterings through the “displacing and unhinging of our own understandings” (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer 2013, 639) where it becomes possible to, as Lenz Taguchi (2013, 712) frames, “acentre and asubjectify ourselves in a way that produced a [research] reality that [she has] called a collective-body-assemblage, and/or a collective-researcher-assemblage”.

Diffraction into a Decolonial-New Materialist ethic towards a ‘Hyphenated’ relationality

Reader, I have said to you multiple times by now that I come into this writing from a multiplicity of timelines. It is perhaps time now that I begin speaking to you from hindsight. What I hope to bring to your attention now are insights from a time much later than when we collectively started designing this project. I ask you to stay with me here in the iterative ethical tensions that emerged in knowing/being/doing of the study and the insights we/I arrive at from this about our engagement within this frame. I step back into the *emergenc[i]es* and ethics of “mattering” again to take you into my process. I have argued above that framing ethical engagements as an *apparatus* allows for thinking of research itself as a boundary making practice that produces certain worlds at the exclusion of others. While a New Materialist, Baradian frame allows me to engage with/in these tensions and to *keep the problems alive*, it also demands taking responsibility for and being accountable for the exclusions and iterative consequences of this boundary making. Hollin, et al. (2017, 47), towards “(dis)entangling the Baradian framework of ethics”, highlight Barad’s central contribution through Agential

Realism as being the “Ethics of exclusion” and “drawing attention to what is excluded from particular entanglements”. Agential Realism, thus not only draws our attention to how ontological realities are constituted in the intra-active co-constitution in drawing diffractive attention to the way entanglements could have been otherwise, but also allows us to map the precise moments at which matter comes to matter as it is; through that which is entangled and that which is excluded from mattering. For example, in my earlier chapters and the exploration above, there is a particularly New Materialist conceptualisation that is being made to matter as opposed to a Phenomenological, Post-structural or a Postcolonial worlding. A Baradian New Materialist engagement demands that we pay attention to the other matterings that could have been, that have been excluded by the entanglements of the research apparatus.

In my argument above of framing the collective process as allowing for us to “acentre and asubjectify ourselves” (Lenz Taguchi 2013, 712) we exclude the world that may have been produced from us centring and subjectifying ourselves. These tensions of not “centring”, not “subjectifying” and not “representing”, particularly in the context of ontologically and epistemologically marginalised communities, are urgent Decolonial and Feminist concerns (as reiterated by Mohanty 2003; Fernandes 2013; Tuck and Yang 2014; Pillow 2020 and Bhattacharya 2021) and offer valuable critiques of Post-qualitative, Posthuman and New Materialist paradigms in calling attention to the potential risk of erasure they might pose for the important work of Black Feminist work, Indigenous knowledge practices and Decolonial disruptions. Is it ethical to ‘acentre’ and ‘asubjectify’ communities that have been historically, structurally and onto-epistemologically acentred and asubjectified through the processes of colonisation and Eurocentrism? What are the consequences of arguing for a ‘decentring’ of human as I have in my previous chapter? I encounter De/Postcolonial theories only as part of our collective work together; you might remember that a member of the collective is a

transnational, decolonial scholar, and within the collective-researcher-assemblage and in “displacing and unhinging of our own understandings” (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer 2013, 639), I am called towards making space for the disruptiveness of the questions above.

Thinking-with Post-qualitative and New Materialist notions of “decentring the human” with Decolonial scholars like Mohanty (2003) and Bhattacharya (2021) allows me begin thinking about the tensions of “humanness”. There is sense of erasure in this de-centring that flattens out and de-contextualises the very markers of damage caused by colonialisms. I understand how knowledge-making practices echo colonial violence to render some humans to be less than their white counterparts and idea of “decentring the human” risks leading to the violence perpetuated by colonialisms to reverberate and shape lives in its never-ending entanglements. I notice the potential for continued violence in such a stance, but I also notice the same violence in the idea of *Humanisms*.

I take a stance here, in line with Deckha (2008), Fernandes (2013) and Pillow (2020), of ‘Humanism’¹⁶ in itself as built around the bounded-Individualised-White-male-human and all other humans (and arguably the non-human) categorised in how they differ from this ‘Humanness’. A disruptive (read De/Colonial) stance here then would demand for an acknowledgement of the idea of ‘Humanness’ itself as colonial. Consequently, noticing that politics and exclusionary boundaries of “Centred-Humanness” allows me to see ‘Humanising’ (I use this term to refer only to the inclusion and exclusion practices) in itself as a practice that

¹⁶ Pillow (2020) uses H/human to bring attention to the distinction of capitalised, privileged, centred ‘Human’ vs marginalised ‘human’. My use of capitalisation (or not) here follows this conceptualisation.

employs erasure of other ways of onto-epistemological *being-knowing* towards an inclusion in the universal idea of ‘Humanness’¹⁷.

It is significant to note here that much of the patriarchal values in India (morality, privileged fairness of skin, feminine modesty, inhibited sexuality to name a few) are entangled within its history of conquests and colonisation. It is particularly relevant within the Indian context, and the internalised colonial echoes within the Indian culture of at once trying to aspire to this white ‘Humanness’ while also defending against it in spurts of devout nationalism, to think of this inclusion into ‘Humanness’ as in itself a violence. Holding these tensions close allows me to understand the possibilities of the De/Colonial ethic that emerges within the ethical grappling in this project as a “Decentring of the Centre” (its hegemonic knowledge-production apparatus, and privileged centring of ‘white, male, individualised, Humanness’) through centring other already decentred ways of “human[ness]”. Highlighting the importance of a De/Colonial ethic towards an ethical engagement with/in the New Materialist framework, within this framework of “Decentring the centre”, there are some iterative ethico-onto-epistemological matterings that emerge at this stage, particularly in my entanglement as a

¹⁷ In addition to this ethical grappling, I am thankful to my external examiner (Prof. Jerry Rosiek) for pointing me towards King’s 2017 article “Humans Involved” that highlights the colonial, [un]ethical implications of using Deleuzoguattarian concepts such as *Rhizomes*, *Line of Flight*, *De/Re/Territorialisation* towards following unencumbered paths towards newness, openness, and expansions. While I do use Deleuzoguattarian concepts in this thesis, I use this footnote to acknowledge the genocidal, colonial violence and erasures (Jodi Byrd as cited in King 2017) that are entangled in the historicity of these concepts. I retain their presence in this thesis to highlight the need for ongoing of ethical grappling with what is produced in this body-of-work too and with the reparative hope that my future De/Colonial departures from this thesis will make space for explicit De/Colonial disruptions of these concepts in the way King demands us to. However I also need to clarify here that, while I begin this exploration following the currents of expansive newness, openness and emergence in line with the Eurocentric spaces I am produced and continue to be produced in, in the process of this project and this thesis I hold newness, openness and emergence with the sense of ethico-onto-epistemological engagement that allows us to be with and grapple with the tensions of what might be [un]ethically produced within this reaching towards newness, openness and emergence and I use these as departures into “different”, De/Colonial ways of research engagement (explored further in chapter “Going-on-being”). This problematising is at the core of the emergenc[i]es of this thesis, in the interruptions, disruptions, and refusals that this work holds, and will carry forward into future materialisations of this work as perhaps a disruption of even this materialisation and the [un]ethical, colonial resonances it inevitably carries.

[co]researcher and the intra-actions of this study with Indian womanhood, our materialisations with/in patriarchal entanglements and the context of India's colonial past.

The Ethics of the Insider/Outsider co-implication – De/Coloniality as an emergent ethical emergency

As an emergent interruption, a De/Colonial ethic demands that I pay attention to my own entanglements of privilege and consider how the Institutional and the Whiteness acts/furthers/oppresses through me. I am a Woman of colour from the Global South, 'conducting' research in a white institution with other Women of colour. Bhattacharya (2021) reminds me that the collective, but particularly me in the context of this thesis, hold the status of being an insider in the western institutional structures, in the privileges it affords me onto-epistemically and in the way I enact these in my research practice. I am however also an outsider within this context; my skin, ethnicity and nationality will hold me outside of the margins of whiteness that historically categorises these spaces. It is here that the co-implicated relationship between Colonialisms and De-Colonialisms are brought into sharp relief, towards the framing of 'De/Colonial' as Bhattacharya (2021) explores. I agree with Bhattacharya (2021) here that I cannot afford the naivety of *being or becoming* a New Materialist without coming face to face 'against' Anti/Post/De/Colonialisms and without holding the colonising parts of me accountable and in relationship. Within a diffractive process, I am able to get in touch with these colonising parts of me that are entangled in this process of research-making-doing.

For example, when I look back to explorations in the previous chapter and consider the 'whiteness' in my conceptual and citational practice, I am drawn inwards into thinking about my *becoming* a researcher. Here I hold myself back from 'resolving' this through diversifying

my citations¹⁸. I notice how I am produced as a researcher in a particularly Eurocentric space, where privileged literature makes way through structural politics to the students in perhaps unconscious, implicitly colonial ways. I am diffractively led here to my process of encountering New Materialisms; I gathered, nurtured, and tended my love for the disruptiveness of New Materialisms in a space where the newness of it was making waves, creating fissures, and opening avenues. I can also track here that it is the disruptiveness and newness that captured me, even as the whiteness becomes ingrained into my very body in the way my thoughts assemble and take form and my vocabulary changes and morphs into something I can recognise as almost (but never fully) ‘natively’ academic to the spaces I am being produced in. I cannot however deny that my engagement with New Materialisms comes from a space of affective relatedness that doesn’t feel very external to the ingrained Indian, deeply entangled, non-anthropocentric, interconnected collective way of being that *marks* me as a woman of colour; I am enlivened and made alive in that moment I meet Barad through their work *because* of the relational intra-connectedness I feel within it to my Indianness. In this, I am brought into relationship with the critique of New Materialisms by Rosiek, Snyder, and Pratt (2020) that calls for an acknowledgement of already existing, silenced, indigenous (and other non-western) ways of being that are appropriated by New Materialisms as a new paradigm of thinking and disruptiveness. However, I cannot also deny that it is through my relationship to New Materialisms and my process within it that I encounter the De/Colonial parts of this work¹⁹.

¹⁸ Reader it also to resist the short-lived comforts of diversifying citations or using more work by people of colour as a quick-fix Decolonising act that I stop myself from rushing towards a more extensive use of WOC scholarship. I argue here that the holding of literature and relationships as they emerge offers me not only the room for more transparency about the process but also further diffractive ground to disrupt myself as a researcher and trace the entanglements of the spaces within which I am produced.

¹⁹ I need to clarify here reader that my claim is not that the New Materialisms or posts (with their colonial historicity and entanglements) allow me to arrive at the De/Colonial praxis and thinking. I mean here that I cannot deny my entanglement within western academic spaces that lead me to a New Materialist path before I encounter the De/Colonial resonances of this project and to deny this and my entanglement within such paradigmatic currents would not only be dishonest but also unethical.

What does it mean then for me to straddle this middle space of being the Insider/Outsider, essentially both the coloniser and the colonised? Mirroring Bhattacharya's (2021) affective sense of onto-epistemological incompatibility, in my first encounter/reading of De/Postcolonial work and the emerging critiques of New Materialisms, I come up against the ethical distress of framing this project as New Materialist, an inherently *White* paradigm, that in hoping to disrupt essentialist notions of Imperialist research practices has the potential to produce a further colonising apparatus (as argued by Ahmed 2008; Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla 2015; Rosiek, Snyder, and Pratt 2020 and Bhattacharya 2021). My diffractive process here is somewhat hijacked by the familiar exclusionary spaces I am pulled into in search for ethical safety and pushed to take an either-or positioning— much like the way the Colonial apparatus hijacks cultures, *beings* and *becomings* and enacts boundaries of differentiation and separation. Here, I come into an affective relationship with the colonising parts of me in practice and as Puar (2013) cautions the colonial apparatus moves through onto-epistemological enactments to create further exclusions and produce me, a WOC engaging in Eurocentric practices, as a “race traitor”. Resisting and disrupting the colonial echoes and thinking of how I could occupy a space within New Materialisms, while also holding onto a De/Colonial ethics here, diffractively allows me to arrive at the disruptive practices I/We have enacted in this process and in practice and how these might speak into the ethics of this particular mattering. Like Puar (2013, 181) evocatively writes of ‘Cyborgian-goddesses’ (in response to Haraway’s (2006, 181) quote “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess”) and the possibilities of an *Intra-sectional* positioning that allows for Intersectional Feminist work to be made dynamic in coming into relationship with the Posthuman idea of leaky, entangled assemblages, within our experience in this process is a relational space that disrupts the colonial hegemonies of not only onto-epistemological ideas and the academic practices of research-

doing and knowledge-making but also a middle space that disrupts the immutability or incompatibility of these stances and exclusions.

I also came into New Materialisms from a relational space of refusal (Tuck and Yang 2014) and disruption, a refusal towards not reinstating the affective unidirectional victimhood I notice within myself when I engage with representations of Indian Woman (including my autoethnographic writing of myself that I share in Chapter-I) and a need to disrupt these representations. In its ongoing co-constitution, this research project has always had an affective sense of going against the grain. In its “becoming-New Materialist”, in me “becoming-New Materialist” and “becoming-Post-qualitative”, in its commitment to process and disruption, there has been an emergent and dynamic *desire* to go beyond the hegemonic practices of research that are geared towards particular kinds of knowledge production. Here, thinking-with Decolonial frames allows me to track how a De/Colonial praxis has been entangled in my process since before I was even a researcher.

For example, I think of myself as a Feminist, a rebel, and a rule-breaker. There are the echoes of this rebellion in the kind of research I want to engage in. An uncomplicated reading of Indian women’s experiences of their bodies perhaps would be to collect ‘data’ (albeit rich, experience-near ‘data’) from the collective of Indian women and write a thesis collating/interpreting these. What has emerged in this project instead is a “reading” that falls outside the boundaries of the “traditional” and “validated” representations that I understand with Mohanty (2003) as Indian women, Global South women, being produced “Under Western eyes”. There is something here about being drawn, affectively and materially, to the disruption of boundaries that are enacted in Eurocentric research practices and representational practices. I was perhaps enacting this disruption in my wish to pay attention to the bodily materiality and

the embodied, sensual ‘data’ in the initial conceptualisations. In its essence, and perhaps in my allegiance to Material and Post-structural Feminisms, my foray into this project came from a space of disruptiveness.

And perhaps in the very same allegiance there was also a deeper De/Colonial agenda that I was enacting. I argue here that this disruptiveness, this paying attention to the “outside the margins” that has emerged in the process, was always led by certain implicit De/Colonial overtures that emerge from my/our Indianness, womanhood, my/our entanglement within the practice of everyday Feminisms (Ahmed 2017) and inevitably my/our Insider/Outsider positioning within the spaces where I/we produce this project. I did not call myself or this project De/Colonial at this stage, but the disruptions enacted as an emergence in this project has produced us as stepping away from colonial ways of being and doing research within the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy and research about Indian women. I think of when I was drawn away from idea of “my individual narrative” to a desire to be/become from within a collective. There is an ontological-epistemological shift here – away from the individualism and Humanism that forms the cornerstone of western societies and most of Counselling and Psychotherapy theories to that of a familiar, Indian onto-epistemology of collectivist, interconnected, relational space. In this collectively-constituted project and its ethos of collaboration, the decolonising ethic is embodied in creating a space where “I” the researcher am co-implicated in the group of my “collaborators” – we create a space where we are ‘deterritorialised’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) from the idea of the ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’ to that of a collective, collaborative *knowing-in-being*. Here our decolonial engagement is enacted onto-epistemologically, through imagining (and intra-actively creating) a site and way of knowledge-production that seeks to actively engage with De/Colonising “research” iteratively and delves into how the colonial entanglements shape this process of

“knowledge”-making in particularly contextualised, entangled ways. It is also within these ethico-onto-epistemological engagements of the process that my focus shifts from producing knowledge *for* research to considering who this is actually for and what kind of knowledge might benefit us as a collective while also offering something potentially new to the disciplines we engage in.

I arrive at this De/Colonial shift as we enact further refusals to what the knowledge machine demands from us; we disrupt ourselves in each encounter with how we engage in the “doing” (as explored in detail in the following chapters). We exceed the forms of ‘accessible ‘data’ through allowing ourselves, our explorations, to fluidly move between writing, movement, art, discussions, and any other ways we might relationally want to engage, and in being flexible and diffractive with the methodological decisions and process in a way that can allow us to be and become within the dynamic movement. You will see in the following chapters that we embody these refusals of the colonising apparatus iteratively and relationally through exceeding the boundaries of research relationships, in approaching ‘data’ production through an ethos of care, and witnessing for each other over the obligation for knowledge-production. While the institutional ownership over the ‘data’ produced in the Collective Biography is already disrupted and destabilised in the collective framework of this project’s ‘data’ belonging to all collaborators and therefore not limited to the production of this thesis, further disruptions emerge in the ongoing process to shift my engagement with the ‘data’ we produce. As an emergence in ethico-onto-epistemological engagement with the ‘data’, I begin thinking-with Tuck and Yang (2014) and their frame of a decolonising stance in the refusal of academy’s fetishizing and commodifying of pain narratives of subaltern and Global South woman, the refusal of the academy’s claim to collecting/producing knowledge of other territories, and the refusal of research as intervention into marginalised communities.

In the writing of this thesis, I employ a stance of “plugging in” (Jackson and Mazzei 2011, 1) of the collaborative knowledge produced in the Collective biography workshops. While I explore “Refusal as an Analytic practice” (Tuck and Yang 2014) in detail and as it emerges in process in the chapter *Writing Story/ies*, in the chapters ahead, you will see that this refusal is enacted in the plugging-in of excerpts from the collaborative work to be diffractively read *with/through* different lenses that exceeds universalised, essentialist representations. I read theory here through the lens of our process, flexibly and creatively, rather than only reading/understanding the process through the lens of theory. This privileging of the “collective voice” towards thinking about research practices and theory further lends to the multiplicity and bringing to fore of “differences”, to allow for the knowledge produced in the study to be a “mapping of interference” (Haraway 2004) situated in the emergent interplay of contradictory stances and perspectives and coming alive as a *De/Colonial-New Materialist* praxis to thinking-with the ‘data’ gathered.

There are echoes and reverberations of this De/Colonising decentring throughout the Collective Biography process, this thesis and the matterings it produces. What emerges here is a process of bringing a De/Colonising praxis into relationship with the New Materialist knowledge/world making apparatus in our research practice. I ask myself here if I/we can produce in this project a Creative-Relational collaboration that is *De/Colonial-New Materialisms*? I turn to Barad’s conceptualisation of Diffraction (2006) towards coming into a relationship with these ontologically different yet entangled paradigms of world-making. Barad (2006) conceptualises diffraction as an encounter of two waves that occupy the same space to create a new emergent wave that holds the properties of the two. What diffraction does is to allow for a transdisciplinary research agenda through “reading insights through one another in

attending to and responding to the details and specificities of relations of difference and how they matter” (Barad 2006, 71). Using diffraction as a apparatus here to think with the *emergenc[i]es* that emerge in the doing and writing of this project, makes space for articulating the relational space (the *hyphen*) in-between New Materialist and Post/De/Colonialisms and the way they emerge as a ‘*knowing-in-being*’ of De/Colonial praxis within this project. This does not however mean that the idea of diffraction is too not disrupted. Inevitably, like the process of this project itself and perhaps as obvious from this rambling, messy engagement with ethico-onto-epistemologies, this writing marks the beginning of ethical engagements and diffractive decentrings, and iteratively *keeping the problems of ethics alive* in our *knowing-in-beings*.

(to be continued....)

CHAPTER-III

“KNOWING-IN-BEING” A THESIS

- *A ‘diffractively-reflexive’²⁰ foray into the **unknown-known** and Writing-as-worlding*

Reader, I now take you into some of the earliest pieces of writing from this thesis, following on from the conceptualisation of the project as explored in the previous chapter and the beginnings of Stage-2 of the Collective Biography. This chapter catapults us into *plugging-into* (Jackson and Mazzei 2011; 2013) moments of writing, and collective ‘data’ gathering time, over a year before the emergence of final drafts of this thesis. I take a step back to relate to the *then* so we might engage with how my engagement with “theory”, “data”, “research” and this thesis shifts from *knowing-in-being* with the collective and moments of methodological/paradigmatic incoherence in the process. My struggle with navigating or may be even orienting myself in my research process was at this stage embroiled within a conundrum – an unconscious search for ontological security and coherence in a project that hoped to embrace ontological *insecurity* and *incoherence*. Perhaps the struggle was also with the ideas of *navigating, orienting, and positioning* myself or the collective in this project; it seemed as though I was swimming upstream here, resisting the flow of the project as a dynamic *becoming*. The in-between spaces of navigating as an individual and being a part of a collective and of trying to engage within the non-dualistic, paradigmatic spaces within the frameworks of New Materialisms is brought into sharp focus here in how the collective (with its members holding conflicting paradigmatic positionings in relationship) disrupt/produce the space, each other, and this thesis.

²⁰ See Footnote 21

Let me then *re-turn* (Barad 2014), to the focus of this meandering – the onto-epistemology of ‘bodies’, ‘data’ and diffractive practices as we come to understand within the collective and the shifts in my parallel process that take me into *becoming-differently* through *Writing-as-worlding* (Jackson and Mazzei 2022). As loose structuring, within this chapter, I move between different pieces of work that has been broadly produced within my project, and I try to hold multiple points of entry into troubling our engagement and my process within it. I *plug-in* other texts as they emerge relationally to complicate the initial title of this study “Bodies materialised in power and patriarchy”, the movement/film exploration “On ‘being’ and ‘knowing’ a body” (Manjunath 2021b), my process as the researcher, the process of beginning collaborative engagement, ‘data’ as we come to understand it, and excerpts from different points in time from the collaborative writing. We arrive from this complicating at expanding on what I was unravelling in the previous chapters – an emergent articulation of shifts and disruptions in my understanding of ‘data’, theory/concepts, representation, the enlivened praxis of Barad’s (2006) *Knowing-in-being* and Jackson and Mazzei’s (2011, 2013) *plugging-in*, and ultimately embryonic beginnings of how the lens of the collective work and writing produces worldings of ‘De/Coloniality’ and this thesis in process.

Diffractively-Reflexive²¹ Beginnings – ‘Re-turning’ and splintering through time and spaces

Perhaps I can begin with *re-turning* to the initial title of this study - “Bodies materialised in Power and Patriarchy”. While this title emerged through a series of entanglements and has

²¹ I draw from Serra Undurraga’s (2021) conceptualisation of “Diffracted reflexivity”, a performative meta-reflexivity that diffracts and interrogates the ways in which we are being reflexive and use adverb form “Diffractively-Reflexive” as a paying attention to the movements towards Diffraction that emerge through meta-reflexively *being-with* the pull towards sense-making and capturing in my attempts to embrace the Diffractive apparatus.

produced the study itself in particular onto-epistemological frames, *re-turning* from other entangled moments of ‘here and now’ of process allows me to examine and make evident some of what is produced and made dynamic through titling the study in this particular way. It feels important to take a moment to remind myself that for Barad (2014, 168) *re-turning* itself implies a stepping away from the dichotomies of the *here-now* or *there-then* and allows for a blurring of the boundaries towards “making of new temporalities”. Thinking with Barad and *re-turning* allows me to see the intentional act of titling the study as *more-than* a frozen, static moment in time to be revisited, captured, and reflected upon. In this section and the next we see how this *becomes* a diffraction through the study (and this writing), creating splintering entanglements and relational moments of mattering that dynamically produce, and disrupt, the study and us as intra-active bodies.

Thinking with this ‘co-implication’ I notice, through *re-turning*, my contrary use of language in my initial title that implies a representational stickiness and immobility: in its focus on a collective (multiple-entangled *Bodies*) rooted in a boundaried, static past (*Materialised*), tied unidirectionally *in* discourses of *power and patriarchy*, and waiting to be somehow captured through the processes of our being together in the Collective biography workshops and collaborative writing. Getting in touch with this stickiness here allows me to also notice the desperate grasp for the familiar ways of knowing/being/doing research and relating that creates an onto-epistemological incoherence between the way I come into the study and the frameworks of the New Materialist co-implication I was committed to. These tensions also come alive in our collective process during this time, with our becoming embroiled in finding ‘our’ way of engaging within a non-linear, disjointed, sometimes incoherent and yet forceful process of self-exploration.

Within my parallel process, I struggle here with ‘making sense’ of how the collective process was being produced and how this might/might not have been aligning with New Materialist onto-epistemological positioning. I get stuck here in my anxieties of not leading the process into any specific framework, while struggling with the force of collective, chaotic emergences that did not fit my (or Davies and Gannon's (2012)) envisioning of diffractive discussions and Collective Biography ‘data’ production about the materiality of our bodies. With hindsight, I resonate here with Serra Undurraga (2022, 1) when she highlights how we inevitably betray our best intentions of embracing diffractive, disruptive, and decentring practices through unwittingly (perhaps desperately?) reproducing familiar, “representational, dichotomous, centring and identitarian ways of relating to ourselves, others, our work and so on”. Serra Undurraga (2022) advocates acknowledging and allowing for how we might betray our intentions; so we might become more curious and facilitate a *being-with* the nuances, complexities and contradictions of spaces that might trap us.

Owing to this *being-with*, perhaps a *re-turning* to the ideas on diffraction as an apparatus is in order here. I think of diffraction as conceptualised by Barad (2014) where diffraction and diffractive methodologies bring the entanglements, exclusions, and differences forward to “open up lines of flight where new and surprising meaning intra-act with the matter(ing) of life” (Davies and Gannon 2012, 372). Reader, you might have some sense by now of how committed I am to this idea of newness and diffraction. I feel obligated to share that this commitment involves *mo[ve]ments* of iterative complicating as opposed to rigid sense of loyalty, and as promised earlier, I now reveal how my practice and understanding of diffraction is complicated/disrupted in process.

According to Davies and Gannon (2012), diffraction allows (at least conceptually) for a paradigmatic and methodological coherence within the context of Collective Biography and its allegiance towards “diffractive rather than reflective apparatus”. At this stage, I was grappling with *how to do* “diffraction rather than reflection” in practice and coming towards an in-practice understanding of limitations of this “doing”; considering we were also noticing our need to grasp, make sense and capture experiences within the collective, and facilitating a shift away from this process felt incoherent and exclusionary within the collaborative ethos we held. However, I note here the exclusions of the statement “diffractive *rather than* reflective”, that implies a stepping away from or leaving behind the reflective apparatus. I am bound here within the very exclusions I create in trying to stay true to such a stance even as I try to embrace diffraction as an expansive force. Acknowledging these cyclical binds that emerge in the process of *doing* allows me to begin disrupting not only my process with diffraction but also other intentional acts that are bound and stilted. For example, let us think further about what might be produced in titling a study “Bodies Materialised in power and patriarchy”? What am I asking here? What am I trying to ‘know’? Is there a wish here to know about “bodies” as static entities that have been produced/materialised in a static past? A hope to reveal pre-existing cultural scripts of power and patriarchy that produced these bodies? A hope to know of a pre-existing collective? Similarly to the collective process, there is an almost unconscious draw here towards “knowing” from the past and my language aligns more towards how we understand reflexivity than diffraction.

It is perhaps as Ahmed (2010a, 37) says, ‘we may walk into the room and “feel the atmosphere,” but what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival...we might say that the atmosphere is already angled; it is always from a specific point’ and like Ahmed, I am angled in my arrival into this project and it is THIS specific angling (along with multiple such

entanglements) that are producing me, the project and the collective as incoherent within the frame of “diffraction *rather than* reflection”. The need to “know” that I reveal here betrays me even as I long to escape it. It emerges in the process as a struggle to hold on to expansiveness but getting bogged down in anxieties of “doing” and “knowing”. However, with Serra Undurraga (2021) I ask myself if perhaps, it is only *through my attempt to grasp* (to know of bodies and collectives, of power and patriarchy, to ‘know’ of myself but failing) that the collective and I are produced as dynamic subjects who cannot be known. I use Serra Undurraga (2021, 6) here to both *know* and take me away from the knowing. I sit with her words – “I find myself needing to grasp, to pin down things, to represent, to categorise, but when I do it, I can feel trapped, the other can feel trapped and I need to move towards the diffractive lights”.

I understand/know within my practice of trying to *do diffraction* that the tensions of this call to “leave behind” forecloses the expansive and dynamic movements that can be created in *being-with* the incoherence and collision of these seemingly opposing practices. And it is through *re-turning* to trapping/trapped spaces and *mo[ve]ments* of being bound that I can allow myself to expand towards new openings. Thinking-with Serra Undurraga (2021) and her call for stepping away from purist notions of *leaving behind*, I embrace what she offers as an intra-active in-between space that can diffract the static notions of both diffraction and reflexivity itself. Here, rather than a defensive manoeuvring away from this grasp for familiar reflective/reflexive apparatus towards, I wonder what can be produced in making space for and leaning into the paradigmatic incoherence that is created by this grasp for understanding and being pulled back into familiar ways of being with/in the collective.

Being-with here opens up a pathway for me to not force myself or the collective into rigid positionalities during the process and allows for process to emerge and produce as a

catalytic force. It is such non-exclusionary practices within the unwittingly produced dualistic *mo[ve]ments* that I hope to pursue now and I invite you, the reader, to follow me into the potentially productive departures this perusal might lead to. In the following section I explore how the collective and our *being-doing-becoming-together* collaboratively facilitates this opening of in-between and allows me to interrogate the paradigmatic dimensions of the study I take for granted in claiming a certain rigid, theoretical situatedness.

The echo chambers – Re-turning to the ‘unknown-known’

And after weeks of discussions and trying to write, I notice how I still need to find a way in, to attempt to start writing the body... the relationship with my body is still based on external factors .. filled with jargon and cognitive, political language...

(Collaborative Writing Session-2)

In speaking of unwittingly produced dualisms, a significant conflict in my process at this stage was between *theoretical grappling* and *material being*. This project was to be about bodies and I had, many times within and outside the collective, complained about my/our lack of ability to go *into the body*, to *access the body*, to *capture in words* some of what happens to and within the body (a dualistic stance where thinking/talking about the body are held as separate from *being-with* and writing the body). The fragmentation that these dualistic binds create becomes my affective experience of being pulled in different directions between expansive, diffractive flights and a foreclosing need to make sense and make *known* something concrete, grounded, and stable; as in the excerpt above, within my process of beginning Collective Biography I search for the *ontologically stable body* that can be known, written, and made sense of outside the entanglements. This search for ontological stability in itself feels like an incoherence that can potentially close off the process, but it is also incoherence that can

open up an in-between space where new meanings can be produced from the echoes and the fragments. One such echo is my video/movement film [“On ‘being’ and ‘knowing’ a body”](#) (Manjunath 2021b). I link this video above as a rhizomatic departure, but what this chapter demands is a *re-turning* to writing produced later as an artist’s memo *about* this film –

Artist’s Memo - Film published in the TheAutoethnographer

“On Being and Knowing a body” is a multimedia/movement rendition... An overarching thread that runs through the film is the question of “Can we ever see or know ourselves or another fully?” ... This Creative-Relational exploration delves into assumptions of “being” and “knowing”, not only in relation to myself in my research, but also in relation to the political, discursive, and privileged notions of how we think/write/know about bodies in research contexts.

At the core of this exploration is my experience of fragmentation and loss that arises from the inability to be, see, know, or coherently articulate parts of my bodily process as I engage in a deeply relational, collaborative process of writing about collective bodies and dynamic, messy, entangled identities in my research process. I follow these layers of fragmentation and loss from thinking about the “I” of research, and its presumption of our capacity to know ourselves, to a diffractive disruption of “writing” and ‘data’ and the richness that is produced through the use of a different medium of exploration.

The medium of film and movement here allows me to capture the non-verbal, evocative, intersubjective bodily “being-ness” that cannot be fully articulated, explicitly spoken of or written... Consequently, the frame of the camera and the film itself becomes symbolic of the limitations of the gaze with which I can look at my own body and the gaze of the other who will hope to “see” through the film. The fragmentation and loss both come alive in the incoherence and distortion in the parts of the body that are “seen” or what parts of the body I can expose to myself or the viewer in any given moment and portrays the intangibility of the materiality in trying to explore and “write” about my experiences.

I share this artistic piece as an invitation to problematise and think further about what I/we can know about ourselves and our bodies but also to make space for the incoherence that becomes a part of “being” and “knowing” in explorations of fragmentation and loss.

While the above description of the film slips into autoethnographic explorations of bodies and knowledge, *re-turning* to this now leads me to explore the productive way my departure into a reflexive/meaning-making space allows me to find lines of flight and straddle the tensions between not only being/knowing or coherence/incoherence, but also the reflexive and diffractive positionings of *relating* to myself, the collective and the ‘data’ I/we produce. I step into thinking-with Lenz Taguchi (2012) and her idea of engaging with ‘data’ in a transcorporeal way that traverses the researcher-subject dualisms and allows me to be in a process of *becoming* with the ‘data’ and that which is read within it. Serra Undurraga (2021), in her conceptualisation of blurring diffraction and reflexivity, furthers this idea of a transcorporeal engagement. For Serra Undurraga (2021) a reflexivity that can embrace diffraction allows for relating to ourselves as *becoming* (not as formed, bounded subjects) and rethinks the very act of thinking through engaging the bodymind, and embracing all that is vaguely felt but not understood in a clear-cut manner as being co-constituted from an entangled field (in hindsight, this also aligns with Jackson and Mazzei’s (2021) ideas around rethinking ‘thought’). This way of a transcorporeal, diffractive reading of the ‘data’ allows me to conceptualise the production of this dance film, produced as a seemingly ‘separate personal reflection’, as an affective departure that allowed for my *becoming* from the in-between of diffractive and reflexive practices.

In the highlighted parts of the text above (and in the film), I enact (quite viscerally) the onto-epistemological tensions I have been exploring above; I complicate what I can know and I complicate how I can know this and what is happening to ‘it’ in my quest to know. While I do not arrive at static answers, I am taken into making space for incoherence, to allow it to be created by and create the field. This *re-turn* to the writing further puts me in touch with the vagueness/in-betweenness of this ‘knowing’ as the ‘*unknown-known*’ and the co-implicated

processes of *knowing-in-being*; in diffracting and shining light on the non-linearity and enmeshment of the processes of creating this film and the being/knowing that emerges iteratively from it. I did not know while I was creating the film, I did not set out to know something after, I did not know when I was *being* and *becoming* within the film; what I capture is the becoming, of what is continually *becoming* from my *being-with* the film even now. It is perhaps this sense of *becoming* and relating to the '*unknown-known*' that Jackson and Mazzei (2022) refer to as "writing-as-worlding" (I think of "writing" not only as the written word but also other material ways of engaging with the not-yet). Within the process, this particular *writing-as-worlding* provides me the diffractively-reflexive pathway to be in the materiality (a fragmented, incoherent and ontologically unstable materiality) *while* also being present within the entanglements that produce and are being produced by the bodily beingness.

However, it is significant to note that it is not just methodological or paradigmatic insights that I arrive at here from the rhizomatic exploration of making a movement film. I also begin to understand here the way different mediums of 'data', the film in this instance, opens up potential pathways for diffractive thinking that steps outside what feels familiar and inevitable. The camera and the gaze of camera here for example *become* the agential non-human other I relate to in producing the film/me diffractively and the movement medium I use for exploration offers a disruption of the need for articulation and 'understanding' that comes from language and allows for the visceral and incoherent to emerge. I *know* here of the Post-ontologies, Posthuman decentering and Barad's (2006) ideas around co-implicated ontologies, through the process of *being* with the tensions and difficulties of embracing such stances. However I need to highlight here that it is not just me in a parallel process who embarks on these *becomings*. The collective process that is entangled and co-implicated within

knowing-being-doing research is inextractable from my process and expands my understanding of the intra-active onto-epistemological relationality that Barad (2006) argues for.

Knowing-in-being – Diffracting from/towards “Entangled Bodies” and co-implicated “Onto-epistemologies”

Enlivening the co-implicated processes of *becoming* and being co-constituted by the collective, multiple synchronous/entangled processes emerge in the relational space of Collective Biography work. I now trace these processual entanglements of the collaborative engagement.

Are we looking for something specific? The difficulty of writing also makes me feel a certain pressure of talking about the body and talking about it in a particular way... but my relationship with my body is not so tangible. It is just so difficult to even make sense of my body outside the patriarchy and the other social stuff.

(Collaborative Writing Session 2)

In the excerpt above, it seems as though an echo of the film explored above has reverberated through the collective, or perhaps it was the echo of the collective that was diffracted into the film. The group here is enacting a dynamic, agential act of hoping to ‘make sense’ in the writing. In the questions of specificity that look for static, tangible knowings, in the grappling for “a particular way” that would require the negation of the entanglements of bodies, we enact and re-enact familiar representational dilemmas of trying to make sense of our material realities as separate from their discursive histories. We tie ourselves up in knots, we are territorialised by the dichotomous, dualistic need for material/narrative coherence, to ‘know’ a body that is not entangled in discursive roots. In this territorialisation, even as we

notice the enmeshment, we foreclose ourselves in our hope of representing ‘A body’ or ‘THE collective BODIES’ or ‘the UNSOCIALIZED body’ in its bounded reality.

While the collective is produced as particularly incoherent in that moment, by our grasp for contradictory onto-epistemological pathways that traps or forecloses any movement, a diffractive reading can open new expansive ways of thinking and *being-with* these contradictions. For example, diffractively thinking about our grappling as a collective here propels me into the New Materialist critique of Feminisms and Feminist theories as swinging between the dualisms of the material and the discourse. A dualistic, unidirectional stance here would be to deny the phenomenological beingness (e.g., intangibility) of the everyday body towards bodies as being constituted within discourses of culture and power OR bring to fore the specificities of the materiality where the social-discursive is negated (e.g., making sense of bodies outside of patriarchy). In the above excerpt then, through the *mo[ve]ments* of our becoming-feminist and becoming-collective, we enact these very tensions in a visceral way, in feeling unable to move past the unidirectional constitution of bodies and discourses as somehow having to have a prior ontologically stable status that can be de-alienated and accessed. Frost (2011, 70) cautions that the New Materialist call here is not a *step back* into the phenomenological body, renouncing “insights into the ways in which power infuses bodies and matter to make them into socially and politically intelligible subjects and objects”, but expansive entanglements asking the questions of “what these bodies are such that inscription is possible, what it is in the nature of bodies, in biological evolution, that opens them up to cultural transcription, social immersion, and production, that is, to political, cultural, and conceptual evolution” (Grosz 2004, 2 as cited in Frost 2011). The call here then is for a way of onto-epistemological disrupting that can make space for both the way bodies are constituted in the discourses and the way biological bodies enact their agencies in producing and resisting

against these discourses; a mutual co-constitution that opens the space for both the beingness of bodies and its co-constituting discursive forces as reciprocal agentive acts.

I step back to thinking-with Serra Undurraga (2021, 6) here, I *re-turn* to her words - “[we] find [ourselves] needing to grasp, to pin down things, to represent, to categorise, but when [we] do it, [we] can feel trapped, the other can feel trapped and [we] need to move towards the diffractive lights”. What newness can be incited from our being trapped in these unidirectional/representational loops? A dynamic, in-practice understanding of how these methodological and philosophical tensions of being-feminists and doing feminist work is enacted in collectives in particularly material-discursive ways in the research process? A territorialisation and de-territorialisation that allows me to dynamically *become-New Materialist* and allows us to inquire into collective ways of transcending material-discursive dualism? I ‘diffractively-reflexively’ see these emergent *becomings*, enacted in multiple ‘timespacematterings’, as a reaching out towards Serra Undurraga’s (2021) diffractive lights – the film “On ‘being’ and ‘knowing a body’”; the description of it that is produced in a different timespacemattering where a transcorporeal engagement (Lenz Taguchi 2012) with the ‘data’ creates something affective, something that exceeds the ‘data’ and ourselves as researchers; the small sentence (quoted below) added by a member of the group to the excerpt at a later date:

(Added to the above excerpt in writing session 5)

But we don’t know that there is a way to make sense of the body outside the patriarchy, outside of power, outside of discourse and outside of all the other things the material body is tangled in...”

We flow (sometimes jarringly) between the material consequences of our discursive explorations and the discursive consequences of our material beingness, the co-constitution of being produced and producing ourselves as ‘*unknown-known*’ even as we start wondering–

“I notice, just like we did with the discussions and the writing, we keep going round and round with the “how to””

There is a collective sense of grappling with ‘how to engage’, producing the shift out of the representative stance into the ‘not yet’ and into the co-constitution. Here we are deterritorialised into diffractive lights in the change of focus from the “what” and “when” to the “how do we do this”, perhaps even without really ‘knowing’ what it is we are doing. Like in the excerpts from our collaborative writing below we disjointedly, non-linearly make and remake ourselves as primarily material subjects and primarily discursive subjects, we disrupt that which we are producing, so that we can inadvertently produce *timespacematterings* through testing boundaries of that in-between space of material-discursive co-constitution.

“There is one theme that keeps coming up. When and how do our bodies become “loaded”? ...become charged with the power, violence, and discourse? And what would happen to the body without this loadedness?”

(The materiality here collides with the political but we keep producing ourselves as discursively rooted bodies)

How does a part of the body become a “place” or known as “pussies” as opposed to a body part ... but there is something split off about how we can see or talk about bodies ...Medically, sexually, biologically, discursively...

(A disruption in noticing the dualistic splitting-off; a going beyond ourselves)

How do we write our body? Is it visual responses of drawing, is it visceral responses in our bodies the knots in the stomach, the feeling in our bodies! We want to be writing the body but there always seems to be something of a representational dilemma ... It creates an uncertainty ... is meaning made from bodies? Or are bodies made from the meaning ascribed to them? such ontological uncertainty ... are we writing the body if we are writing about the body? ... are we writing about the materiality of the body if we are writing about the social and the discursive ways that the material becomes material?

(A disruption of unidirectional ideas of materiality)

But the violence that comes with the loadedness and the charge ... and the power in that... violence against bodies, but also violence against “dignity” and the shame associated with that violence ... There is a cycle here of how power moves through patriarchy into bodies and from bodies into patriarchy again So how do these “intimate” parts become “intimate and by definition also vulnerable ... how does it become possible for bodies to be “violated” and what makes them characterised as violated? ...

(A diffractive reading of thinking about materiality and its entanglement within the discursive...the in-between space where we can maybe think of how bodies get materialised and how the materialising produces discourses)

“How do bodies get materialised? How do bodies keep materialising? How does the materialising of bodies produce agential acts and a multiplicity of entanglements and realities? How does our coming together (an intentional agential act) as a collective produce this knowledge? Do you see diffracting light creating something new each time it collides with ‘another’ in these questions? I/we arrive here to *knowing-in-being* diffraction as a practice and tracing the material-discursive entanglements as Barad (2006) calls for, through the process of our engagement within the representational tensions of how we might engage with our bodies and our experiences. Perhaps then, it is these relational collisions, *knowing-in-beings*, that becomes the focus of this inquiry; the relational that allows us to inquire and *know* through our very *being-with* and that produces and creates individuals/collectives as dynamic, vibrant co-constituted *becomings*.

“Writing-as-worlding” – Knowing-in-being, ‘unknown-known’ and dynamic, De/Colonial becomings of this thesis

What are we doing here? What is this space for? What is the space made of? It is becoming difficult to pull away from the collective intensity.”

*I wonder if it is **necessary** to pull away from the collective?*

As with the collective process in the excerpt above, I too struggled at this stage with what I am “doing” with this thesis, what/who it is for and how/what I could write outside of the collective process. I *knew* conceptually that, within a New Materialist framework, I would have to ‘not represent’ the collective process but allow for this thesis too to be a diffractive flight, but I did not perhaps “know” at this stage the myriad disruptions that were already emergent in the process to shift this thesis from being unidirectionally representative of the collective and our bodies. Reader, you are aware from my earlier chapters that I am arguing for such disruptions as an emergent De/Colonial praxis to New Materialisms and Collective Biography and in this section I hope to begin thinking further with the four themes of Deconiality identified by Ndege and Onyango (2021) as noted in my introduction. However, before I trace these links to De/Colonial disruptions, I need to go back to ‘*knowing-in-being*’ and how I arrive at *writing-as-wordling* this particular thesis in the process.

For Barad (2006) a truly *relational*, New Materialist framework would commit to an ethico-onto-epistemological stance where the processes of ‘knowing’, ‘being’ and ‘doing’ are co-implicated and intimately intertwined. I understand this through our collective-becomings as the research process that shifts the questions of what, when and why to the “how”. Within a New Materialist practice then, I am concerned with ‘how is this research being produced and what is it producing’, I am concerned with making explicit and paying nuanced attention to how matter, knowledge and discourse enatangle and produce particular realities and produce each other continually. I am concerned with how I/we within the collective (and sometimes individually) enact or perform agential acts that propel us into being produced *differently*. What I am getting at is the rich emphasis this ‘*knowing-in-being*’ as an onto-epistemological practice

puts on the production of knowledge, worlds and realities- as known in the very being, known in the processes through which it is being produced and producing as it is being known. In the above sections I have explored how this *knowing-in-being* comes alive in the research practice and disrupts other familiar *knowings* that we might fall back to; the questions I ask above are emergent in the process as opposed to being pre-prescribed as ‘research questions’. Consequently, I now ask myself why this thesis would be any different from the process of constant flux and richness of the *knowing-in-being* stance that emerged within our practice. It is here in process that I begin to move from writing the familiar ‘known’ (what we already ‘know’ about the challenges and traumatic entanglements of bodies across gender identities with patriarchy) to the ‘*unknown-known*’; where in seeking to know our bodies we might end up *knowing* something about processes of *if/how* we can know about such bodies.

With hindsight, I can see my process with writing this thesis as embracing *knowing-in-being* and knowing what this thesis *becomes* through the very writing of it; perhaps not at the very moment of writing but iteratively in the *re-turns* and *emergenc[i]es*. As an *unknown-known*, I begin a *different* engagement with the process and with this thesis through writing the sections above. I go back here to thinking-with Jackson and Mazzei (2022) and their thoughts on plugging-in and writing-as-worlding. Reader, I have ‘used’ both these concepts to a certain extent in this chapter/thesis and now I engage with these as they emerge/expand relationally in the process. Jackson and Mazzei (2022) offer plugging-in as a concept towards *thinking-with* theory but perhaps I need to highlight here that their focus here on plugging-in is ontological; i.e. a relational-creation of assemblages through plugging texts into one another and the worldings/becomings that are set in motion through the process. Inevitably then, plugging-in is a *becoming* where *mo[ve]ments*, forces, intensities, the felt, and the sensed (if only as *unknown-known*) “catalyse relational formings” towards attending to the *what-else*, the not-

yet and enacting new wordlings. It is this sense of thought-in-action that is brought alive in the above sections where the collective accounts (and other ‘data’ gathered) are “not things... but *do* things. They are *Force*” (Jackson and Mazzei 2022, 2), that unleash thought, cross thresholds of the familiar and rupture the conventional in a continual process of *becoming* a process of *Writing-as-worlding*.

We can note this writing-as-worlding, the *unknown-known* and plugging-in of the collective ‘data’ in process with how my writing in the above sections begins producing the De/Colonial praxis in the very way it is being disrupted and produced as *more-than* but co-implicated within the collective. I was not aware at the time of writing the above sections that I would be employing Refusal as an Analytic practice with the Collective ‘data’ (explored further in the chapter *Writing Story/ies*). But even within this not-knowing, I begin *being-with* the collective process and the ‘data’ produced within it in a way that disrupts what I had presumed I would do; i.e. “analyse”, to some extent, the collective ‘data’ even if not ‘represent’. Instead in the practice of writing, *re-turning* and *knowing-in-being* as an ethico-onto-epistemological engagement, I start interrogating my theoretical situatedness, the concepts that I am grappling with and the very paradigmatic, onto-epistemological and methodological stances I had envisioned for the study through the lens of the collective voice and process. I set the path here for *this* thesis writing process that disrupts itself, not in any pre-prescribed way, but in what emerges from the process of the collective and our grappling with the paradigmatic/methodological frameworks we had set out for ourselves.

Ultimately it is also through these writing-as-worldings, and the worlds I/we go on relationally-creating through our *writing-being-becoming-knowing-together*, that I/we become entangled in how we, a collective of Global South women, are relationally, intra-actively

creating and producing through these processes of knowing and being and the ‘*knowing-in-being*’ with our bodies, patriarchy, New Materialisms and Collective Biography. With hindsight, if I have to think of a “how” question of intra-active co-constitution here as Barad (2006) would ask us to, it would be something along the lines of – “How do we, a collective of Global South women, *know* and co-constitute Creative-relational Inquiry, New Materialisms and Collective Biography differently while *being-with* and tracing the entanglements of our bodies and patriarchal contexts of India within a framework of a New Materialist Collective Biography?”. Such research questions and research practices perhaps cannot be anything but De/Colonial *because* of the way our localised situatedness as Indian Women becomes co-implicated and entangled within our engagement with/in Global North onto-epistemologies; I/We produce these Global North onto-epistemologies differently and *ethico-onto-epistemologically* even as we are produced as a collective engaging with Indianess, femininity, bodies and patriarchy through creative-relationally *becoming-feminist, becoming-New Materialist and becoming-collective*.

Here we bring alive in process three of the four themes identified by Ndege and Onyango (2021). We “open up spaces for free thinking” through our localised situatedness and our very co-implication and fluid engagement within the process – our process here allows us to transcend rigidity and familiar ways of knowing/being/doing that might trap us in dualistic, colonial and Eurocentric loops of representation. A “critique of positions of power and dominant culture” emerges through tracing the entanglements of *how* we engage in research and allowing for the process to produce me into *being-doing-writing this* thesis as an ethico-onto-epistemological disruption of the familiar and the expected as explored above. Further our engagement propels us in the process here towards “unpacking disciplinary tensions and conflicts” and, as noted in my introduction and our explorations in the previous chapter, the

De/Colonial disruption here happens through my/our holding of interdisciplinary, conflicting and improbable positionings into complicating/disrupting the rigidity of disciplines/theories/concepts we engage with.

As we move through our process with the Collective work, and as I continue *writing-as-worlding* this thesis, plugging-in our collective voice and process to disrupt the very means, frameworks, apparatus' and knowledge machines that forms our research practice *becomes* the De/Colonial *emergenc[i]es* and the dynamic *unknown-knowns* that I cannot help but keep attending to. It is on this note that I take you to my following chapter. *The Writing Story/ies* traces my/our process with *writing-as-worlding* to arrive at further complicating the process of our collaborative writing and the writing of this thesis towards “Refusal as an analytic practice” and further De/Colonial disruptions. It is my hope here that we might emerge from this next chapter into envisioning the rhizomatic departures that becomes possible from such a disruptive, De/Colonial praxis and have a sense of the multiplicity of dimensions that such De/Coloniality might open for us in thinking of research processes.

CHAPTER-IV

THE “WRITING” STORY/IES**– PerForming refusals and abandoning ‘sense-making’ as *Minor-acts* of worlding**

In the previous chapter, I have alluded to the inevitable and significant entanglements of the practice of *writing-as-worlding* this thesis, its materialisation and the process of the collective being/becoming. There is still a story to be told here of how this opens up the enlivened worlds of De/Coloniality for us in process. I frame this as a story in thinking-with Richardson’s (in Richardson and St. Pierre 2017) conceptualisation of “Writing stories” but these multiple, layered, intertwined story/ies defy and resist the structure of storying itself. You the reader perhaps by now have a sense of how I am led by this defiance; it is a productive, generative, disruptive force that drives me within this project. Staying with this defiance, in this chapter I hope to attend to kindred enactments of resistance and ‘Refusals’ and the way our performing these refusals within the processes of collective engagement, collaborative writing and writing of this thesis intra-act to materialise *Minor-acts* of structural disruption and De/Colonial, ethico-onto-epistemological worldings. I foreground the process of ‘data’ gathering within Collective Biography meetings and collaborative writing to trace the ripples it creates in the inclusions, exclusions, and analysis/*writing-as-worlding* this thesis. I expand further on the some of the emergent methodological/paradigmatic/theoretical tensions (reading them through plugging-in the collective process) and the threads of De/Coloniality that I began unravelling in the previous chapters. My positioning in this process as insider/outsider, an Indian woman engaged in New Materialist knowledge production practices in the Global North, and as co-implicated in a collective of Global South, Indian Women, brings to fore the myriad entanglements and charged moments of tension that emerge in the materialising of this project. While all the four themes identified by Ndege and Onyango (2021) come alive

explicitly in our process at this stage, in this chapter I particularly expand on “Considering the relationship of the researcher with the ‘*researcher*’” and “Opening up spaces to critique positions of power and dominant culture”. In being with these tensions, I arrive at conceptualising *[Non]writing* and “Refusals” as an analytic practice (Tuck and Yang 2014) that allows me to track the diffractive-rhizomatic, ethico-onto-epistemological *knowing-in-being* processes of ‘data’ gathering/analysis and further expand on the De/Colonial praxis towards research (and this thesis) as creating pathways for expansive, different, and dynamic, non-colonial worldings.

Collective Biography, Collaborative Writing and Knowledge production – Writing as a ‘data’ gathering/analysis Apparatus

In the chapter *The Ethics of Collaboration*, I outlined the methodological design for ‘data’ gathering as conceptualised by the collective. Our Stage-2 of Collective Biography workshops were co-designed to be fortnightly meetings as a group; alternating between five meetings where we discuss and witness each other’s memories and thoughts about our bodies and our entanglements with patriarchy, beginning with themes of breasts, vagina, skin, hair, and blood, and five meetings where we collaboratively *wrote-with* the discussions we had engaged in on a cloud document. I think of the design of this project to be a like a tapestry, woven collaboratively, lovingly, and painstakingly to support us, the collective, in our engagement with ourselves. During this process of conceptualisation, our attention was on the strategies we could employ to allow us to produce something material and tangible that we could iteratively work with, while also making space for fluidity and instability of anything that is produced within this engagement. As noted in chapter-II, this included foregrounding the kinship and connectedness we shared outside of this project, making space for the informality of this relationality, and privileging the safety of our witnessing, solidarity, and our

familiarity with each other to be explicitly brought into the collective space in engaging as we would outside of the research contexts.

We are all Indian women, friends who share deep friendships and who regularly gather around tables loaded with scrumptious food and drinks to talk about the highs and lows of our lives, of the joy and pain of *being* who we are, entangled in inseparable threads that connect us regardless of this project. While this way of *being-with* each other emerged as an intra-active collective framework for/within the group, I would come to later understand it, through writing with Bhattacharya (2007) in this thesis, as aligning with the transnational, De/Colonial framework that foregrounds culturally familiar, non-imperialistic ways of knowing and being in research relationships as an ethico-onto-epistemological praxis (explored further in the last section of this chapter). The Collective Biography space reflected this foregrounded connectedness and relationality through moulding the discussion space around our familiar ways of being and creating a contained ‘writing’ time that we would use to write-with our discussions. We knew during conceptualisation that the design we envisioned demanded a long-term commitment and that the doing of the project would be emotionally and relationally demanding. The writing was to provide a space for “producing” something that the collective and I could use as ‘data’. Additionally, the writing space was also a preliminary ‘data’ ‘analysis’ where we could work our relationalities and the ‘data’ from discussions in the collective space by plugging it into itself towards collaboratively materialising it in a format that iteratively considered the inclusions and exclusions we enacted in process. In essence the ‘analysis’ and the relational engagement with the ‘data’ we produced was woven into the design and co-constitutively produced us and this thesis. But reader, you have seen the beginnings of the disruptions that emerged for us in our writing process in the previous chapter,

and I now follow on from our grappling with tensions of “writing the body” and representation into our process of *writing-becoming-De/Colonial*.

Before beginning writing with the group, I envisioned collaborative writing and our engagement as conceptualised by Gale et al. (2019, 326) – “a collaborative intra-active space in which [we] were relatively free to creatively and diffractively enact and respond to multiple stimuli, movements in moments, in the processually imaginative unfolding of (listening, talking, writing, listening, talking, writing ...) space”. While conceptually a process such as this might feel fluid and infinitely generative, our experience of aiming to write in this way, particularly about our materialities that are inscribed by trauma, was wrought with the tensions of a never-ending emergence, and rushed diffractions away from meaning-making toward continually *becoming-more*. I wrote a bit about our grappling with meaning-making and our struggles within the material-discursive dualisms of our exploration in the previous chapter. Staying with Serra Undurraga's (2022) thoughts around betraying our best intentions, and with hindsight, I wonder now if there was a naive hope in our wish for containment, and producing something *tangible* to be ‘used’, that is rendered ungraspable within these *mo[ve]ments* of the process. I resonate with Tamas (2009, 5) here when she says “clean and reasonable scholarship about messy, unreasonable experiences is an exercise in alienation”. I understand this as any and all experiences but particularly resonant with experiences that evoke traumatic affects. Was our attempt at “writing” then a hope of making our fragmented, leaky, affective, visceral discussions reasonable enough to fit into the mould of “data”?

Perhaps what we did not anticipate in the process of conceptualising the Collective Biography engagement was the struggles and tensions that would iteratively emerge with the demand for producing tangible ‘data’ about our bodies and our experiences, as knowledge that

somehow explicated our discussions. While our intention for the Collective Biography was to roughly follow the processes of telling, listening, writing, reading, re-reading, re-writing and re-telling our stories, in the process, we had to continually and generatively depart (as in my previous chapter) from not only the structure of Collective Biography as envisioned by Davies and Gannon (2012) but also the tentative loose structure that we had agreed upon; to engaging with our resistance towards particular ways of being/doing/writing. The process of writing brings this resistance into the relational space (seen in the excerpt below) in ways that had perhaps been not evident in our discussions.

I feel the familiar resistance to writing that I recognise.

I feel a resistance to writing too. In a way it feels like I am out of the comfort of chatting with friends over a coffee and suddenly pushed into a very formal space. What I say now will be somehow institutionalised, the discomfort of exposure becomes evident to me.

What happens when things are institutionalised .. it seems like it's a different kind of exposure

Writing things down makes them real.

(Collaborative writing session-1 – The beginning)

The reverberations of this resistance have formed a central thread throughout our process and the iterative, paradoxical *writing-as-worlding* of this thesis (as evident in how each chapter has led us to the evocative, visceral sense of incoherence and resistance towards meaning-making and familiar, representative world-making). In the above excerpt, our collective resistance to writing, to putting down experiences we had verbally shared in words, gets territorialised in our process of *becoming-institutionalised* and *becoming-real*; the significance of “institutional knowledge-production” as something that makes *worlds/reality*

and as having ethico-onto-epistemological implications comes to fore here. I/we did not anticipate then that this struggle with *becoming-institutionalised* would change the course of our work and this thesis, particularly in opening up the space for thinking with/in a De/Colonial praxis and highlighting our inseparable entanglements with the ‘institutional’ and the ‘colonial’. What is also significant here is the distinction that is identified and materialised between the onto-epistemological ramifications of “writing” as opposed to the “the comfort of chatting with friends over a coffee”. A line of inquiry that distinctly emerges here, in constituting and being constituted by the writing, is that of what it means to “write” or “not write” collectively in a research process; essentially what the *[Non]writing* does as opposed to what the writing *is*.

Thinking with St. Pierre (in Richardson and St. Pierre 2017) at this time, I understand our/my process of writing here as aligning with her idea of *Writing-as-analysis*; where writing is used to think and interrogate both the writing self and itself to work into particular spaces that remain otherwise inaccessible, as rhizomatic work that allows for accidental and generative departures towards the unknown. For us, in the collective, the *being-becoming-writing-together* was not only an entangled, intra-active site of materiality, witnessing and solidarity but also of struggle and resistance that made space for collaboratively interrogating what it meant for us to write or not write as opposed to only telling and retelling who we are and what we might mean. There was a sense of constantly *becoming-more* here that I spoke of earlier – a continual diffracting and fragmenting into more rather than arriving somewhere that we could identify as depth or contained “meaning-making”. As Pławski et al. (2019) articulate from their experience of collective writing, our process of *becoming-interrogating-becoming-more* was an infinitely generative space where the “very writing about events became another event, which generated more and more subsequent events. Writing [had] become the practice of the

constant generation of multiplicity.” It is not then coherent, contained “data” that we produced but an iterative multiplicity of incoherent, incomplete fragments and our process here begins to bring alive the shift Jackson and Mazzei (2021) propose away from the language of “data” to that of dynamic ‘enactments’ (referred to as ‘data’ in this thesis).

We hold multiple, generative fragments together in following the sense of resistance while still trying to write into our discussions. Perhaps this holding multiplicity is an act of negotiation, a compromise that reiterates Guttorm's (2012, 595) claims that “to tell some story [is to be] simultaneously compelled not to tell others”. But I argue here that these negotiations allow us to take lines of flight that makes it possible to inquire into multiple entanglements and intra-actions of process. Thinking of ‘writing’ through the lens of a Baradian *apparatus* here, opens up the space to attend to the inclusions and exclusions enacted as agential cuts through our negotiations/intra-actions with/in “writing”. It changes the focus of my inquiry to the process of writing itself and its entanglements in thinking about ‘how matter comes to matter’ and the [im]possibilities that writing creates as an *apparatus*. Some of the questions that emerge from this are - What does it mean to write (or not write) the things we speak of? What does writing bodies do or not do? What does writing *together* and *collectively/collaboratively* do? What can we know (if anything) from our *being-doing-becoming-[Non]writing*? We understand through the process of “writing”, in our collective work and this thesis, that writing is not a passive act that is done in the service of documenting the process and explicating “knowledge”. Writing here is agential/ontological in that it dynamically keeps materialising us and the world – through our desire to write our materialities and its entanglements, through our resistance towards writing and through what we *become* through what we write and what we do not. Our writing in the collective and my writing here then becomes the ‘data’ gathering/analysis apparatus that is entangled in and intra-acts with the onto-epistemological

process of world-making – taking us back to the *Writing-as-worlding* that I explored in the previous chapter where the process through which *unknown-known* worlds emerges in our intra-action with ‘writing’ this project.

Fragments, silences, and resistance – Performing ‘Refusals’ as a relational and ethical act of worlding

Perhaps the above section produces us and our bodies as obscured in the diffractions towards thinking about writing instead. Did we then not write about breasts, vagina, skin, hair, and blood at all? You the reader know, in the excerpts I have used and will use in my following two chapters framed as *Rhizomatic departures*, that we did indeed produce a multiplicity of evocative, affective fragments about our materialities as entangled within patriarchal structures. However, that does not mean that we were somehow liberated from our resistance in the process of our discussions and writing to be able to produce those excerpts. Rather than a linear, bounded path of arriving at writing the body, our process was that of a constant looping back on ourselves to produce something, to write and document the discussions, only to be pulled back into resistance and fragmentation. Perhaps the resistance was not named as such, but multiple excerpts from our writing-together holds enactments of other withholdings, silences and incapacities that defy a cohesive structuring or explicit meaning-making.

There is something about this topic which makes it hard to write. Talking about this part of my body, in a collective of trusted individuals, feels easier than writing about it. I am aware that I am writing about a part of my body, I have written 250 words so far without naming that part of MY body. So, what is that about?

Am I hesitant to allow the fragments of the thoughts to linger in my head long enough for them to form coherent words? Would these words about this part of my body threaten me? Or perhaps threaten the world? Am I scared to allow the emotions about them to come close? Or do I not feel any emotion towards them? Is talking about parts of my own body scary for me?

Are these parts of my body inconsequential? Am I indifferent towards them? Does their presence not matter? Will their absence not matter? I don't know!

I find myself trying to read between the lines of your writing ... It is so emotionally charged ... but I also feel that absence of the charge ... it feels like a weird paradox and I am reminded of the stunned silence you spoke of ... almost like this writing too is meant to evoke that stunned silence, but the stunned feeling that comes from how raw it feels... there is so much underlying heaviness in the writing

(Collaborative Writing Session-1)

The above excerpt for example, holds innumerable paths that the group or I could take towards further analysis/interpretation. However, rather than going deeper into sense of fragmentation and silencing that the writer speaks of towards answers, we are left instead with questions that cannot/will not be answered. This resistance and silence here is not singular, it not just a resistance towards writing or silence highlighting risk of exposure. It holds an affective incapacity to write of or relationally experience the body and/or its parts, it holds threads of pain, of risk, fear, heaviness, of paradox and fragmentation. The writing spills and evokes the affective dimensions of resistance and silence within the collective. However, **[Non]writing** is also agential in that it denies classification, it enacts a refusal to arrive at any 'knowing' other than - we might not know why we cannot or might choose not to write in particular ways. It feels important to note that the writer of this excerpt withholds making "written" meaning out of the experiences they had willingly brought into the discussions to be witnessed; in the writing of it, it is materialised as a story that is impossible to tell or make sense of. The body and its articulation here become impossible to hold except for in fragments that might reveal something only to dissolve as the next question emerges.

This sense of emergence and iterative questioning is not limited to this excerpt. It echoes through the collective process (and this thesis), unravelling into infinitely more threads – always *becoming-more* even as it closes in on itself without ever arriving. Considering the traumatic nature of our experiences and our shared ethos of care/safety towards each other in the collective, we were aware from the conceptualisation stages that being with ‘emergent process’ meant perhaps not following Davies and Gannon’s (2012) strategy of interrogating the teller’s feelings as they share the story towards evoking the affective feelings of the experience in the ‘here and now’. However, in process of being in the emergence of discussions and the writing we found that our sharings and the writing grew in breadth almost as if spilling out, taking flight from and away into other unexpected resonances, unravelling and layering the stories from before with more stories, memories, affective fields and experiences, until we lost track of where we began and where we were going. There were no coherent threads here to be traced back to the original memory and its affective resonances, neither were there threads that could hold our pourings together so that it would somehow take shape and be explicated in writing. As Pławski et al. (2019, 1005), speaking of their Collective writing process, articulate evocatively - “The text [and arguably our dynamic, entangled subjectivities/worlds] was not just developing but rather swelling, being filled with further remarks, observations. Moreover, it went beyond the structure, creating autonomous fragments, subsequent dimensions, and it unravelled in discussions that flooded “pure” words; into the act of writing itself, or more precisely, into a series of acts of writing, taken and interrupted accidentally”.

I *re-turn* to the question- what can we know (if anything) from our being-doing-becoming-*[Non]writing*? The above excerpt (and this writing) might defy ‘knowing’ in staying with the affective feelings of incapacity, multiplicity, and iterative questioning. However, I have to acknowledge that I do not enter this writing from a place of not-knowing; not only

because of my being implicated in the discussions prior to *[non]writing* but also because of the dual relationships we share within the collective. Perhaps I could, as the “researcher”, use certain disclosures to inform me in my pursuit of further knowledge about our bodies/materialities; after all I do have a consent form that allows me to use the ‘data’ both from the discussions and the writing. Perhaps, being the insider of this process, I can reveal the narrative of the body that is obscured here. But what are the ethics of this affectively non-consensual exposure? What are the ethical ramifications of me ascribing meaning while the writer grapples with meaning-making without arriving at answers? And what of our other collective writing, in all its fragments, evocative yet decentred narratives, unstable meanings, dead-ends, tentative resonances and threads that do provide ‘answers’ to these questions? Do I use them to exceed the resistance and incapacity? Is it for me then to thread it together in this thesis through further analysis, so that it would tell me and the readers something coherent about Indian Women’s bodies that can be explicated as “knowledge”? As has been the process of this inquiry, I am once again left with further *emergenc[i]es* and ethico-onto-epistemological *unknown-knowns* than concrete, contained knowings.

Perhaps stepping back to Murray's (2020) ideas on staying with the emergencies of not-knowing and it’s creative-relational potential might offer a line a flight. Murray (2020, 32), asking the pertinent question - “If it is crucial to tentatively keep the problem alive in order to resist feel-good yet short-lived certainty, then how can urgency be attended to in slowness?”, insists it is staying with, tolerating, and holding uncertainty long enough that allows for creation of *more-than* and the *what-else*. It is in holding this not-knowing that I come into relationship with Bhattacharya (2007) in the process, who, speaking from a De/Colonial perspective, similarly highlights the ethical importance of surrendering our will to know to make space for troubling what cannot be known or extracted as ‘data’. While Murray’s concern is premature

arrival at meaning that might foreclose the potential of new realities, Bhattacharya's concerns are ethical and structural. Bhattacharya (2007, 1106) problematises the procedures of consent and what these might mean in a relational context when enforcing these consent-contracts might lead to unethical, bounded materialisations of marginalised and essentialised relationalities towards making "the Exotic Other more tangible, understandable, and consumable". I resonate with Bhattacharya (2007, 1106) when she highlights and problematises re-presentation of such contested material as being akin "to seeing through a broken looking glass. Very rarely does a looking glass reflect what we hope to see. The re-presentation from such messiness inhabits mirrored spaces that are not only fractured and refracted but also shattered into shards, leaving it to the writer and the reader to piece them together to tell tales with indistinct ends, beginnings, and middle, with a temporary composure that is fraught with contradictions."

I have, in earlier chapters, explored emergent *knowing-in-beings* about representations and the concerns it creates. I have also explored how the *emergenci[es]* of De/Colonial praxis might disrupt the materialisations produced in this work as a processual *unknown-known*. As before, my relationship with the collective 'data' and this writing here becomes problematised in the very process of its materialisation. I am led to questions not only about the ethical/processual ramifications of what producing/analysing such 'data' might *do* within the collective but also the onto-epistemological concerns of the non-consensual/unethical/universalised/bounded worlds this might create particularly in thinking within the De/Colonial lens that Bhattacharya brings. With Bhattacharya, I further problematise my [un]ethical engagement with 'data' and ask myself - What do I do with the stories I am entrusted with? Do I mine/analyse them for 'in-depth knowings' regardless that our process became but more about the relationalities, refusals, and fragmentation of the dynamic

[Non]writing than production of coherent, linear knowledge about our bodies and its affects? In the below excerpt we arrive at these tensions from a place of care for each other and exploring our own boundaries with how much we are willing to give of ourselves to the knowledge-making agenda.

We keep coming back to the trauma ... but going into the trauma to be able to put something down in words feels like a boundary we skirt around ... a very necessary boundary that we need to hold to keep ourselves safe

I wonder what it means to GO INTO TRAUMA???

The whole of it just feels violent, a kind of forced, being pushed into something that feels, risky, that feels rocky and potentially painful... is this going into the trauma?

How do we write about something so visceral, how to write about bodies, and the trauma inscribed on our bodies (might be too traumatic or make us feel vulnerable)? what is the point of us sharing this trauma and pain? Is this knowledge? Who are we doing this for?

Maybe we should be asking ourselves if we “have to” rather than “how to”

(Collaborative Writing Session-4)

The above excerpt becomes significant here not only in making visible the limitations of exploring or writing ourselves in particular ways within entanglements of trauma, but thinking-with Bhattacharya (2021), it also diffractively brings to fore our entanglements within the academic world, our positioning as women from the Global South with the onto-epistemological privileges of living in the Global North, and our trauma and entanglements of patriarchy as intra-acting with the obligation of knowledge-production. My position and onto-epistemic privileges as an Insider/Outsider (Bhattacharya 2007), a non-western researcher

implicated in the research practices that might re-enact colonising structures of explicating a Global South community's traumas and pain as knowledge, is also brought to fore here. What I encounter, as significant to the materialisation of this thesis within these tensions, are the questions of who we are doing this for and if we 'have to' do this. The [un]ethical consequences and De/Colonial *emergenc[i]es* of our collaboration materialises with a force in the collective relationality here in a way that cannot be ignored. These are sometimes *Minor-acts* and *unknown-knowns*, sometimes a visceral "no" towards writing the body or an intentional obscuring of the body and at other times challenging what we set out to do (for example "go into the trauma/write about our pain") to arrive at disrupting the demands of a research/academic commitment. That is not to say that the excerpts, the collective writing, and this thesis do not inevitably reveal/represent some of ourselves, our traumas, pain, and struggles, OR that our sharing, witnessing and process within the collective did not include rich explorations of our materialities or was not therapeutic (explored in further chapters as rhizomatic departures). Reader, I remind you (and myself) here of my argument about the problem of ethics and stay here with how *keeping the problems alive* allows us to open the space for *different* ethico-onto-epistemological worldings of the *what-else*.

Refusal as an Analytic practice – *Becoming-resistant and Becoming-De/Colonial*

In *keeping the De/Colonial problems* of the above process and the iterative resistances/refusals *alive*, Tuck and Yang (2014) offer a line of flight in their conceptualisation of 'Refusal as an analytic practice'. For Tuck and Yang (2014) the notion of Refusal as an analytic practice involves an active resistance to the academy's unquestioned right to know of people's pain towards producing essentialised, universalised accounts of the 'other'. I sit here with their question of "when we overhear, uncover, are entrusted with narratives that we know will sell, do we stop the sale?" (2014, 813). Employing a De/Colonial praxis, particularly

within the context of Global South women, would demand that I/we stop the sale of further colonising, victimising displays of trauma that might be in the service of a reader who, with a colonial gaze, demands to 'know' and consume the specifics of the pain in the name of richly descriptive, evocative knowledge about far-away communities. We feel this colonial gaze emerging within our collective relationality in our demands of ourselves in service of 'research'.

Within the context of this project, we are all transnational women with direct/indirect stakes in the academy, and like Gajjala (2010, 190) cautions, we must also remember that "our speech/writing could be viewed and used as representative of subaltern/[Indian] women who are not located within the same sphere of material and cultural privilege that we inhabit". The ethical consequences of what I/we materialise here about our bodies and its experiences is highlighted here in its potential to further colonial, epistemic and structural injustice within the context of Indian women and their representation within Global North contexts. It is these colonial undertones of "knowledge production" that we implicitly and dynamically resist here in our agential [*Non*]writing process, taking me into the questions of - do we have to share and analyse our pain so that the knowledge machine can be furthered? Perhaps descriptively rich experience-near 'data' can be productive in providing context and producing experiential knowledge (if only unstable), but at whose cost? Is it possible, safe, or ethical for us to produce, provide such experience-near narratives of our bodies? What would this kind of knowledge about Indian women *do* within western academic and therapeutic contexts? What is it that WE, the collective, gain from producing this knowledge about this pain?

The questions that emerge here highlight what Tuck and Yang (2014) note of "refusals as an analytic practice" - that refusals can never be just a 'no', but have to also disrupt the

hegemonic, essentialist ways that further the damage of the colonial machine. In the process of the Collective Biography we navigate the traumas of the patriarchal entanglements within the Indian contexts, we navigate our own entanglements with the colonial apparatus as both the colonised and the colonisers, we explore how we are co-constituted and re-produced as bodies inscribed by patriarchy and how we inscribe further onto the world. In the collective process and writing there are implicit and explicit refusals, just as there are outpouring, sharing, and witnessing *mo[ve]ments*. However, Tuck and Yang (2014) give us the permission to do this for ourselves rather than for the production of knowledge and they give me the responsibility of thinking about the ethical ramifications of analysing and re-presenting ‘data’ that might further the colonial ways of writing/thinking/doing research. I could use our collective experiences and make inferences about the traumatic experiences that shape our bodies and our engagement in this project, but an ethical-diffractive reading here and thinking-with Tuck and Yang (2014) take me into *being-with* how and when we might perform relational refusals (such as the dynamic *[Non]writing* here) to resist against what is demanded of us in the service of knowledge; to interrogate and trace the relational processes in the collective as an emergence that creates new/different realities through disrupting the expected. Ethical writings then, materialisations of our work together, can only ever surrender the will to know ‘more’ or understand and analyse ‘more’, and hope to write into this process and our relational engagement through *keeping the problems alive* in the *[Non]writing*.

Within the frame of this refusal, the focus of my using this excerpt then (or any other excerpts) is not to ‘make sense’ of our struggle to write our bodies within the oppressive regimes and traumas of a patriarchal world and the ways that oppression inscribes upon us to make us struggle. It takes us from interrogating the ethics of unidirectionally writing/representing the collective as bodies that can/cannot be known to the motion of co-

constitution where we arrive at disrupting the hegemonic, essentialist ways of research being/doing that furthers the patriarchal/colonial machine in being disrupted by the process. We are made agential and De/Colonial as a collective in that, we materialise a world where I/we can iteratively, relationally disrupt ourselves and our obligations within the research apparatus. There is also a change of focus in our work together to our commitment to each other, the collective, and the community rather than a commitment to producing certain knowledge. The refusals then, to provide/produce certain kinds of knowledge about ourselves, becomes the axiom through which the ‘data’ we produce can embody a De/Colonial praxis and expands into the materialisation of this thesis in shaping what I ‘do’ with the ‘data’ here. As an ethico-onto-epistemological practice within this thesis, holding these refusals close demands that I too refuse to produce the representative, unidirectional or unstable worlds where we can *know* the other and problematise the idea of “narratives and benign agents” as Rosiek and Snyder (2020) invite us to. However, rather than holding us still as we might imagine refusals do, my/our worlding, being-doing-becoming-*[Non]writing-as-worlding*, is set in motion from the refusals and the resistance, towards disruptions and De/Colonial ethico-onto-epistemological engagements with the process and ‘data’ and into *becoming* this thesis that tracks the De/Colonial interruptions of *knowing-in-being* a New Materialist Collective Biography²².

Processual Intra-actions – [Non]Writing-Knowing-Worlding the De/Colonial entanglements

Reader, we have arrived at the latter parts of our collective process and perhaps like me/us, you too are feeling the weight of everything said/unsaid in this *[Non]writing*. How

²² Detailed in the last chapter.

could we be at the end of the process when I have only revealed to you the minute fragments of our collective work together? Perhaps a lot has been obscured (as intentional, ethical acts in keeping with the refusals) in my *[Non]writing-as-worlding* our Collective Biography, but I want to draw your attention here to the newness that has emerged for us in *being-becoming-with* the fragments of process and abandoning sense-making. In the above sections I have explored our arrival within my/collective process at the practice of De/Coloniality as *emergenc[i]es* and co-constitutions that iteratively shapes this *[Non]writing*. Following on from this *becoming-resistant* and *becoming-De/Colonial* reader, now I explore how our collective process, the holding of ‘Refusal as an analytic practice’, and worlds that this thesis produces, speaks into the thematic areas of De/Coloniality that I noted in the introduction to this thesis. In the last chapter we have seen some of the four thematic areas of Decoloniality identified by Ndege and Onyango (2021) emerge implicitly in the process to be later understood in hindsight. Here we see this De/Coloniality, particularly the two themes of **“Considering the relationship of the researcher with the ‘researchee’”** and, **“Opening up spaces to critique positions of power and dominant culture”** come alive in our process of engagement.

In the initial sections of this chapter, I outlined the localised relationalities and the kinship we hold as way of being within the Collective Biography space and reiterated, in thinking-with Bhattacharya (2007), how these speak into the De/Colonial praxis in foregrounding familiar, localised, culturally-situated onto-epistemological practices within research. Along with disrupting Eurocentric research practices and privileged ways of knowing and being, these emergent relationalities also disrupt the unidirectional relationality and hierarchies between the ‘researcher’ and ‘researchee’. Within the practice of our Collective Biography, this disruption emerges in practice in multiple, implicit, and explicit ways. I have

noted some of the ways our collaborative conceptualisation disrupted the unidirectional power structures and research roles in the chapter *The Ethics of Collaboration*, however in *keeping the problem of ethics alive*, we can note the iterative tensions that emerge in the research process in the above sections. For example, the collaborative process explored in the initial sections of this chapter (and arguably the previous chapter) highlights the negotiations of relationality and power that we engage in as we disrupt ourselves, our expectations, and our commitment to producing ‘knowledge’ within this project. Be it in holding ethical, De/Colonial approaches in boundaries we establish for our engagement with ourselves, the meaning-making that I abstain from to preserve the affective integrity of these refusals in the explication of our process or holding the space for ourselves over knowledge production, our process here is of an iterative disruption and *re-considering* the complicated relationalities that emerge between us as collaborators. It is perhaps through this iterative disruptions and *re-considering* that we arrive at the practice of De/Coloniality and **Considering the relationship of the researcher with the ‘researchee’**” as Ndege and Onyango (2021) implore us to.

It is also within these disruptions and *re-considering* that we understand **“Opening up spaces to critique positions of power and dominant culture”** as an emergent De/Colonial praxis. Reader it is perhaps obvious to you by this point, through being with me/us in this *[Non]writing*, the ways we the collective, and consequently this thesis, enact critiques of positions of power and the dominant culture. Be it in our collaborative, emergent process that disrupts institutional structures of research practice, our localised situatedness, interrogating our positioning as insider/outside capable of furthering colonial violence, employing refusals to disrupt universalised representations of third-world women within western contexts (where third-world women become essentialised as victims of third-world oppression thereby reiterating the historical, western representations of the Global South) and refusing the

academy's claim to people's pain towards furthering the knowledge machine, our engagement with De/Coloniality here *becomes* iterative, dynamic and processual. As a significant offering, our collective voice, and our process as women of a marginalised community becomes the lens through which I/we can offer disruptive De/Colonial insights into dominant paradigmatic, methodological, and conceptual frameworks within the field of New Materialisms and Social Science research. What we arrive at here, through our process within the collective and my process in *[non]writing* this thesis, is a worlding that is *more-than*, different and unexpected²³.

I take you back to the proposition in my introduction reader, of thinking about *what-else* this thesis can do. I have, to this point, offered our process of *knowing-in-being/becoming* as an invitation think dynamically and ontologically with the *what-else* of research practice and process. I have entreated you to stay with me in the De/Colonial interruptions of New

²³ Reader, by this point you might have questions or a desire to know about the proportion of the material I quote to the whole content of the collective biography text and conversations and how prevalent the resistance to writing was or if this resistance is all the group talked and wrote about. As I have noted in this section and the last, our writings DID include extensive, detailed explorations of our materialities with/in patriarchy. In the spirit of refusals I acknowledge here that I do indeed privilege the resistance and refusals (be they minor, implicit, resounding or emerging between sharings and outpourings) in my choice of excerpts and in sharing our process through the writing of this thesis so that (as an ethico-onto-epistemic engagement with what our pain narratives might *do*), I can *keep the problems* of the colonial gaze that emerges within the collective process *alive* and stay with the *emergenc[i]es* of the De/Colonial concerns that emerge from my Insider/Outsider positionality. I reiterate here that I use "Refusal as an analytic practice" not because we only produced material about being resistant to writing but because of where the collective writing about the resistance takes me as an ethico-onto-epistemological engagement with the data into the *what-else* I might offer in this thesis other than narratives of pain. This ethico-onto-epistemic engagement also holds within it the threads of privileging the collective's needs in withholding the explorations of our bodies as what we produced for ourselves rather than for "knowledge production". While I could provide answers to the first two questions in some form of quantifiable measure, particularly with the concern of how prevalent was the ambivalence within the collective, I argue that not only would that take me into a more positivist paradigmatic space that would in itself further the imperialist/colonial epistemic violence of quantifying experiences towards their validation, it would also be a betrayal of the resistance that emerged affectively within the collective space and I explore our process of *becoming* within this resistance in upcoming chapters. I believe here that any attempts at framing these refusals or minors acts of resistance as "all the group spoke about" reinforces the very binaries of representation (women who could write/not write about their bodies) that I have been trying to resist in this thesis and carries the risk of producing us the collective as victims who *could not* articulate their pain instead of as an agential force who choose to refuse to share their narratives of pain as 'data'. Perhaps it is important to also remind you here that the 'data' produced within the collective belongs to all its members for use and this keeps open the potential for excerpts not used here to be a springboard for further knowledge production as the collective members see fit.

Materialisms and Collective Biography that grips us to *become-differently*. We arrive here at these refusals and *[Non]writing* where I reiterate to you that I will not be analysing the ‘data’ gathered by the collective to make meaning about Indian Women’s bodies. It is perhaps that I am leaving you here as a voyeur whose gaze I/we deny. While I cannot help but refuse you here, I ask you to stay with me for a little bit more as I do have more to share in the Rhizomatic departures we can take from the ‘data’ gathered by the collective into the *what-else*. The next two chapters of this thesis are contextualised as standalone departures (albeit entangled and intra-acting with the collective process). Be it in interrogating the collective process towards “new” and unconventional readings of *marginalised-material-relationalities* within a framework of interdisciplinary, onto-epistemological boundary-crossings, or a story about leaking, exceeding selves, and messy entanglements of trauma, I offer these as potential pathways and examples of a De/Colonial, ethico-onto-epistemological engagement with the ‘data’ rather than monoliths that prescribe a certain kind of analysing/worlding. And perhaps when we meet again at the other side of these departures, I can entreat you into the Intra-active interlude of re-framing this thesis with/in the field Counselling and Psychotherapy and the *Going-on-being* of this De/Coloniality as it lives on in its co-constituting encounters.

RHIZOMATIC DEPARTURE-I

BREASTS, VAGINA, SKIN, HAIR, AND BLOOD- *Affective-Material Becomings in a Collective-Body-assemblage*

In my first chapter, I framed this project as ‘beginning’ with or birthed through a *desire*, a desire to engage with the co-constitution of materiality, the particularly situated materiality of Indian women’s bodies and their patriarchal material-discursive entanglements. We, through *being-thinking-becoming-with* the collective process and my *[Non]writing*-as-worlding this thesis within the framework of ‘Refusals as an analytic practice’ (Tuck and Yang 2014), have arrived at departures from the familiar-known towards the *what-else*. My stance here is that the collective are not objects that can be known, instead we are an agential force that take us/me elsewhere into *knowing-in-being* and becoming through *emergenc[i]es* and *mo[ve]ments*. Staying with the De/Colonial praxis, I hold that the ‘data’ that ‘speaks for itself’ (not interpreted or analysed towards further meaning-making) can allow for the complexities and the incoherence to reside, not in the sense of being rigorous/comprehensive but in defying classification or premature meaning-making that betrays the process of *becoming* and in becoming encounters and enactments that take us elsewhere. What emerges, from this complicating and problematising engagement within research and the worlds it creates, is rhizomatic, diffractive *worldings* where each departure *becomes* a new encounter, perhaps contradicting the unstable *knowing-in-beings* produced in other chapters, but nonetheless resonant with our process that defied any kind of linear, coherent understandings of ourselves, our materialities, and its myriad entanglements.

In staying with this instability, I begin this *Rhizomatic departure* into material-becomings with *re-turning* to the sense of fragmentation that is resonant of thinking about ‘bodies’ in this project. In the last two chapter, I have explored the representational dilemmas of conceptualising and writing the ‘body’. We have seen the processual tensions, silences and refusals and arrived at De/Colonial ethico-onto-epistemological *[Non]writings* of the Collective process. However, you might remember from my previous chapter reader, that it was not just affective withholdings of silence and resistance that formed our collective writing but also a multiplicity of outpourings that traced our material-discursive entanglements to be witnessed and processed within the group context. Towards the *what-else* we can know from these explorations, I now take you into other diffractive facets of ‘writing the body’ and tracking *what bodies do* as they are materialised in a Collective-body-assemblage. With Bennett (2010, 24), I understand Assemblages here as open-ended gatherings or arrangement of agencies together, where each element “maintains an energetic pulse [or perhaps material inscriptions?] that is slightly ‘off’ from that of the assemblage”.

I plug-in excerpts of collective writing, sometimes *re-turning* to those we have seen before, towards diffractive readings of the materiality within the emergent processes of relationality and co-constitution. Within the frame of Baradian Agential Realism and Intra-action, I contextualise bodily materiality as in a process of iterative *becoming*, where it becomes impossible to write of the body as a stable, ontologically prior object that can be known, understood, or represented. We are perhaps called to note this instability further in the diffractive insights and contradictory worldings (destabilising even my previous readings of the process) that emerge from this departure. Following the expansive departure that Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 257) take in saying that “we know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are”, I can *be-with* and *become from* the

materiality through turning my focus to the affective *mo[ve]ments* of the collective process. Here, I employ the *De/Colonial-New Materialist* praxis in holding close the post-qualitative call for de-centring the centre, the New Materialist call for foregrounded relationality and materiality, and the De/Colonial response-ability of refusing universalising, essentialist accounts of third-world subjectivities. In this context, decentring takes the form of stepping away from the colonising, essentialist notions of the bounded simplistic identities and exclusionary research practices. Consequently, in *[Non]writing* unbounded materialities that refuse classification and categorisation, I enact a refusal of Eurocentric universalised productions of third-world bodies and women as victims of violent men and an oppressive nation-state or, within the Indian context, as unidirectionally and discursively produced in the heteropatriarchal/nationalist representations of women's bodies.

However, in *keeping the problem of ethics alive*, there are some tensions that emerge here in thinking of the New Materialist positioning, of transcending the essentialism of Identity politics in foregrounding the posthuman in a relational engagement (Braidotti 2013), and the centrality of identity markers within the decolonial thinking. Thinking-with theories of Affect allow me to straddle the tensions between these stances and hold them together relationally and productively. Within the Baradian frame, I understand Affect here as the materiality of intra-actions or the Vibrancy of matter (Barad 2003) that “feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns and remembers” (2012, 48), drawing attention to the relationality of the body (and matter) in its capacity to affect and be affected. Danvers (2015, 293) aptly describes the inherent relational focus of Barad's conceptualisation of Affect in saying that “Affects do not so much belong to specific bodies [human or nonhuman] but flow intra-actively between them”. Holding Barad's conceptualisation of Affect with Ahmed's work on “Collective Feelings” (2004) and “Circularity of Affect” (2010a; 2010b) turns the attention to the sticky places of how affect

settles and inscribes differently upon different bodies and highlights how oppression is carried out at an affective level, allowing for a micro-political reading of everyday materiality that can be accountable for the way the patriarchal and colonial apparatuses circulate and stick to certain bodies; essentially allowing also a reading of *what the [collective-]body cannot do*. Ultimately this straddling of conflicting onto-epistemological stances in writing the materiality of bodies makes space for processual departures that rethink the posthuman call for “pure dislocations of identity” (Braidotti 2013) and highlights the need for onto-epistemological boundary-crossings towards the *what-else* in interdisciplinary, unconventional readings of *marginalised-material relationalities* that challenge simplistic Identity politics around universalised womanhood.

Affective Intensities, inscriptions and Becoming-Collective

There is something about this topic which makes it hard to write. Talking about this part of my body, in a collective of trusted individuals, feels easier than writing about it in isolation. Thoughts seem fragmented, emotions feel distant and scattered... Am I hesitant to allow the fragments of the thoughts linger in my head long enough for them to form coherent words? Would these words about this part of my body threaten me? Or perhaps threaten the world? Am I scared to allow the emotions about them to come close? Or do I not feel any emotion towards them? Is talking about parts of my own body scary for me? Is this part of my body inconsequential? Am I indifferent towards them? Does their presence not matter? Will their absence not matter? I don't know!

This whole process of trying write is so convoluted. We WANT to write about our breasts, our vaginas, our skin, our hair, and blood but there is so much intensity and fragmentation in trying to write that it becomes impossible to make sense

(Collaborative Writing Session-1)

Reader I begin with this excerpt we have seen in-part before and you have been with me in the ethico-onto-epistemological problematising that I was diffractively led into from *being-with* the refusals that come alive in *making-sense* of this *[non]writing*. However, there

are also other affective dimensions to our writing/process here that can be read diffractively towards insights into the collective relationality and our material-becoming within it. You know from my initial chapters that the engagement of the collective in this project set out to ‘begin’ with the body in a process of intentional *thinking-being-with* our breasts, vaginas, the hair, the skin, and the blood. I hold here that *beginning* with the body is an affective materialisation of *desire*, a departure that was to offer us a way into the affective materiality. It is these diffractive departures and the affective-material ramifications of *becoming-body/collective* through the intra-actions of these encounters that I hope to take you into now.

For example, I draw your attention to the sense of fragmentation, risk, and intangibility in the above excerpt, and *re-turning* now to this convolutedness, of wanting to write of our breasts, vagina, skin, hair, and blood but struggling to, allows me to notice it as being affectively co-implicating; it at once impinges upon and is impinged upon by our *desire* to know/write the body. Perhaps reader, the convolutedness here emerges as a consequence of beginning with the body as fragmented material-discursive parts that ‘biologically’ constitute us as women and as objectified/marginalised bodies. We produce a fragmented relational engagement with the materiality of the body, as split-off parts, as that part and as this part that is called to be tangible and comprehensible. However, in thinking of what these affects *do*, we come to see that it is these very affects of fragmentation, intangibility, and impingement that, in their encounter with other bodies, contour the materiality of our bodies as and in a Collective-body-assemblage. Thinking-with Ahmed (2004, 29) and Barad (2003), I understand these affects as onto-epistemological encounters, with objects and other bodies, in which “‘surfaces’ [or bodies] *are felt as being there* [my emphasis] in the first place”. We as a collective come into a relationship with our bodies and its affects through these processes of contouring our materiality in the *relational-being-with* of the process.

While we start with the intentional act of engaging with the inscriptions of the Indian patriarchal historicity on our material bodies, the “affective intensities” (Ringrose and Renold 2014), the temporal revealing and *materialising* of bodies, of *this encounter* is entangled with the “affective intensities” of other collective encounters of *becoming-woman, becoming-breasts, becoming-vaginas, becoming-skin, becoming-hair and becoming-blood*. Ringrose and Reynold’s (2014) ideas of “affective intensities” has further resonance with Barad’s (2003) conceptualisation of *material-discursive phenomenon* and “vibrancy of matter”, that can be paid attention to in our *relational-being-becoming-together* but hold entangled within it the identity inscriptions that are written and write our bodies particularly. In process, we encounter not only our materialities but also the entanglements and inscriptions of the identity markers that our bodies are *becoming* with/in. Perhaps then, a diffractive reading here would be to track the processes/inscriptions through which we *become* a Collective-body-assemblage.

This is a space where I felt my anger found meaning, my anger and resistance felt productive. A place where I was able to change the meaning of what my body meant. It is also a place where I started the process of materialising a relationship with my body

I am struck by the number of times we have said - “We talk about” ... I feel like there is something quite significant about “telling each other and talking” ... It is a sharing that really brings in the feeling of belonging within a collective. We are creating something for ourselves in this telling each other... may be a safety ... or may be like a different collective from the traumatic one we are part of ... not that we become not part of the traumatic collective ...but how reparative can it be to have a secure one ... where the onus is not on us as individuals to carry but it is on us as a collective to live through and process somehow

Sometimes I imagine us with all the things written, inscribed, and etched over our bodies of these inscriptions and etchings coming alive and moving, shifting, and inscribing and getting etched into other bodies Somehow it seems like we are carrying each other’s trauma too now....

(Excerpts from Collaborative writing from multiple points in process)

Ringrose and Reynold (2014), speaking of “Affective intensities” envision a form of ‘Affective atmosphere’ that can constitute collective and group affects where bounded individual affective intensities emerging over time intra-act to form what Hemmings (2012) calls “Affective Solidarity”. The excerpt above enlivens this affective solidarity in its emergence within our collective; we *relationally-create* here the therapeutic space, safety and emotional-processing that is facilitated for us in this engagement through anger, resistance, through talking, sharing and “*materialising a relationship with bodies*”. It is perhaps that, as Ringrose and Reynold (2016) conceptualise, this “Affective Solidarity” propels us towards our *becoming-differently-together* within the group. But, resonating with Ahmed’s (2004, 32) conceptualisation of “The skin of Collective”, a contact zone of impressions where “the bodies that come together...slide away from each other, becoming relived in their apartness”, it also acts as a material boundary-making phenomenon that highlights the edges of what *makes* us a collective in materialising *a different collective from the traumatic one we are historically entangled in*. For Ahmed (2004) the focus here is not a fixed differentiation or boundedness that might be invoked with the idea of a bordering. Much like skin that boundaries the insides and outside of a body even as it relationally becomes implicated with the outside and the inside, Ahmed’s call here is to implicate and complicate the relationality of materiality itself through envisioning an inscribed body that is porous yet bound in boundaries and material-discursive impressions. What is brought to fore here is our porous, yet bounded/boundaried, materialities and their entanglements within the Identity politics and its inscriptions.

However reader, in this reading of this excerpt and its affects, I encounter the paradigmatic tensions between New Materialist calls for transcending Identity politics, and the

historicity of our collective and its materialisation as being rooted in our identities as Indian Women. How could I hold the affective-material ramifications of the collective that are co-implicated in our Indianness, our womanhood and so on while also situating myself within a paradigm of transcending and dislocating ‘Identity’ towards non-essentialist readings? Reader, you are perhaps aware by this juncture that I draw momentum through occupying nonconciliatory positions of *in-between* as a De/Colonial praxis. I *re-turn* to Puar (2013) here and her call for envisioning a “Posthuman-Cyborgian-Goddess”, where intersectional identity politics (through which hierarchal differences are constituted and maintained) can be held in a relationship with the assemblage theory to “explore relationship between signification/identity positions and bodily capacities/affective tendencies” (Ringrose and Reynold 2014, 238). For both Ahmed (2004) and Puar (2013) it becomes impossible to perhaps think of materiality and the bodies as separate from the identities that they are constituted in. While Ahmed’s and Puar’s philosophical positioning might seem incoherent with the Baradian position of Intra-action (see for example the debates in Ahmed 2008, Davis 2009, Barad 2012 and Ahmed 2014) it is important to note that their positionings highlight a commitment towards paying attention to the entanglement of materiality with-in the social and the discursive, and towards holding materiality itself as an active agent in the world’s becoming (it is perhaps not as evident in recent New Materialist debates around transcending Identity politics that Barad (2021) would agree with this inseparability in claiming the entanglement/co-constitution of historicity within the material-discursive).

Within this frame, I can hold both that our materiality and its affects as co-implicated *and* our very signification/identity as set in motion iteratively through the processes of *becoming* with/in the collective; rather than holding us still as we might imagine our identity inscriptions do, we are instead set in motion through paying attention to how we *become*

inscribed yet are rendered porous in coming into relationship with our materiality and its affects. This *co-implicated-iterative-becoming* is perhaps akin to Ahmed's (2004) "circularity of affect" that she sees as imperative to readings of materialities and we see this circularity in our relational coming together to become *more-than* through the very boundaries that are produced through our affective engagements within the collective. Like the Baradian ethics of exclusion (Hollin, et al. 2017, 47), Ahmed's (2004) focus here is on the micro-politics of everyday and what and who gets stuck behind the boundaries or particular matterings.

Reader, what this diffractive reading with Ahmed, Puar and Barad does is bring to fore not only the inscriptions and exclusions (of colonial, patriarchal and other material-discursive entanglements) that are co-implicated in our *becoming-bodies* and *becoming-collective* but also the exclusions we create in our materialising the world as we work and rework the boundaries and inscriptions of ourselves and our entanglements. I step back to thinking-with assemblages here. *Plugging-in* the Deleuzo-Guattarian (1987) idea of an assemblage here offers a way to map the way matter comes to matter through these *Minor-acts* and affective intensities of territorialisation, deterritorialization and reterritorialization within the collective process. Could I then say we produce ourselves in the relational space as a Collective-body-assemblage, where our inscribed bodies, the implicated affective intensities, and the material-discursive milieu are held as an arrangement of multiplicity towards *becoming* other than ourselves even as our assemblage becomes *more-than*? I am getting ahead of myself. Perhaps I need to attend to the co-constitution of "the body" in the collective before I can go any further with what we can know from the Collective-Body-Assemblage.

Becoming-Bodies – Moving relationally between the extremes of dualisms

But what does it mean to ‘be’ a body? A question we come back to over and over again in the collective process as an iterative “folding and unfolding” (Deleuze 1993), co/re/constituting the inside and outside as a doubling down upon ourselves, to infinitely differentiate and *become* through the act of questioning. As explored earlier in this chapter, our journey into this process of “folding” and co/re/constituting begins with the parts of our body that material-discursively implicate us as women/gendered. We perhaps hold ourselves in a relational space of intra-active entanglement, but in engaging with ourselves and our becoming in this way, we inevitably get pulled into the cartesian dualisms between mind/body and further into dualisms of material/discursive, and the whole and its parts. Perhaps its significant to highlight here that this splitting is inevitably also gendered – the *desire* to explore the “parts” of our bodies that are inscribed by material-discursive silencing within the patriarchal apparatus is entangled with the context of our gendered bodies and it’s materialisation/signification as objects of the heteropatriarchal gaze. As in the excerpt below, the “abandon”, the “shame” the “disjointedness” becomes affective intensities, temporal intra-actions that allows us to map the inscriptions of silencing and its materialisations with-in our gendered historicity.

I wonder what happens to the things we don't explicitly talk about .. like the vaginas, like what happens to the vaginas ... I imagine it hanging in between us ...

very much there but so hard to look at ...

But then I guess the focus here is on the bigger point of the feeling of shame that stops us from thinking of, finding out and using the correct labels for "intimate" or "private" parts of the body. Isn't it?

we say vagina as an all-encompassing expression for everything that is “between our legs” ... how would it be though to actually differentiate between the vulva, the vagina, the clitoris, and the urethra It feels disjointed ...

Breasts ... That's a word that never rolls off my tongue without a hint of awkwardness...

*This was the first time I discussed breasts with such... **abandon** ...*

Imagine that I so can't imagine ever discussing breasts with "abandon" ... such a novel unfamiliar thing



Ahh to give them shape .. to actually reveal I feel the nagging undertones of risk and fear at the explicitness how dare we openly draw breasts? and what happens when we dare to draw breasts or talking about them with "abandon"

*Discussing the body with **ABANDON** ... a paradox that we can and can't.*

(Excerpts from Collaborative writing from multiple points in process)

Here the question of “how matter comes to matter” is entangled with/in the questions of “what are the affective matterings of our engagement with our Breasts, Vaginas, Hair, Skin and Blood”. I think with Ahmed (2010a) here to hold close the *different* inscriptions on the different parts of our body and I argue that these *Minor-acts* of affectively *becoming-bodies* are positioned in the in-between space of that with produces and shapes our bodies along normative, dualistic, and territorialising lines and that which allows us to exceed these in dynamic moments of iterative becoming. However, I need to reiterate here the in-between space and that these charged moments are not only non-linear but are also entangled in the

dynamic process of territorialising-reterritorialising *timespacematterings* that bring us to engaging with the process and the co-constitution of our bodies as a body-assemblage in the collective. *Abandon*, here for example (and a multiplicity of intra-active affective intensities) acts as the driving force to conceptualise exceeding the silencing and becomes productive and dynamic through taking us on lines of flight where we can envision, articulate, and exceed our articulation of bodies as sexualised, gendered, inarticulable parts to that of a perhaps incoherent yet intra-actively entangled body-assemblage of the below excerpts.

Again I am becoming aware of some kind of resentment or a resistance towards our bodies being seen one way or the other .. like a reductionist thing that invalidates the other ways our bodies and body parts come into being

there is something split off about how we can see or talk about body parts Medically, sexually, biologically ... it can never be a cohesive, linear understanding but like a combination of mixed-up things...

So then what does that say about how much we can know about our bodies in the first place?

There is something of a wish here I suppose... to be seen "fully" and how impossible this might be

I feel like there is something about this ... feeling disjointed when the body is not spoken of as a whole and feeling disjointed when it is.

But I am always thinking of why they [parts of the body] mean something more than just skin and flesh and bones... But like I said my body can never be just skin and flesh and bones ... Its always more ... it's always in relation to the outside and its always in relation to another ... human or non-human

It's like the language is so intertwined with more than just visceral, physical experiences of the body ... it's always, always, tied to more ... to ways of somehow connecting it to other things ... it's never just the body or the bodily sensations is it? It also makes me think of that

kind of difference between bodily experience and thinking ... like there is a distinct boundary between those ... do I also not think with my body? ... does my thinking happen outside of my body?

(Excerpts from Collaborative writing from multiple points in process)

These are inherently ethico-onto-epistemological questions that we engage with. What are the ethics of writing materiality “in one way or another”? How much can we know of a material body that is “intertwined with more than just visceral, physical experience”? How can we ‘know’ about materiality that is more-than the materiality of “flesh and bones”? “Is thinking not a material/bodily experience”? What is it to be always in relation? We are embroiled and entangled here in the politics of materiality, of its flows and blockages. It feels also significant to note here that our inevitable entanglement within dualistic notions of material/discourse and the mind/body are not transcended but held in a relationship to make space for something to be produced in the working and reworking of it in process. I imagine Tauna’s (2008) concept of a paradoxically “Viscous porosity” in practice here; of bodies that are stuck in wanted or unwanted states of interconnectedness and interdependency yet are porous in a way that enable flows and exceeding. What we do here, perhaps unintentionally, is produce ourselves as open-ended, ongoing, and agential - as without answers to the stuckness and the embroilments that emerge in our affective being together yet actively producing and reproducing ourselves. Perhaps what we materialise here is embodied multiplicities – bodies that can *be and become* breasts, vaginas, skin, hair or blood or an assemblage of bodies, bodies that can be differentiated within their material inscriptions yet can *be and become* a collective, a collective-body-assemblage that is in an infinitely dynamic iterative process.

Exceeding-Entangled-Feminist Bodies – Intra-active processes of Material De/Re/Territorialisation

“Feminism has always been incendiary and fiery, spreading and catching through group affects and generating fierce reactions.”

Ringrose and Reynold’s (2016, 220) words above feels resonant for me as precursor to this section. Paying attention to the affective intensities of the process in the above sections puts me in touch with another diffractive thread of the collective materiality. Reader, we have seen our materiality set in motion in the above sections. However, our entanglements as a collective and as individuals with “Feminisms” drives our *Desire* and our *becomings* within the collective process in powerful ways and we cannot perhaps think of signification/inscriptions as women and not think of signification in relation to Feminisms itself. As Ringrose and Reynold (2016, 231) aptly describe, our *Desire* here sparks potential to “enable feminist becomings of affirmative thinking and/or acting differently (Braidotti 2013 as cited in Ringrose and Reynold 2016) as a result of the shared experiences of anger and confrontation ... [that] emerge in dynamic assemblages where [we] intra-act with each other, in specific times and spaces”. In the processes of co-constituting ourselves as a collective-body-assemblage we move between conflicting, contrasting, and intense affective spaces of intra-active material engagement. However, this is not a question of “what Feminism does to/for us”. Rather, what I hope to do in this section is to pay attention to multiple, contradictory, scattered *mo[ve]ments* of resistance and *becoming-feminist* that traverse time-space-matterings. While I explore resistance and anger in other diffractive dimensions in the other chapters, the focus here is on the affective ramifications of such resistance in the collective-body-assemblage and the processes of iterative de/re/territorialisation that is highlighted in this.

Through all the discussions about resistance, there is also the need to belong, be acceptable.

For me this is the dichotomy... the need to be acceptable and the need to resist

how do we grow to learn the way certain parts of the body feeling a certain way in the tactile sense of it how they are 'meant to feel' and the ways we resist or conform...big breasts, hairy skin, jiggling of belly fat or underarm fat ... the bat wings ... the tactile bodily feeling of this fat tissue that feels absolutely unacceptable and by extension ugly and disgusting but hairless smooth skin that feels pleasurable ... the terms we use to describe fat bodies ... And how we describe the fat in our bodies to ourselves... The amount of stuff (e.g. tubes of whitening creams, hair dyes, clothes, razors), the tubes we have emptied over the years in order to look acceptable. There is a strong feeling about how norms become so internalised that they are almost viscerally part of us.

What does it mean and what did it mean as we become women to have skin that is unacceptable? to have skin that is dark and covered in acne and that may be was tanned and not protected and made up in a certain way, to have hairy skin, to have big or small breasts, "not beautiful" vaginas.

there is always a question of how many unacceptable things can you get away being ...

(Collaborative Writing Session-4)

Our explorations in the above excerpt for example take on a quality of rebelliousness. We thread the line between *viscerally feeling* the need to be acceptable even as we ask ourselves how it would be for us to be unacceptable. The process of *exceeding* here is multidimensional and draws attention to the disruption of congealing material corporealities. We are territorialised in materialisations of ourselves as inscribed upon, as perhaps passive, sometimes helpless recipients of that which feels imposed upon us –

I know what the world did to my body.

We become-*detransformed* from the universalised representations of third-world oppressed women through paying attention to the ways we might become agential/entangled within the

territorialising processes of inscribing our own bodies and how we might relationally territorialise ourselves into frames of acceptability. We further exceed these bounds of territorial acceptability through playing with “how many unacceptable things can we be”?. Perhaps we also exceed representations of ourselves as resisting, as rebellious and as “Feminist Killjoys” (Ahmed 2010b), *becoming-reterritorialised* through claiming a need to be acceptable and a wish to occupy the “happy affective territory” (Ahmed 2010a) through an investment in the realm of the prescribed. Significantly, the dynamism of our *becoming* here is reinforced and highlighted in the way we keep moving between these positions of de/re/territorialisations. However this is not to say that the group’s *feminist-becomings* are without its melancholic moments, complaints, or wounds. We might take an expansive departures, dynamically *becoming-rebellious*, *becoming-sexual*, *becoming-resistant* and *becoming-feminist* but we *become-territorialised* within the bounds of “good feminism” itself as in the excerpts below.

On more than one occasion I have been told that I am perpetuating patriarchy by enjoying the lyrics of a song where a woman is happy with her heavy breast. I also understand breasts are sexualised, but is it wrong if breasts are my only point of pleasure during any sexual activity, how else do you normalise breasts if not talk about it? But am I objectifying myself if I take that conversation to the stage? Which brings me to the dilemma of trying to understand if my comfort with my heavy breast, and my openness about my self-love towards my body or breast in particular - is it somehow making me a bad feminist?

This reminds me of the fact that I follow an Instagram hashtag about big saggy boobs, and because I have such a bad relationship with my big saggy boobs that I keep quickly scrolling past the posts (in vague disgust) instead of embracing the potentially feminist interpretation.

I have a similar thing about my weight I like how I look when I am thin and I know how some of that is produced by patriarchy and capitalism but there is also the guilt and shame of being a bad feminist just because I want to be thin ... it's like shame cycles ... going from one to another in loops.

This is a slightly funny realisation, that reading above account I had my own thoughts about my positive relationship with BDSM and just when I wanted to chime in I remembered that I had just put in a comment talking about my relationship with sex, and I mentally told myself, 'I am talking too much about sex' and noticed how I was telling myself off for talking about sex and breast.. like there should be a limit of talking about sex in research.

(Collaborative Writing Session-2)

I turn back to the affective intensities of the above multidimensional exceeding and becomings. My intention in this section was to highlight the ongoingness of our material becoming within the process and within this writing as defying easy categorisation and simplistic readings. Here we might read materialities in multiple ways but what we are left with are contradictory *becomings; becoming-inscribed, becoming-bodies, becoming-collective-body-semblage, becoming-[bad]feminist... always in iterative co-constitution*. What we arrive at here is not an understanding of materialities but the dynamism of intra-actions, entanglements and bounded inscriptions that open up the materialities to be traced. While the above explorations (and arguably this thesis itself) reinforce this inescapably entangled nature of our intra-active materialisation with/in the world's becoming, the ethico-onto-epistemological consequences of such *timespacematterings* and materialisations, and the affective processes and exclusions where dynamism itself becomes foreclosed (if only to open other lines of flight) remain to be explored.

Affective-Material Becomings – The flows, blockages, and exclusions of a fragmented mattering

I have until this point in this chapter managed to stay with the instability and dynamism of material bodies within this diffractive analysis of the Collective-body-semblage. However, the writing, mattering, and producing of this chapter is not without its

exclusions and foreclosures. While I have attended to some ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements of the processes of co-constitution within this writing of material bodies and their affective intensities, I enact a significant exclusion in not allowing the agential, more-than-human entanglements to be written in the materialisation of the chapter. Perhaps implicitly, the position I take in this *[non]writing* is that of a deeply entangled world where we are acted upon by and act upon the non-human world, becoming relationally co-implicated in ethico-onto-epistemological ways. In the extracts quoted above for example, our materialities within the collective is written as being produced in particular ways through our intra-actions with/in social media, the tubes we empty out, the sun that colours our skin in particular ways, music lyrics, clothes we wear or don't wear, razors that make us hairless and inevitably the spaces that we relationally come together in.

Our meetings for this project started during the Covid-19 lockdowns in UK. While we met online for the majority of our Collective Biography meetings, our relationality and materiality were implicated and entangled within the digital spaces and devices we engaged with. Engaging through online video conferencing platforms and writing-together on a collaborative cloud document, in a Collective-body-device-assemblage, for us created a sense of disembodied-ness that we remained not fully aware of until our bodies occupied the same [physical] space. There is a certain affective momentum in coming together physically. We are moved, we *become* and we materialise differently as we sit in our bounded rooms and in front of our screens as opposed to when we meet in-person for the last two sessions. Perhaps an additional line of inquiry emerges is thinking of “what the body can do differently in *being-with* other physical, material bodies?”. The below excerpt allows me to notice the affective intensities that emerge differently in *talking-writing-being-together* of physical bodies.

If I think about it now, I sit here talking to you all, with a pain in my shoulder because I was dancing with sticks while staring at the laptop earlier in the day, I am sitting with pain in my abdomen and vagina because of my periods, the constant shifting of my legs and my hips to accommodate the pain, restlessly shaking my legs and feet like I always do, its soothing and calm ... don't ask me why! Just as I write this my stomach cramped, the pain is clouding my thoughts now, sometimes I feel my brain functions at a lesser capacity, and it's probably not just me it's all of us, we all function differently on periods. Writing and thinking about the experience of having periods has made me so aware of every little moment of this experience. As I had to shove a tampon inside me, because I was not bleeding enough for it to just slide easily. Trying to stuff the cotton tampon in my vagina, while feeling the burning friction against my dry skin. ughhh

We are forced to go into our bodies every month, the PMS, period pains. Wondering if PMS just gives us a chance to embrace the intense emotions for a week. But also how sometimes being disconnected from our bodies to not even realise why we are feeling those intense emotions.

My period has always come with a certain drumroll and pomp, I have made jokes about my uterus trying to murder me with sharp stabs and intense cramps a few hours before I am due to get my periods and violently start bleeding.

phew! This whole section was such a heavy read for me just now! I can sense the loaded-ness this in my chest and on my shoulders.

I am reading this in the fag end of my period and am acutely feeling the needle pricks in my thighs, the cramp in the lower abdomen, the exhaustion and lack of energy. And also the discomfort and stuffiness of sanitary pads (the cotton, the plastic/mesh) and the feeling of heat because of the friction between the thighs.

Gaaaahhhhhhhh!!!

It felt inescapable ... this sort of being pushed into the body and perhaps by default that reminds me of the other times when we are not in our bodies. Perhaps the whole of it just feels violent, this being pushed into the body through pain and sensation, be it in feeling the body, knowing the body, or writing the body...

And again, the big question of why it is so hard to talk about the body, the physical body, the experience of being within our bodies, the sensations, the feelings... this shifted when we started meeting in person.

This writing is representative of our relationship with our bodies. It reflects the disconnect we feel with our bodies and its visceral feelings, how we go into the cerebral experience and talking about things related to bodies but feels external, and then return to the visceral experiential body.

(Collaborative Writing Session-5)

In the above excerpts, there is a certain inescapable sense of *immediate* materiality, a multi-layered, multidimensional process that opens up with the body's *being-becoming-together* in the space and time and the affective intensities of this that propel us and co-implicate us in other time-space-matterings. It is perhaps here that the deeply entangled nature of our material-discursive intra-active entanglements come forth. I relate this to a sense of “embodiment of the brain and the embrainment of the body” that Braidotti (Braidotti 2017, 33) speaks of, and our *being-becoming-together* calls further attention to dynamic movement between *connection and disconnection* with the material dimensions of our entangled becoming within the world. Perhaps what becomes further significant here is the “affective Solidarity” of physically coming together as a *community*, bodies in the room, the pots of *chai* that keeps flowing, the Indian food that we rejoice in eating together with our hands, the pillows we share to settle our comfortable-uncomfortable bodies on and it goes on iteratively foregrounding the “collective-affect”. Reader, we could again go into reading insights about our pain and bodies here, but in thinking further with our entanglements with the more-than-human world, I draw your attention to the way the physical space and its materiality acts on us to produce particularly intense affects in our togetherness. Perhaps it is also significant to acknowledge here that our coming together in the way I speak of above, as a community, opens

up further questions and departures of De/Coloniality and the kind of space *we* might need to facilitate a being/writing with-in the immediacy of materiality. However reader, I leave these emergences unattended for future explorations and *re-turn* to my thoughts about in-between spaces and interdisciplinary worldings of materiality as productive, De/Colonial *Rhizomatic departures*.

Concluding thoughts

The process of this whole writing has been so symbolic of our relationship to the body We are moving and being with the writing in the same ways we are used to being with the body ... in disconnection, in moving away in the silencing and in erupting ... in resistance, rebellion and conforming ... in bursts of fluid becoming and spurts of fragmented outpouring and knowing ...

(Collaborative Writing Session-5)

In the beginning of this chapter, I set out my intention to rethink the posthuman call for “pure dislocations of Identity” (Braidotti 2013) and make space for boundary-crossing, interdisciplinary readings of materiality. I have in this writing held the multiple threads of Decolonial, Material Feminist and Posthuman/New Materialist frameworks to think about our affective becomings with/in the collective-body-assemblage. I argue that holding these different threads here has allowed for different, unstable readings of our materialities in a way that trace the dynamism of our material/discursive entanglements. Yet, the insights we arrive at here are fragmented and more about the micro-politics of materiality, its affects, inscriptions and *minor becomings*. Here it is not only impossible for us to transcend the identities that have constituted us and that we constitute in being in this relational space but also perhaps unethical. The dynamic processes of de/re/territorialisation here are inextricably linked in its ongoingness. Our entanglements within the representational material manifestations of the

patriarchal apparatus (which is also entangled with the other material-discursive entanglements of capitalism, colonisation etc.), the identities we subscribe to and its affective manifestations in the group process is inevitably what holds our material bodies in intra-action. I could then say that it is not in transcending “differentiating identity politics” or “pure dislocations the Identity” (Braidotti 2013) that we *become* dynamic but we are made dynamic through the *mo[ve]ments* of the de/re/territorialising processes that cannot but reach for the inscriptions on our bodies itself as that which holds us bound together-apart, even as it shoots us off into further diffractive pathways. It is this dynamism that emerges in the writing of this chapter, in minor disruptions of congealing material corporealities – not towards knowing “the body” but towards fragmented matterings of multiplicity of bodies that at once hurtle towards and defy classification, escape linearity and cohesiveness and *becomes-productively-incoherent* in iterative processes of fragmented, dislocated *knowing-in-beings*.

RHIZOMATIC DEPARTURE-II

FEMINIST HAUNTINGS

- *Entanglements of Rage, Resistance and Collective Trauma*

Reader, we have entered the *what-else* of our collaborative work in the previous chapter of this thesis as a rhizomatic departure and attended to the exclusions and cuts I had enacted in *[Non]writing*-as-worlding the materiality in this project. I now take you into another departure that takes us yet farther away into a piece of writing that emerged rhizomatically during the process and attends to the worldings that Trauma produces for us, particularly in *thinking-with* our process as a collective and plugging in emergences that are localised and situated within our entanglements. I have been speaking about Trauma and its entanglement within our process throughout this thesis. Perhaps you have noticed that I have resisted arriving at concrete insights or theoretical understandings of these traumatic entanglements and you know how I have come to treasure resisting the short-lived certainty that *sense-making* of our traumatic entanglements through theory might provide. While this departure too inevitably speaks into the *emergenc[i]es* of the *unknown-known* that I have been staying with in this thesis, with hindsight I frame this as a De/Colonial departure that takes us into disrupting/problematising the onto-epistemic privileges we afford to what we might consider legitimate sources of knowledge within academia and theory.

Perhaps, I need to warn you here reader that much of the writing in this departure is without the hindsight of the De/Colonial praxis and you might notice that I write of insights I have explored in the other chapters as though they are new. However, to contextualise this departure within the rest of this thesis, I have come to understand in *thinking-with* Bhattacharya (2019) that the emergent practice of *creative-relationally* incorporating

unexpected, varied and non-privileged sources of knowledge and wisdom here is akin to what Bhattacharya calls “Theorizing from the streets”. In *being-with* the collective process and through *[Non]writing-as-worlding* with the emergences of it, I unconsciously and processually arrive at De/Coloniality here and its practice of incorporating oral traditions, stories, mythologies and other localised, situated forms of *knowing-in-being* from outside of the academic gaze of the Global North. It is this plugging-in of the unexpected *emergenc[i]es* that allows me to expand on and disrupt privileged, familiar, and colonial ways of reading ‘data’ towards the *what-else*. We are rhizomatically led here into a conceptualisation/reading of feminist resistance and [Collective] Trauma that, in keeping with the practice of refusals and *[Non]writing*, takes us beyond writing testimonials and witnessing of pain to opening up the entanglements and particular matterings that emerge from our engagement with our *traumatic-material-being-becomings*. It is in this vein, that I now take you into this story, a *timespacemattering*, from the ‘data’ gathering time about ‘Feminist hauntings and Traumatic entanglements’. This story is about how we *become*, similarly yet differently, it is a story about trauma and haunting that *becomes* persistent, rebellious, destructive, productive, and *creative-relational*, it’s about Trauma that remains, shapes, and creates. This story is about leaking, exceeding selves, and messy entanglements.

Writing with the Witches and the Feminist Demonesses on a blowy winter’s day

We started the Collective Biography meetings on a quiet pandemic day. Much like the day I write this ‘story’, I was meandering through my thoughts with equal parts of anticipation and nervousness. I of course knew the other members of the group from different walks of life, we were not strangers by any means. We begin as if we are meeting for a coffee over the usual social chatter and I imagine that each of us are bursting with memories of ourselves, our lives,

and those of others around us barely contained within our bodies. But we do not yet know where to begin. It is new after all, this space where we are allowed to talk about ourselves and our bodies with abandon. Perhaps out of sheer desperation to somehow start, I blurt out - “I have a story to tell you all”. Now, the simple statement “I have a story to tell you” takes me back to another time and another place, across oceans, decades, and generations. I am at once taken back to sitting with my grandma in the vast stone courtyard of a lazy village house that we used to visit in the blistering summers of India as she said the same words to me. Perhaps this gives an illusion of continuity, a thread running from those lazy summer afternoons to the quite pandemic days and that blowy winter’s day. But the continuity is not what I intend here. Instead, I call your attention to the reverberations outside of these linear pathways. When I say, “to begin”, “to start”, I put a timestamp on a particular moment as a marker for something that is yet to come but perhaps it holds within it the multitude of moments from before and after that create and are created by that very moment. But before I digress any further (I do have a story to tell after all and I have a certain reputation for going off on tangents and never getting to the story), I *re-turn* to my meanderings about haunting and spectres.

I heard about the Back-footed witch/demoness, or the *Mudiya Pairi Chudail* as a young girl. Perhaps it was one of those stories children wanted to hear, albeit with their hands covering their ears to convey a sufficient concoction of fear and morbid curiosity. Try as I might, I cannot remember who I heard the story from. Like all spectres and superstitions, perhaps over time, the stories that are passed down generations through oral tradition and folklore take on a disembodied quality that makes them seem like they were heard in omnipotent whispers and were carried in the howling wind. The *Chudail* was one of the scarier creatures spoken of. She was known to be sometimes a hunched-backed women with a gory face or at other times a beautiful maiden with bells around her ankles and long hair who haunted men and drove them

to suffering and death. While the details in the story might vastly differ from families to the micro-cultures of different parts of Southern Asia, the most distinguishing and consistent characteristic of the *Chudail* was that she was always given away by her feet that faced backwards. As Ansari (2020) says in her blog post, it is perhaps not well known that the story of the *Chudail*, rather than being just tales passed on as tea-time and bedtime stories, has surprisingly deep-seated feminist roots that embody resistance - the *Chudails* were historically described as women who died at the hands of an abuser or due to mistreatment by husbands and families and came back to haunt their oppressors and perpetrators.

I am going to take a moment here to step back from the story (I promise it is not a suspenseful pause). You the reader might be wondering about the relevance of this meandering to this thesis or perhaps you are wondering if this was the story I shared with the collective on that quiet pandemic day. I imagine that you might be disappointed to hear that this unfortunately was not the story I shared but this was a story that diffractively emerged out of discussions surrounding another tale that propelled us into our journey as a group. Perhaps I have given myself away in the title of this section and it would not come as much of a surprise for you to hear - that tale was about the “Feminist Demoness” or the *Feminist Pishachini*.

The feminist movement and digital activism in India in relation to violence against women and women’s safety has gained traction in the last decade particularly after the uprising caused by the 2012 gang rape and the #Metoo movement beginning in 2017/18 (see for example H. S. Anupama 2018; Roy 2018; John 2020; Guha 2021). A counter movement was initiated in response to the #Metoo movement by a group of Men’s rights activists who organised and mobilised to take part in a string of Hindu rituals (death rites) around the country that would destroy and exorcise the Feminist Demoness or the *Feminist Pishachini* they

claimed these women were possessed by (see Jha 2018; Yogesh S. 2019). While these rituals were contextualised as a cry for help against a Feminist conspiracy that would be the end of cultural and patriarchal family systems, the discourse this created was that of demonising women who chose to disclose their experiences of abuse. Essentially, the exorcism of the *Feminist Pishachini* furthered the silencing and dismissal of the voices of resistance in framing the allegations, testimonials and the rage that had been evoked in response to the movement as a haunting or a conspiracy that would threaten the cultural roots and the very fabric of Indianness in its deviance from the norm of silence and morality.

Perhaps the irony of holding these two stories together are self-evident, but what becomes further explicit in *this particular* plugging in (Jackson and Mazzei 2013) are the intricacies and the entangling processes that get culturally and historically played out in the storying and symbolising over time. While the story of the *Chudail* allows for a possibility of resistance (even if it is from beyond the realm of human possibilities and in the form of a more-than human spectre) the separation of the historical significance of this story propels it into being weaponised against the very resistance it seeks to establish. As an emergence from these multiple points of departure (the story from the childhood, the retelling of it in the present, the story from the Collective Biography workshop, and that which emerges in its retelling and plugging in with a story from the past in the present), it is these *timespacematterings* of silenced rage, resistance and collective trauma that I hope to attend to in this writing. Here I understand *timespacematterings* as conceptualised by Barad (2010, 240) - “a way of thinking with and through dis/continuity—a dis/orienting experience of the dis/jointedness of time and space, entanglements of here and there, now and then”

The threads of Rage, Resistance and Haunting

Getting angry about the whole fiasco of Feminist Pishachini rituals seemed like an easy way in. I notice that being angry is always a way in for me.

Anger is a very good way into these topics I think

I was in touch with my anger in the group, in our discussion. Perhaps because it felt useful, it felt like something can be done with it.

Anger... Ughhh...

(Collaborative Writing Session-1)

Was I not talking about silenced rage just moments ago? You might be wondering why am I then quoting excerpts from the writing done by the group that evidently shows multiple voicings of anger, perhaps even in a productive way that lets us find a way into the resistance and thinking further. I cannot claim that I do not enjoy being a little contrary but here I am thinking-with Jackson and Mazzei (2009; 2013) and hoping to work the limits of these voicings; to allow for “a positioning of voice as *productive* of meaning—as excessive and unstable voices that surprise us, both pleasantly and uncomfortably, with previously unarticulated and unthought meanings ... to seek the voice that escapes easy classification and that does not make easy sense” (Jackson and Mazzei 2009, 4). Such a reading of the above excerpt, particularly when held in relation to the traumatic patriarchal entanglements and plugging in of the contrary stories of the *Chudail* and the *Feminist Pishachini*, makes space for an encounter with the ‘data’ that exceeds the easy readings and perhaps exceeds and leaks outside the confines of ourselves as a bounded collective. We *become* a collective who are entangled in the discourse of trauma, silencing and dismissal but yet entangled also in the

stories that are older than us, of anger and resistance. Even as I type this, I notice I am typing with my long *witchy* black nails and I know I am deviant, I know within the multiplicity of the different parts of me there is a hunched-backed witch I/we can call upon to screech with anger, as a way in into the resistance. I/we hear the screech of this very witch as a collective driving force when group members evocatively and powerfully write:

I know what the world did to my body.

*FUCKERS
have my boots alone*

Over the years fighting became my second nature, I conform, only in dance settings, very sadly.

I often stare down at aunties who look at me in disbelief when they see my deep neck top, I always win that staring contest. I am snarky to people when they point out my bra strap. It didn't start the first day someone said something offensive to me, it started when I realised I was being asked to compromise my comfort, my choices for someone else's benefit.

In India , we always hear "log kya kahenge" , "what will people say", to which my reaction was I have been saying a lot about their narrow minded ideology why are they not wondering what will I say, I have a lot to say, they really need to change.. Why are they not changing already and if they are not why should

I ??????????????????????

As a moment of emergence in the group, what these evocative snippets do in the writing of them is to help find a way back into the resistance; we are remade as being in the flux of the

anger and exceeding the silencing, remade through exceeding the framing of the anger and resistance as a deviant conspiracy. We set ourselves slightly apart from the boundaried Indianness where there is no room for resistance but identify with the Indianness in claiming to be “one of the people”. Perhaps we also exceed the boundaries of deviance in deviating from the idea of the *Chudial*, who can only resist as a non-human or more than human spectre, as a haunting that requires becoming something more than the material-discursive beingness to be able to resist. But we are constantly *becoming* in relation to the more-than human aspects of the *Chudail*, the discursive of the Feminist demoness and our material being in the collective process. You may now be wondering, like I am - are we not then binding ourselves, in this particular writing, into a transcendently subversive space where we have somehow overcome and we escape the confines of the discursive silencing and the dismissal? A *re-turning* to the cuts I have enacted in choosing *the particular* excerpts to quote above allows me to encounter and attend to significant points of *difference* in the collective as quoted below.

As I read this, I am wondering where is my anger? I have become aware through our discussion in the first meeting and my reflections since, that my relationship with my body is more about the biological/physical health and less about the socio-political associations to female body that comes with the patriarchal gaze. This is so even after the abuse and the lack of choice my body (and in turn I) has experienced because of these associations. So, where is the anger then in response to that abuse/lack of choice? Perhaps I have denied the anger, have side stepped it even if I had ever acknowledged it because what is the "use" of experiencing it on my own? What am I going to do with that anger? Feels like me to sidestep an emotional response so many times that it becomes automatic and sub-conscious, and I do not notice it anymore.

But may be necessary?? To not only survive but to somehow also be okay within it?? Where does anger lead us? Is it always safe?

(Collaborative Writing Session-1)

As a collective we are being contrary here. We allow for the voices of difference and the jarring, complicating narratives to have a home within the collective, as much as we mobilise the anger within us to propel us further into our discussions. While we could write ourselves as purely resisting and explicitly omnipotent in that resistance and deviance, the writing of ourselves as equally in touch with the traumatic facets of the patriarchal gaze, the denial of the anger and the onus of safety and survival takes us back to the stickiness, the intra-actions and the co-implication of the material-discursive entanglements that are a part of our *becoming* (as *timespacematterings*). A further diffractive departure that emerges with holding these dualisms are the questions of the “use of anger” and the sometimes-unavoidable sense of futility that is a part of resistance. In the contrary statements of “*I was in touch with my anger in the group, in our discussion. Perhaps because it felt useful, it felt like something can be done with it*” and “*Perhaps I have denied the anger, have side stepped it even if I had ever acknowledged it because what is the "use" of experiencing it on my own? What am I going to do with that anger?*”, we begin asking ourselves about the affective ramifications of what the anger does (which is in itself co-implicated in what patriarchy or trauma does) and what the ‘use’ of such a resistance might be.

I take a moment to catch my breath here. So what is it that Trauma does? I feel the representational pull towards conceptualising the anger (or the lack of) as a readable response, to contextualise it and position it within some kind of home (of theory or experience) that might allow me to step into the inquiring itself. Perhaps I could dive into the ocean of literature around Feminisms and the Feminist cause. Or I could go the Trauma route here and think about what trauma does and how anger and its lack can be thought of in terms of post-traumatic symptoms and their recovery through the group process. Better yet, maybe I should think about this stickiness between anger and resistance through the lens of Judith Hermann’s (2015) ideas

around Trauma and Recovery and of the ‘survivor mission’. But I wonder what could be diffractively produced in staying ungrounded, perhaps, as Jackson and Mazzei (2009) say, complicating my own voice within this and staying with the emergence of “use of anger or resistance” as an *unknown-known* to see what could be produced differently in this particular *mattering* (with hindsight reader, perhaps you too can see the emergent De/Coloniality as an *unknown-known* here and note the threads of refusal and dissent that emerges in our explorations around safety, trauma and resistance).

Thinking with the anger and resistance, and our affective, collective experience of holding these, along with the lack of capacity or denial of the anger takes me to thinking-with Rita Banerji’s (2012) paper - “Why Kali won’t rage”. While Banerji (2012) offers ample justification for why Indian feminists might find it hard to rage and delves deeply into the discursive matterings that might enable and disable the kind of resistance that is at the forefront of Eurocentric third wave Feminisms, the idea of ‘not raging’, for me, creates not only the bounded discursive reality where a Feminist cause without apparent rage and resistance might be seen as a lack or a passivity but also a unidirectional, dualistic space where perhaps the seemingly productive forces of resistance and rage are held either in opposition or separation from ongoingness of the silencing and the trauma and cannot be seen as *timespacematterings* that happen not in isolation but in iterative intra-action with raging and not raging. Perhaps it is important to clarify that my intention here is not to critique the stance that Banerji takes (I relate to her need to break away from the passivity and to rage and resist), but to further diffract and make space for a reading into the material-discursive entanglements and consequences of that which emerges in the processes of *Becoming-resistant and Becoming-Feminist*. Here what arises for me are the questions of how we relate to our *Feminist-becomings*. What happens when we do rage? What is created or produced in the not-raging? What entanglements can be

made evident and are co-implicated in the process of being, doing resistance and *becoming-resistant*? What is produced and made to matter in a collective where matterings of both resistance and conforming are emergent and held together? And how do entanglements of the trauma (Collective-Individual) shift and move (within us, between us and beyond us in a multiplicity of *timespacematterings*) and create further intra-actions in these processes of raging/not-raising and resisting/conforming? Perhaps, it might be productive to cast our gaze towards the in-between space of the resistance and rage and the trauma and silencing. In saying ‘in-between these spaces’ what I imply here is the entanglement and co-implication between these seemingly conflicting positionings of being and becoming from the Collective trauma, the resistance in the face of its ongoingness and the tensions created within them that further create particular kinds of *becomings* and *matterings* that would be impossible to inquire into from outside of these entanglements. The below excerpts allow for a stepping into materialising of these tensions and opens up the space of that which is created *along with*; where the trauma, guilt, shame, and fear are brought alive and evoked from/with/beyond the space of resistance and anger.

I possibly can only think about my relationship with my body if I can begin thinking about how angry it makes me that I have THIS PARTICULAR RELATIONSHIP with my body. And of course, with that comes the anger about patriarchal narratives and I can always lose myself in that rage. But is it just anger I feel? And Who is this anger directed at? The Collective MEN? The patriarchy? The women who taught us to|have particular relationships with our bodies? Myself? But anger always creates that energy, the fight and will to keep going... I notice that in my anger is the resistance and resistance give me the strength to keep fighting and keep thinking ... a way to be safe while being within the trauma. Even as I noticed with you all that we seem to be in that space of frustration and anger and we made space for the sadness and the heaviness I noticed the anger driving the heaviness too... this time it was anger at having to expose ourselves to the traumas ... and I started asking myself ... why are we doing this to ourselves... Why do I keep getting called and pulled into these traumatic explorations when I know that these are going to be painful?

I think I always felt this constant contest, this constant fight took too much energy out of me- perhaps why I never felt I wanted to wear clothes that showed parts of my body that could attract these glances, stares, comments. Not that I was ashamed of these glances, stares, comments, raised eyebrows but that I could not ignore them, go without retaliating/resisting them and to do that all the time take a LOT of energy. I like to believe I was choosing to conserve my energy but I do feel sad that that was a choice I had to make.

even keeping ourselves safe (when we have been forced to it) can induce guilt :(

It makes me wonder, as much as I have anger against these cultural and societal norms, there is an inherent fear about speaking against them too. The fear of being branded, the fear of backlash. However, I have and will always choose to look past that fear and still speak or write in this case, but I can't ignore the fact that, that fear is deeply ingrained and will always lurk in the shadows.

I am struck by the "I have and will always choose to look past the fear" ... the responsibility and ethics of that

:(:(makes me think of the activist's obligation almost to "show" and "speak" and expose ourselves

Who are we obligated to expose our traumas to?

(Collaborative Writing Session-1&2)

I should clarify though that my intention here is not to draw linear connections between the rage and the resistance and the evoking of trauma and fear within it or as a consequence of the resistance. What I intend here is to move beyond the dualist notions of victims who are powerless to resist or survivors who have recovered *because* they are able to resist. When we talk of the fear, the shame, and the guilt here we are, for the first time in the collective, naming them in a relationship to trauma and we make space for them to be held and perhaps processed, (not in the sense of recovery or processing which allows us to makes sense and resolve something, but in a productive way of holding and unpicking together that can allow for both

disruption and *becoming* in the process). But we are also questioning and complicating the trauma, anger, and the resistance, what is it 'supposed to be' or what we do with our traumas, with our resistance and who we do it for and ultimately what it does to us. There are two opposing but ongoing narratives here, that of resistance and anger which allows for a thinking space, a way to stay safe while *being-with* the trauma and another of passivity and conforming and silence that provides some safety and conserves energy. Perhaps in both of these narratives (as co-implicated and created by/creating these) there is a sense of shame, fear and guilt that is very alive in the collective relational space. Even as we think about the anger directed outwards and inwards, that anger acts as a productive force that allows us to arrive at the heaviness and that which is concealed and denied with the anger.

This then becomes an ethical concern – we exceed the denial, the fear, the shame and the guilt to lay open our testimonials (holding within it the multiple points of difference) but we also question the ethical concerns that are co-implicated in this exceeding, that which feels like a responsibility, an obligation and a call to be angry and bare ourselves heedless of our safety and the loss of energy it creates, opening us to being further traumatised in the process (reader, you might remember from my other chapters that this ethical problematising is at the core of our De/Colonial praxis and in this writing we can see how this emerges from holding the collectively produced 'data' in relation to the localised entanglements that emerge diffractively). Much like the cyclic convolutedness of the *Chudail* and the *Feminist Pishachini*, we might write ourselves as an empowered, resistant collective who go beyond the silencing in producing this project (even just in talking about our conformity and denial) but we are unbound and produce leaky versions of ourselves that shuts down the resistance in its tracks in taking us back to the entangled threads of the trauma, the pain, the shame, the fear, the guilt and the need for/the lack of safety we carry. Perhaps the *mattering* of our anger and resistance

here is then multiple (is it not always?). We resist to subvert and unbind ourselves from that which seeks to territorialise us into the boundaries of a static, stable Indian womanhood. But we also resist and unpick this resisting to make space for thinking about the entangled relational processes of Indian womanhood that produces and keeps the trauma living, breathing, and moving through the collective, allowing it to shape us, to create further messy entanglements (of the trauma and us as traumatised women) that cannot be easily classified or understood or known unless it is in the *being*. What I am tentatively arriving at here is that the collective anger and resistance itself perhaps becomes entangled in the processes of the traumatic *phenomenon* and its intra-actions in the collective; it becomes not a unidirectional response to the traumatic moment from the past but that which is at once created from, within and against and that which furthers the traumatic *phenomenon*.

Traumatic Entanglements – A conceptualisation of Collective Trauma that exceeds

I have been talking about Collective Trauma for a while now without making explicit how I conceptualise it. The conundrum for me has been in finding a home for Collective Trauma that can encapsulate and hold the emergent process of this project in the trauma theory that exists. I am not claiming here that the vast ocean of literature we can delve into about trauma and collective trauma cannot be used to understand our process from this project and that which was explored in it. It is perhaps that I am struggling with what gets lost in the agential cuts that get enacted in fitting this process into Eurocentric theoretical frameworks that does not make room for the leaking, exceeding, messy ongoingness that has been characteristic of this process. Instead, what I hope for, through this writing and reading of the sections above, is to arrive at a conceptualisation of Collective Trauma that emerges from this study. Perhaps I should then begin with the ending of my previous section.

When I say Traumatic *Phenomenon*, I draw from Barad's (2006) idea of *Phenomenon* as intra-active becomings that do not pre-exist the *timespacematterings* and the ongoing intra-actions that are co-implicated in the process of knowing and being of the Trauma. This is perhaps an ontological shift that takes the Trauma from the boundedness of an event or a happening to a mutually constitutive ongoingness that is in a dynamic state of constant flux. Here we flatten out the idea of Traumatic experiences as *having happened there, then, here, at a particular time or to particular people* and allows for a relational conceptualisation where we relate to, know about, be with and produce materialisations of the Trauma experience and its iterative intra-actions from the space of dynamic ongoingness where we and the study are being produced from this phenomenon as we are producing it. For example, in the section above, we produce our understanding of what Trauma is and how it is traumatic for us as we are being produced by these understandings are traumatised women. Here we do not look for definitions of Trauma (from DSM-5 or other clinical diagnostic spaces for example) to support and allow this producing to *matter* or materialise. We do not name a particular moment of the traumatic event as we hold the collective experience of the Trauma as ongoing, spanning beyond the boundaries of the past, the present and future and as material-discursive, entangled intra-actions. When we speak of our experiences of Trauma or what we produce as traumatic in the collective, we stand as both individuals and as a collective, we carry (and are produced by and shaped by) each other's anger, resistance, denial, passivity and conforming. We are neither just conforming nor just resisting. We hear each other's testimonials and in relating to each other we are produced by these as individuals and a collective who relate to the experiences of trauma, the traumas that we witness for the other are materially inscribed onto us much as we inscribe onto the conceptualisation of Trauma as being something alive, sticky, and shared. Perhaps such a conceptualisation of trauma allows it to exist in layers of relational

productiveness and destructiveness, in between people, bodies and in between spaces, it attends to how trauma shapes collectives even as it is shaped and contoured and affectively enlivened through the collective. As Allegranti (2014) poignantly asks, this becomes a question of “Where do I end and where do you begin?” (Allegranti 2014, 64), where does the trauma end and where do we begin?, even as we dynamically shift between “me” and “not me”. I stay with Allegranti (2014, 58) here in that, “having an understanding that our bodies develop in relationship with other bodies re-frames humanist understandings of the self/body as a bounded stable entity: bodies are co-created and porous and we do not inhabit ourselves by ourselves—we are constantly undone and remade”.

May be then, some of the understandings we have of how we think about and know about experiences and intra-actions of Trauma too need to be undone and remade. I step back here into some of the questions that have emerged from the collective. When we ask why we keep being called to engage in these processes of knowing and understanding and relating to our traumas, when we say we have and will always look past the fear of backlash, when we ask why we are doing this to ourselves even though we know how painful the process is going to be, I struggle to find a home in theoretical understandings and I fail to find an answer to these questions in what we know about Trauma and the recovery paradigm that says that ‘understanding our losses’ is possible and even necessary. How do we *understand* losses that have happened to someone else? How do we understand and grieve for something that has not stopped happening or is yet to happen? Even as I long for a home in theory and understanding, I agree with Lather when she says, “theory is too often used to protect us from the awesome complexity of the world” (Lather 1986, 267). Tamas (2016) in her evocative, ground-breaking work on critiquing the recovery model offers a thought that “the project of “making sense” presumes a hierarchy of consciousness, in which the intellect can encompass and demystify

profoundly emotional, somatic, relational experiences” (Tamas 2016, 135). Perhaps here I long for a home that can make space for these complexities, where knowing is not a demystifying but is accepting of the rawness and the unboundedness that is revealed in our emotional, somatic, and relational entanglements. Much like the Indian patriarchal collective that fails to offer us this relational home in its dualistic/discursive boundedness perhaps theory too fails in its intellectual omnipotence.

Maybe I could stay with Tamas (2016) for a bit longer and think with ‘haunting’ as a way of conceptualising the Collective Trauma. Tamas (2016), speaking in context of Marital Abuse, argues for re-framing the “post”-abuse in terms of enduring our own deaths and still have a semblance of life and the new possibilities that emerge in using the metaphors of the undead and the spectral to perceive the journey we take in the aftermath of trauma and the ensuing metaphorical death it brings. While I am not opposed to identifying with spectres and ghosts (as you well know), the focus here on the “post” (while productive for Tamas’ argument) creates a jarring sense of incoherence within my stance of co-implicated ongoingness. Perhaps I might then think with Frosh’s (2019) conceptualisation of Collective Trauma and what he calls cultural hauntings or intergenerational hauntings. His idea of haunting is one that has come from another place and another time (reappearing time and again in cultural and narrative scripts to cause damage) and speaks into ‘Postmemory’, the cultural and intergeneration wounds we might carry through being witnesses to atrocities that have perhaps not directly happened to us. While he actively questions his use of the term “Post” in his conceptualisation of “Postmemory” by acknowledging how it might be hard to think of something as “post” while it still continues, his work is situated in the context of trauma that might be culturally and intergenerationally passed on but is not a shared experience that has reverberated and continues to through generations. While the idea of cultural hauntings and “Postmemory” might offer

some kind of grounding, it fails to hold the complexity of the Indian patriarchal, colonial, and cultural contexts and its historical ongoingness. Perhaps what can be productive here is to think of this idea of “haunting”, particularly in what it creates with the complicating and plugging in of the stories of the *Chudail* and the *Feminist Pishachini*. I step back to being with Barad (2006) here and her call for a co-implicated Ethico-onto-epistemological research practice that considers the ethical implications of that which is being produced and made to matter in the processes of *knowing-in-being*. While the idea of ‘haunting’ in itself might open up new possibilities and allow for a more-than-human reading of the collective ‘data’, plugging in the above stories allows for the framework of ‘haunting’ to be held within an intra-active context where the idea of “haunting” is inevitably entangled with the dismissal, silencing and the discourse of deviant conspiracy and creates a point of difference, a rip in seamlessness and continuity of the Eurocentric epistemic practices around trauma to highlight the ethical need for culturally situated knowledge production that can take into account the myriad of entanglements.

Perhaps what I am offering in this writing is a De/Colonial critique of the dominant models of thinking about Trauma, to seek out a space that can hold the ongoingness of traumatic and the past-ness of intergenerational, historical transmissions along with the Trauma that is inevitably yet to come. Here the entanglements become self-evident, it becomes impossible to think about the trauma perpetuated by patriarchy without thinking about the traumas carried forward by our ancestors, our mothers our fathers and the Culture. It is perhaps impossible yet to think about the ongoingness of this Trauma, of being within it still, without thinking about the future and what is being transmitted into the not-yet. Like the matryoshka dolls Jan Bradford (2019) speaks of, we bring in and carry forward, inscribing trauma and our historicity through bodies and passing it on like a baton from hand to hand and shoulder to

shoulder. The burden is carried, imbued, and lived, like a haunting that needs to be demonised and denied but looked back at with fear because perhaps forgetting and denying itself is impossible and a victory march of healing and recovery and “post-trauma” can only allow for illusions and short-lived certainties of “doneness”.

Interludes and *Mo/ve]ments* towards “Going-on-Being”

So what is it then that we can know from departing away from and disrupting the privileged sources towards more localised ethico-onto-epistemic readings of marginalised entanglements? As is perhaps the way with this thesis, we have ended up here with further emergences that go on *relationally-creating* and producing disruptions rather than offer us concrete, stable knowings that might reveal something of an other that we can hold onto. “Theorizing from the streets” as Bhattacharya (2019) calls is then ontological, or rather ethico-onto-epistemological. Reader, perhaps all I can offer you here, with any certainty, is that our interrogation of our entanglements in this way opens up further unstable worlds and lets us cast our attention to the kinds of worlds we go on producing through our explorations and the ethical obligations (particularly disruptive, activist and De/Colonial obligations) we might have as researchers within these processes of world-making. However, as insights, we can note here the expansions that happen through surrendering the will to ‘know’ and allowing ourselves to go beyond knowing another, through examples, details, narratives etc., towards the *what-else*. What is the *what-else* that can be produced in thinking of our traumatic entanglements? Could we perhaps think of coloniality too within this frame of iterative collective trauma that constitutes not only the marginalised or the colonised other as a contained act but also all of us in how it shapes us, our entanglements within the worlds becoming and our relationalities? It is with this sense of generative questioning and ethico-onto-epistemic disrupting with/in world-

making that I now take you into a short interlude of *re-turns* and *re-framings*. We might see this interlude as a resting place where, for a mere unstable moment, we might attend to concretising the framing of this thesis within the field of C&P before we enter the concluding departure of this thesis, ‘Going-on-being’, where we might set in motion again in the in-between worlds of the De/Colonial, methodological and paradigmatic enactments we have arrived at.

INTRA-ACTIVE INTERLUDE

RE-TURNING, RE-FRAMING, AND RE-SEARCHING

- *Tracing the processual entanglements with/in Counselling and Psychotherapy*

Reader, up to this point in this thesis, we have diffractively explored the process of the collective and the disruptions and interruptions that emerge from our process as a De/Colonial praxis into New-materialist Collective Biography. I have asked you to stay with me on a conflicting, convoluted journey that has taken us into unlikely departures and we have seen some rhizomatic departures, as open ended, dynamic possibilities of exploration within this framework of De/Coloniality. However, I find myself unable to find a path from where we have landed to the dynamism of “going-on-being” I envision as the concluding chapter of this thesis and we have inevitably arrived at an in-between space where I am held still before stepping into the concluding flights of this *timespacemattering*. I take a moment here to offer an intra-active interlude instead where I *re-turn* to some of the *unknown-knowns* that have gone unattended to in the ebbs and flows of an agential research/writing process.

I speak here of my entanglements within the field of Counselling and Psychotherapy reader (referred to as C&P in this chapter). After all, this whole inquiry has been about relationalities, and my entanglements within the field of C&P in conceptualising and producing such disruptive relationalities have been inseparable from our process and its expansions, disruptions, and *mo[ve]ments*. Perhaps then it is apt to make some space for exploring how I *re-frame* this thesis within the field and what we might *know-in-being-with* our process as disruptions and co-constitutions into the very practices, processes, and relational frameworks that I begin my journey as a practitioner/researcher with/in. You might be wondering at what an unlikely juncture this is to step into how I frame this thesis within the field and that the

beginning of the thesis might have offered better space for this grappling. However, in staying with the *mo[ve]ments* and not-knowings, I argue here that these insights too emerge as *unknown-knowns* in the process, rather than as a premediated positioning, and I only encounter these framings, diffractions, and co-constitutions through my *knowing-in-being* and *re-turning*, *re-framing*, and *re-searching* with/in the process towards re-encountering C&P from with/in this collectively co-constituted relational space..

[Re]Framing my practitioner/researcher co-constitutions and this dynamic worlding within Counselling and Psychotherapy

While this project is positioned as a part of my doctoral training in the field of C&P, and I begin this inquiry in drawing from my work as a relational psychotherapist, researcher and C&P educator, my explorations here have taken a life of their own and emerged as conceptual, paradigmatic, and methodological insights and expansions into research, particularly within Social Sciences. In a hope of keeping the intra-disciplinary contexts, expansions, and tensions alive and not instrumentalising our process and its insights towards a particularly directive disciplinary destination, I have, in the process of this inquiry and *[Non]writing-as-worlding* this thesis, withheld from shoe-horning or reading the *emergenc[i]es* of this De/Coloniality within therapeutic practice, research, and educational frameworks. But arguably such withholdings of “sense-making” are not unlike how we might relate to our clients and ourselves within therapeutic contexts, and much of my *knowing-being-with*, and embracing productive relationalities as central to this project, has emerged from with/in my practice.

For example, my *desire* to explore Indian women’s materialities, that I note in the first chapter, emerges from my engagement with myself in my training and practice as a Dance

Movement Psychotherapist. I am produced as a researcher and I produce initial conceptualisations of this project too within the field of C&P and in a department that holds the relational dialogue as a foundation; I begin thinking of research, particularly this project within the setting of a course that delves into the in-between of counselling practice and research. Given the context of my doctoral training, a professional doctorate that holds practice at its core, my conceptualisation of relational and ethical engagement within research processes is entangled in my understanding of practice-based research, as called for by Bondi and Fewell (2016), and draws from the therapeutic process to produce a space of tracing and tracking the relational happenings; so we might know something about the relationships, the project and ourselves, even as we become something new from the engagement. Employing this idea of generatively relational practice, and the therapeutic process of staying with the not-knowing (Petrucelli 2010), has allowed me to practice the kind of ethical engagement that is not geared towards resolving, but instead becomes a productive space for interrogating the entanglements of the relationality itself as we might with our clients in therapeutic contexts. The De/Colonial practices I use in this thesis of *keeping the problems alive*, *being-with* and *unknown-known* gain momentum from staying with the not-knowing and hold within their dynamism these therapeutic ways of being with/in relationship, particularly the intersubjective, interpersonal frameworks of relational psychodynamic practice that delve into the in-between to hold the contradictions and complexities in a generative, non-exclusionary “third space” (Benjamin 2006).

Perhaps reader, my staying with the process, my holding of the collective space openly so that we might fluidly follow the emergences, disruptions and interruptions, my capacity to disown the positionality of a ‘knowing’ researcher and move towards a collaborative stance too, draws from the relational processes that I hold as central to my therapeutic practice and

research; like staying with the uncertainties and intangibility of process, interrogating power dynamics, and honouring the liminal spaces of contradictions. What the relational frameworks of C&P does in this encounter with *re-searching* is enrich the sense of creative-relational dynamism that we have come to hold as integral to the De/Colonial process and praxis. Within this dynamism, I frame this project and this thesis as drawing from and delving into the very relational processes that we seek to animate and interrogate within C&P, and I offer our process here as experience-near, rich, practice-based enactments of transcultural relationalities *becoming* agential and producing disruptive, De/Colonial worldings in attending to *Minor-acts* and *emergenc[i]es* of our experiencing/co-constituting the world. However there are other significant *emergenc[i]es* in such a framing of this project. For example I note here that, while the kind of relationalities we might foster in the relational model of C&P hold within them the potential to facilitate a space that is generative of such disruptive De/Colonial departures, I encounter De/Coloniality only as an interdisciplinary emergence within my/collective's localised situatedness and you might remember from my chapter, *The ethics of collaboration*, that it is my problematising of and interrogating the very spaces and frames that produce me as a researcher, from within my insider/outsider positionality, that opens up the space for De/Colonial encounters. I *re-turn* here to my process of *becoming* a practitioner and a researcher.

In thinking of the contexts of my training and practice, what comes to fore here is the gap that multiple scholars like Moodley and Palmer (2006), McKenzie-Mavinga (2009), Johnson and Nadirshaw (2008), Loewenthal (2015) and their collaborators, Arthur (2018), Lago (2011), Charura and Lago (2021) and collaborators, and Tummala-Narra (2022) to name a few, highlight in critiquing the continued failure of C&P professions through the decades in *materialising* the vast literature that already exists about facilitating such disruptive

engagement within the field in research, practice and training spaces, so that they might be picked up by trainees/practitioners towards more ethical, intentional and culturally respectful engagement. I sit here with the frustration that, while decoloniality or disruptive decolonial thinking within C&P is not by any means a new emergence and that the insights that we might draw from my process have been noted before (perhaps continually noted and reiterated like in the literature above that spans decades), the materialisation and encountering of such engagements in practice, research and training contexts remain in the realm of bounded, instrumentalised engagements with “difference, diversity and power” in particular days of training, ‘decolonising’ interventions like including some diverse sources of literature, or individualised checklist activities that call of continued professional development towards “cultural competence” as practitioners. Perhaps I can also note here the gap that is highlighted in how we might make space for onto-epistemological debates and questioning when it comes to research within C&P but fall short of incorporating this grappling into our therapeutic practice and education in privileging the ‘established’ *knowledge* of familiar paradigms/practices. Within these disruptive spaces and courses that produce me as a researcher too, we see resounding calls for disruptive research that embraces the post-ontologies and post-human turns to problematise subjectivity, representation etc., but we stop short of actively engaging with or critiquing the colonial resonances of academia and research itself and consequently disown the ethico-onto-epistemological response-ability that we might hold in our engagements within the field and with/in world-making practices of research and psychotherapy. With a keen sense of loss, I note here the longing for spaces that might have fostered the kind of De/Colonial relationalities and collectively disruptive trans-paradigmatic engagements within the contexts of my own training and practice.

As Tuck and Yang (2012) emphasise in saying that “Decolonisation is not a metaphor”, I argue that the affective sense of loss I hold here speaks into the need for a collective ethico-onto-epistemological response-ability towards embodying an intentional, transformative praxis in real material ways rather than seeing decolonisation as a thing to do. For example, thinking from within this project, I note here how the *emergenc[i]es* of world-making through our practices of ‘knowing’ ourselves and the other, of decentred marginalised relationalities, of Eurocentric theoretical frameworks, of how and what we can/are entitled to know of the marginalised other, what stories might we ethically tell or ask to know, how we can problematise ethics and consent procedures from within different cultural frames, what might the other need from us in a facilitative space, of what we mean when we say ‘Human’ and our entanglements/tensions that become evident in thinking of ‘Human’ experience etc. become enlivened and disruptive in intra-actively *material-discursive* ways within our Collective Biography process. Such *material-discursive* enactments align with the kind of engagement within C&P psychotherapy practice and research that Serra Undurraga (2023, 5) (who draws momentum from Loewenthal (2015) and their collaborator’s call for a Critical Psychotherapy) and Charura and Lago (2021) and collaborators call for in critically exploring what decolonising C&P practice, research and training contexts might look like in practice.

Serra Undurraga's (2023, 7) conceptualisation of “Critical psychotherapy” here emerges from her holding “psychotherapy as [both] produced and productive” and, to problematise the kinds of worlds we might be producing through our theories and practices, opens up the space for iteratively asking how our notions around “the self” and sense-making of this “self” as a therapeutic task might be world-making. I note here that the kind of engagement Serra Undurraga (2023) calls for is not unlike how I envision the dynamism of the De/Colonial praxis. However, this thesis is also ultimately about disruptions and interruptions

of my *becoming-practitioner-researcher* within the field of C&P and within the frame Serra Undurraga (2023) offers, I offer my/our process of *becoming* with/in these interruptions as a co-constitution into C&P that delves into such *material-discursive* enactments of De/Coloniality. Perhaps reader, while the disruptions of our process can provide powerful, rich, and detailed examples of De/Colonial ethico-onto-epistemological interruptions that trace how coloniality and De/coloniality itself comes to matter in our practice/research/training contexts, I need to reiterate that the insights and disruptions of this inquiry, like the women I work with, are not *things* to be *known* but are powerful, dynamic enactments for us to think-with in our C&P practice, research, and educational contexts, to open up practice/research/training futures that attend to the *emergenc[i]es* and gaps I note above. It is with this hope that I step into *re-searching* this project's co-constitutions with/in C&P research.

Re-searching the entanglements of Counselling and Psychotherapy research

Thinking-with Serra Undurraga (2023) and our emergent dynamism of the De/Colonial relationalities here allows me delve into the question of - if we begin to think here of the world-making potential of our therapeutic, research, and educational practices, in how it produces 'subjectivities' and worlds within relationships so to speak, how might we *keep the problems of coloniality alive* in the kinds of relationships/worlds we are producing within our therapeutic practice, research, and education, so that we might attend to the *what-else* of C&P too in the creative-relational spaces of disruption into our very relationalities? Could we set in motion our thinking/rethinking of the C&P contexts as a De/Colonial, ethico-onto-epistemological engagement within the world's becoming *through* opening up the space for De/Colonial response-ability within our relationalities? Perhaps thinking of therapy too as we think of research, a world-making through re-searching of our entanglements and their ethico-onto-epistemic co-constitution within our dyadic-collective-becoming and how these emerge as

inseparable from our ‘experiencing’, knowing ourselves and constituting of the world, becomes the way we can *keep the problems of coloniality alive* with/in our world-making therapeutic contexts.

Could we then say, in holding this dynamism of in-between and stepping back into the practice-based research contexts that I begin this inquiry with/in, that the research futures that we might envision in the field of C&P as iterative ‘examples/enactments’ of such De/Colonial relationalities that become agential towards unpacking and problematising practice, research, and education within C&P rather than bounded cultural representations and static knowings of the experiences of the other? Bondi and Fewell (2016) highlight a gap between research and practice in C&P and contend that for C&P research (and literature) to be really put into practice we might need to look towards *The power of examples*. You might imagine that a call for experience-near, detailed, and rich accounts by practitioners might be contradictory to my argument for leaky subjectivities that defy categorisation, going beyond examples and narratives, and honouring refusals, *[Non]writing* and not-knowing. However I position this thesis and these diffractive explorations within this chapter as aligning very much with what Bondi and Fewell (2016) are hoping to produce as practitioner knowledge (or *phronesis* as Flyvbjerg (2006) calls it) through experience-near examples that work into the in-between of the practice-research gap. Only my call here is that in our examples/enactments we hold the De/Colonial response-ability that asks us to explicitly engage with what kind of worlds/examples are we asking ourselves to represent/produce, who are we producing these for, the ethical De/Colonial implications of producing particular kinds of examples that ‘sell’ and asking our relational/cultural others for such experience-near narratives. I contend that such a framing of this inquiry within C&P also aligns with Charura and Lago's (2021) call for

processual examples of culturally sensitive ways of interrogating and disrupting research practices from within our practice.

However, I take examples here to also mean the experience-near, iterative, and *Minor-acts* of the process and I argue that it is exactly this staying with the minoritarian process of becoming agential and embracing instability and incoherencies that allows us to delve into De/Coloniality and provide instead our process and relationality as enactments where we might not know the other but know differently through *encountering* the other. If perhaps our examples/enactments could be transnational encounters and leaky unstable worlds where all we know is what happens in thinking otherwise within our search to know or hold an “other”, ‘examples’ here then become ethico-onto-epistemological encounters too in making space for not a pinning down but an unpacking and interrupting of our entanglements, theoretical contexts, and disciplinary tensions for iterative interrogation. Could we begin to think of De/Coloniality with C&P research as producing agential relationalities/enactments that foster *Minor-acts* of activism and ethico-onto-epistemological refusals of “sense-making” as disruptions into the ‘known’? Could we let go of the short-lived certainty that our familiar theories and cultural competence offers us and take it upon ourselves to make anew that which emerges from *being-with* dynamic processes and enactments?

I contend here that it is fostering and producing dynamic relationalities that produce De/Coloniality and holding close the De/Colonial response-ability to disrupt our insider/outsider relationalities through problematising familiar, known ways of thinking about “relationalities” and “subjectivities” in our very being and becoming in the therapeutic practice, research, and training contexts that might allow us to iteratively make space for disrupting ourselves and our Colonial entanglements and go beyond the checklist, tokenistic ways of

thinking of “decolonising”. I understand the potential of De/Coloniality with/in C&P as embracing the very sense of “staying with the trouble” of coloniality in our relationships, in *being-with* the *what-else* we might produce through delving into how globalisation, the reverberations of colonialism, and privileging of the capitalist, neo-liberal, hegemonic subjectivities act upon *knowing*, *beings* and *becomings* and how our relationalities come into being and become dynamic in furthering/disrupting these binds as insider/outside. I argue reader that it is through such enactments of leaking, of becoming more, of knowing/being/doing, and *knowing-in-being differently*, that relationally takes us into the unexpected spaces where we might interrupt ourselves, that we arrive at *keeping the problems of De/Coloniality alive* in C&P practice, education, and research. Such a stance of De/Colonial relationalities might not only set our relationships in motion in making space for them to *become agential*, but also bring to fore the entanglements of practice, research, and training contexts in drawing our attention to how we know, how we might learn and how we might bring these knowings and *knowing-in-beings* into practice contexts to go on producing *different* worlds; not as monoliths but as diffractive enactments that take us into the *what-else*.

The De/Colonial praxis as an iterative relationality

I have been holding close the collective process here to think-with relationalities that produce De/Coloniality and the ethico-onto-epistemological engagements we can foster with/in the world’s becoming in creating such disruptively relational spaces. I have, in this interlude, paid attention to fostering/materialising such De/Colonial response-ability and relationalities as the *emergenc[i]es* with/in C&P that this thesis speaks into. I acknowledge here that much of what the De/Colonial praxis might open up for me within C&P too, as processual *Minor-acts*, still remain in the realm of the *unknown-known*, to be only *known-in-being* beyond the linearity of a journey that concludes here with concreteness. But this interlude

is only a moment of holding still to be able to *re-turn* to and *re-frame* with/in the very frameworks I begin this journey with and there still remain a multitude of dynamic flights that we can follow in tracing the *what-else* of the De/Colonial praxis and this thesis beyond C&P worldings. It feels important to go back to the collective process and remind you here, that my framing of our relationalities as *becoming* agential and disruptive to produce De/Coloniality in *Minor Acts* and *Mo[ve]ments*, is co-implicated with/in the dynamism of De/Coloniality as a relationality that goes on to produce in its encounters; we produce the *De/Colonial praxis as a dynamic relationality* with/in our becoming dynamic in the collective relationality. It is this dynamism that I take you into as the “diffractive offerings” of this thesis, to conceptualise the *De/Colonial praxis as an iterative relationality that produces through refusing to end* and attend to what it produces in its co-constituting encounters beyond the bounds of the discipline it emerges with/in.

DIFFRACTIVE OFFERINGS

“GOING-ON-BEING”

- De/Colonial praxis as an iterative relationality that interrupts, provokes, and produces through refusing to end

We have arrived at the final leg of our journey together in this *timespacemattering* and I begin this concluding departure with the overwhelm of holding the innumerable minor *mo[ve]ments*, expansions and intangible *unknown-knowns* of this worlding. While I have, at various points in this writing, alluded to the tentative insights I draw from our process as “contributions” of this thesis, I have refrained from pinning these down as a “thing” to make space for the *what-else* that this worlding too might produce. Reader you know how this *what-else*, since its emergence in the introduction, has been a dynamic, productive force that catalyses my *becoming* within this thesis; in offering provocations and disruptions into my *becoming* as a Global South researcher in the Global North. This sense of productiveness comes alive in how each chapter of this thesis has opened up mine and the collective’s process to produce and offer interruptions and departures from the “known” as insights into *inquiring* itself; I note here how each chapter becomes an *encounter*, as Jackson and Mazzei (2022) conceptualise, that goes on to produce the conceptual/processual/paradigmatic/methodological insights as emergent in the practice of dynamic research conceptualisation, reciprocal collaboration, ethical engagement with ‘data’ gathering, analysis and writing of a thesis. In *being-with* these interruptions as encounters, my process here has been one of emergent dynamism and perhaps the closest I have come to articulating a ‘focus’ of inquiry is in attending to – “How do we, a collective of Global South women, *know* and co-constitute Creative-relational Inquiry (C-RI), New Materialisms and Collective Biography differently while *being-*

with and tracing the entanglements of our bodies and patriarchal contexts of India within a framework of a New Materialist Collective Biography?”.

The De/Colonial praxis has emerged here as a dynamic force that is created with/in and responds to the above question, and has produced this thesis as a dynamic worlding of De/Colonial relationalities and co-constitutions that *keep the problems alive*. From within the process and this writing, I/we have produced multiple other enactments/practices, that become rhizomatic and go on create further spaces of disruptions, interruptions, and expansions as materialisations of De/Coloniality; like the *What-else, Being-with, Mo[ve]ments, Unknown-known* and *Keeping the problems alive* I note above, and the *Birthing, Minor-acts, De/Colonial-New Materialisms, De/Colonial-Collective Biography* and *[Non]writing*, all of which I have been *thinking-writing-creating-relating-with*, to *be-with* and conceptualise *becoming-agential* as a collective who are drawn into the ebbs and flows of process towards unfamiliar/unexpected De/Colonial worldings. We have closely followed these shifts and expansions, and I have noted in the other chapters of this work that it is our process, as it materialises differently in its encounters with the above emergent practices, that is the knowledge produced in this thesis; towards opening up the potential for thinking otherwise from *being-with* the process of a minoritarian collective. Our short hiatus in the *Intra-active interlude* took us out of this dynamic becoming for a moment so that I could frame the resonances and insights of this work within C&P. But arguably the De/Colonial praxis and its reverberations are not limited to the discipline of C&P that I begin this project within, and the *emergenc[i]es* of this process has taken us on departures into unexpected interdisciplinary, trans-paradigmatic spaces.

I argue here that the “knowledge” produced within this project, while intrinsically relevant to our work as C&P practitioners, researcher, and educators, also takes me out of C&P as a bounded discipline to attend to its entanglements within the world’s making and remaking. Like the proverbial opening of a can of worms, I am inevitably pulled back into the dynamism of emergent process here in being led into exploring *what-else* this thesis can do and attending one last time to the productiveness of my *being-with* this process and the *[Non]writing-as-worlding* this thesis. I *re-turn* to the above question of “How do we, a collective of Global South women, know and co-constitute C-RI, New Materialisms and Collective Biography differently” with the hope of expanding on the dynamism of the De/Colonial praxis. However reader, this is not a departure that explores *what the De/Colonial praxis is*. Instead I follow further disruptive departures in thinking-with the *De/Colonial praxis as an iterative relationality that interrupts, provokes, and produces through refusing to end* and I mobilise once more the dynamism of “*what-else*” to think of *what the De/Colonial praxis does*. Within this frame, thinking of the offerings of decoloniality and the De/Colonial praxis becomes not a “how” or a “what” (arguably, I have explored ‘hows’ and ‘whats’ of our praxis in the innumerable “*Minor-acts*” in our process). Decoloniality and the De/Colonial praxis become *encounters* too, relationalities that cannot be pinned down but are that which produce and become enlivened *in relation to what they encounter*. I arrive here at re-framing the question above to think instead of - “*What-else* does the De/Colonial praxis *do* as it co-constitutes C-RI, New Materialisms and Collective Biography differently?”

It is *sensing-feeling-writing* into the above question towards tracing the dynamism of De/Colonial praxis/practices and its co-constitutions that I take you into now. Coming a full circle from our introduction, I frame these explorations as interruptions that we as a marginalised collective, and I as a Global south researcher co-implicated in the Global north

spaces, offer into CR-I, New Materialisms, and Collective Biography. Each of these explorations also inevitably takes us into envisioning further pathways of *what the De/Colonial praxis might do* beyond this project and I offer these emergences as provocations towards the “Going-on-being” of De/coloniality and this thesis. I think-with Winnicott’s (1965) idea of “Going-on-being” here to hold the sense of ongoingness of the De/Colonial praxis and to frame these emergent interruptions as an invitation to create other interdisciplinary, ethico-onto-epistemological (Barad 2006) transitional spaces where we might learn to think otherwise in not impinging through familiar sense-making or concretising; so that De/Coloniality and its transformative dynamism can be kept alive. Reader, it might not surprise you that I do not offer a concise, coherent, or neatly tied up praxis/paradigm/methodology. My explorations here perhaps do not offer us bounded insights that we might readily put into practice, but like the rest of this thesis and the iterative insights we have arrived at, this is not an exploration of *knowing or understanding*. I reiterate Manning’s (2016, 13) claim here that “what emerges from [this] study will never be an answer... What emerges will be another mode of encounter, another problem, another opening onto the political as site as yet undefined”.

Interruption I – De/Colonial response-ability as an ethical emergency with/in creating, relating, and becoming Creative-Relational

Throughout this process, Creative-Relationality, or the Creative-Relational Inquiry (C-RI) offers me multiple pathways to think-with, stay-with and hold the uncertainties of an emergent process that takes me into the unknown. Reader, here we have seen how the enlivened conceptualisations of Wyatt’s (2018) *Desire*, de Andrade, Stenhouse, and Wyatt’s (2021) creative-relational *Hyphen*, Murray’s (2020) *Emergencies* and Serra Undurraga’s (2022) *Diffraction-Diffracted reflexivity* disrupt and dislevel to open up the in-between space for unlikely collaborations and contradictory positionings. My framing of this project and this

thesis as a C-RI emerges from within the process in our commitment to “doing justice to the fluidity of process” (Wyatt 2019, 1), in the emergence/creation of dynamic concepts as we go along, in my putting these concepts, theories, and methodologies ‘to work’, and in being explicit and curious about the process of inquiry itself. The “work” that the collective and I do here is relational and infinitely creative (if only as disruptions and interruptions) and allows us to enliven our research practices in experience-near, context-sensitive, and ethico-onto-epistemologically intra-active (Barad 2006) ways. But perhaps as Wyatt (in de Andrade, Stenhouse, and Wyatt 2021, 4) reiterates, C-RI and the concepts that have been iteratively created in our relating to the process become dynamic and enlivened in this project only in being “played with, plugged in, put to work, and... trusting that in doing so the concept will teach us what it does”. It is this co-implication of “the concept will teach us what it does” that I bring to your attention now as we begin thinking of how C-RI might be rendered in motion in its encounter with the De/Colonial praxis.

You might have noticed that I am talking of the De/Colonial praxis as in itself a dynamic ‘concept’ or a creative-relationality that is open to co/re-constitution with/in its encounters. This very sense of openness to co/re-constitution has been a significant part of my process. In the initial chapters of this work, I write of decoloniality and the De/Colonial praxis as emergent within creative-relational diffractions, and in the process of our collective engagement and the writing of thesis I have embraced Wyatt’s (in de Andrade, Stenhouse, and Wyatt (2021)) conceptualisation of the “creative-relational” as the “the radical, creative opening-up-to-what-may-be, an opening-up within “an encounter [that] is not a confrontation with a ‘thing’ but a relation that is sensed, rather than understood (Jackson 2017)”. The dynamic De/Colonial practice of attending to the *“unknown-known”* is catalysed with/in this very sense of holding,

re-turning to and *being-with* the emergent *what-else* rather than the easily ‘understood’, and the other practices of De/Coloniality here too are enlivened in such *refusals of “sense-making”*.

For example, I note here that *Being-with, Mo[ve]ments, Emergec[i]es, Keeping the problems alive* all emerge within my process to catalyse different, unexpected worldings that refuse “sense-making” through familiar, instrumental pathways. In my above encounter with the practices of the “*unknown-known*”, “*what-else*” and “*being-with*”, we can also see these practices draw momentum from each other in co-implicating ways. However these concepts do not exist in isolation; instead they are created in how I relate to other creative-relational conceptualisations by Wyatt, Murray, Barad, Davies and Gannon, Jackson and Mazzei etc. I do not *use* their concepts in the reductionist sense of using, but I take it and run with it to relationally create other potential worlds that go on to become my De/Colonial praxis. What I draw your attention to here is this sense of becoming-more. While I might explain what I *mean* by *Being-with, Mo[ve]ments, Emergec[i]es, Keeping the problems alive etc.*, and you might already have “made sense” of them through how I have come to *use* them or relate to them in my thesis, it is the other worlds that they go on creating, for you and in other encounters, that makes them dynamically and iteratively De/Colonial.

The question I hope to *think-feel-write* into here is what the De/Colonial praxis/practices *creates* with/in C-RI. I invite you to think-with what we might open up in *being-with* this De/Coloniality and its practices/praxis, in putting it into work in other spaces and frames with an intentional De/Coloniality and plugging the creative-relationality that is the De/Colonial praxis back into troubling the C-RI that it is created relationally within. For example, if we take these practises, if we take De/Colonial praxis and run with it, how might we reimagine C-RI, how might we iteratively rethink research, research relationships, power,

intimacy, coloniality, research ethics, writing/not-writing, knowing/not-knowing, kinship etc. towards a praxis that refuses the colonial entanglements of “relating”, “creating”, “expanding” and “sense-making”. Resonating with Pillow’s (2020) evocative call for reimagining decolonial and ethically response-able research futures with/in C-RI, my encounter here with C-RI and the De/Colonial praxis opens up the space of the creative, the relational and creative-relational to be interrupted by our De/Colonial response-ability into *becoming-otherwise*. I think of De/Colonial responsibility here, as it is catalysed with/in the collective and drawing from Barad’s (in Barad and Gandorfer 2021) ideas around response-ability, as driven by a “decolonial attitude” (Pillow 2019) and productive readings that seek to refuse and dislodge the colonial machine. In fostering such De/colonial response-ability could we mobilise the practice of *what-else* to think of what is excluded from being created within our research relationalities or what is excluded from our relationships in our commitment for research creation? Could we then pay attention to the ethical/processual *emergenc[i]es* and hold still momentarily in *being-with* the interruptions and dynamic *mo[ve]ments*, so we might make space for *unknown-knowns* and *De/Colonial-Minor Acts* that disrupt, problematise, and take us into *what-else* C-RI and its practices can do?

The possibilities here are endless and I argue that this project and this thesis has worked into and problematised the very questions I open up above as a co-constitution into C-RI. Perhaps what emerges for “what the De/Colonial praxis does?” here, as De/Colonial *“emergenc[i]es”*, is an enlivening of Pillow’s (2020, 48) warning:

“Take this seriously; colonialism is imbricated in all we learn, see, know, touch, and feel—undoing this, especially for those who have not had to practice otherwise to survive, will take commitment. Practice requires taking what is learned about the coloniality of power—all the ways, for example, whiteness recentres itself effectively and affectively—and refusing to perpetuate those modalities.”

Plugging-in our emergent De/Colonial praxis into C-RI, I stand with Pillow (2020) here and offer our co-constituted *Creative-Relational-De/Coloniality* as an interruption into C-RI towards research processes that create and produce De/Colonial response-ability with/in our relationalities: the responsibility of explicitly interrogating our iterative entanglements with coloniality and the inevitable Insider/Outsider relationalities it creates, and for explicitly and intentionally refusing coloniality, its machines and practices through creative-relational disruptions of ourselves in *Minor Acts* De/Coloniality (from *with/in* these inevitable Insider/Outsider relationalities). Perhaps the significant thing to note here, the essence of this provocation I offer, is that the response-ability and work we do with/in De/Coloniality is an interruption of our very creating, relating, and *becoming creative-relational* as an emergency and therefore iterative – it does not stop and is generatively ongoing, creating further worlds, fissures, and disruptions as potential trans-paradigmatic, interdisciplinary departures. We see this very sense of iterative, response-able, trans-paradigmatic departures in the intra-action of De/Coloniality and New Materialisms, and it is the dynamic conceptualisation of *De/Colonial-New Materialisms*, the in-between of what De/Coloniality *does* in its encounter with New Materialisms, that we step into now.

Interruption II - Keeping the problems of Post-H/human²⁴, entangled ethico-onto-epistemologies alive through worldings of De/Colonial-New Materialisms

Reader, in my earlier chapters, I frame the *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* as a creative-relational collaboration that brings the De/Colonial praxis into a relationship with New

²⁴ Thinking-with Pillow's (2020) conceptualisation of H/human that attends to problems of "what humans are afforded the status of a capitalised Human", of privileged "Humanness" vs the marginalised "humanness", I use *Post-H/human* here to envision a transformative stance that holds decentring the centred Humanness (and consequent privileged Eurocentric knowledge/world-making practices) as a De/Colonial Post-Human practice.

Materialisms. However this is not the kind of collaboration that fills gaps, supplements, or produces a bounded paradigm/framework. Instead, I note from my/our process that it is a dynamic force that makes space for the disruptions of the De/Colonial practices/praxis with/in New Materialisms, while producing the praxis itself. I *re-turn* here to thinking-with what this *De/Coloniality* does with/in *New Materialisms*, to offer provocations into New Materialisms, and I begin this articulation/encounter by *plugging-in* Pillow's (2020, 48) quote from the above section again.

“Take this seriously; colonialism is imbricated in all we learn, see, know, touch, and feel—undoing this, especially for those who have not had to practice otherwise to survive, will take commitment. Practice requires taking what is learned about the coloniality of power—all the ways, for example, whiteness recentres itself effectively and affectively—and refusing to perpetuate those modalities.”

From within the process of our Collective Biography and my writing-as-worlding this thesis, I resonate with Pillow's (2020) sense here of the commitment needed to practice De/Coloniality and undo/decentre coloniality and Eurocentrism. It is in fact this very sense of iterative commitment that I *know-in-being-with* the collective as De/Colonial response-ability within research and practice and that I offer as a co-constitution into C-RI above. I note the dynamism of *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* in materialising this response-ability (and the iterative disruptions that emerge), so that we might inquire into entanglements of how coloniality comes to matter, what or who is seen as mattering and in what ways, and the ethics of the worlds we go on to create within these charged moments of inclusion and exclusion.

Reader, I remind you here of some of my other chapters where I explore the encounter between De/Coloniality and New-Materialisms. *The Ethics of Collaboration* and “*Knowing-in-being*” a thesis chapters particularly work into the in-between spaces to open up dimensions

of how we might begin to think otherwise; through embracing onto-epistemological incoherence and *keeping the problems of ethics*, and the entanglement of ethico-onto-epistemologies, *alive* rather than resolving tensions through sense-making or ethical reasoning. It is here that we arrive at *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* as a catalytic force, that emerges in my grappling with the inclusions and exclusions of New Materialisms and Postcolonialisms and the ethics of framing this project and my process in either/or ways. *The Writing Story/ies* chapter embraces the dynamism of this ethico-onto-epistemological response-ability to draw momentum from the collective's resistance, refusals and exceeding, as *Minor-acts* of *[Non]writing*, towards De/Colonial engagement with research and knowledge production as a world-making apparatus that demands iterative ethical scrutiny and a dismantling of the colonial centre. The chapter *Breasts, Vagina, Skin, Hair, and Blood* offers alternative, trans-paradigmatic readings of marginalised materialities and our affective becomings with/in the materiality of the collective, to problematise notions of 'transcending identity politics', while also holding the De/Colonial response-ability and refusing colonial representations of Global South women. The chapter *Feminist Hauntings* traces our traumatic entanglements within patriarchy, colonialism, and feminisms to offer a conceptualisation of collective trauma that exceeds Eurocentric frameworks of testimony or individualistic recovery through *plugging-in* oral traditions and localised entanglements. Our collective engagement here, and my iterative engagement with the collective process being plugged-into *De/Colonial-New Materialisms*, takes me into not only problematising frameworks and positionalities that we might take for granted such as 'decentring', onto-epistemological Eurocentrism, entanglement of 'Humanness' within coloniality, the problems of the "posthuman" turn, materiality of race and gender, inescapable identity politics etc. I also trouble and problematise the coloniality within relational/methodological practices we might take for granted such as collaborations, researcher/researchee relationships, research ethics/ethical reviews, consent procedures, 'data'

analysis etc., from within these trans-paradigmatic spaces. Perhaps reader it might be helpful to think of these disruptions as *mo[ve]ments* that are produced with/in the *De/Colonial-New Materialist* encounter and not as tasks we need to do within the De/Colonial praxis (though arguably problematising our assumptions/practices is central to decoloniality and I mean here that these disruptions are not monoliths to be taken up as is). I remind you here yet again that these disruptions emerge in the process as *our* De/Coloniality, our departure from the colonial machine, that was catalysed through my *keeping the problems* of my insider/outsider relationality *alive*.

It is in these *mo[ve]ments* of *being-with* and *keeping the problems alive* that we co-constitute New Materialisms through our De/Coloniality and *emergenc[i]es* of insider/outsider relationality. I position this thesis and our process as a response to the reverberating calls by Ahmed (2008), Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla (2015), Rosiek, Snyder, and Pratt (2020), Pillow (2020), and Bhattacharya (2021) to be critical of the ethico-onto-epistemological consequences of such expansions, to trace/disrupt our entanglements within colonial historicity as we occupy New Materialist and “posthuman” spaces/conceptualisations of the world, and to make space for the transformative potential that can be catalysed through holding non-exclusionary, response-able stances of trans-paradigmatic, non-Eurocentric departures with/in inquiries. The in-between space that this thesis finds a home in is the question Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla (2015, 13) ask –

“whether it is possible to both acknowledge the importance of these critiques of new materialism, to say “yes” to their concerns, while also performing that doubled gesture of asking how new materialist onto-epistemologies might perform such erasures or elisions of race... how might we approach or uncover the assumptions about the human and the iterative acts of exclusion that are also potentially at work in critiques of this field, and to ask this from within (what we identify as) a new materialist frame?”

I offer that it is the De/Colonial response-ability that emerges in my process, in acknowledging and interrogating our insider/outsider positionalities, in holding close the impossibility of escaping our entanglement within identity politics and its inscriptions, and in refusals of sense-making through embracing onto-epistemological incoherencies, silences and refuting of the colonial machine, that allows us to hold these contrary spaces of disruption from *within the New Materialist frame*.

From within these non-exclusionary positionings, I argue that the true potential of *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* emerges in encounters that move towards *becoming-otherwise* and in departing from colonised/colonising ethico-onto-epistemic practices that we become entangled with in the process of inquiring. Could we then say that the *mo[ve]ments* of De/Coloniality with/in New Materialisms allows us to cut-together-apart into the very centre of the “white-episteme” (Puar 2013 as cited in Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla 2015) that New Materialisms is produced within, to produce disruptions from the in-between spaces where New Materialisms too is set in motion? *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* or De/Coloniality with/in New Materialisms is only truly enlivened here in the *what-else*, the *unknown-knowns* and the exclusions of New Materialisms and working into the co-constitution in *being-with*, refusing and resisting the colonial machine. I contend then that it is through *keeping the problems* of our ethico-onto-epistemological inseparability from coloniality *alive* within iterative moments of mattering, as intentional *Minor Acts*, that we might access such spaces of in-between with a sense of response-ability and co-constitute New Materialisms through iterative practicing of De/Coloniality.

Perhaps in relating to *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* and its iterative dynamism, we can open infinite departures in inquiries that strutter, become knotted and entangled within coloniality and mobilise the agential potential within New Materialisms to produce disruptive De/Colonial worldings of New Materialisms instead; a truly ethico-onto-epistemological departure from the representational binds of Eurocentric onto-epistemologies and qualitative research as postqualitative and New Materialist frameworks asks us to aspire to. I envision, as a provocation into ethical/decolonial expansions of New Materialisms, *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* and explorations of insider/outsider relationalities producing inquiries that commit to becoming agential and disruptive from within New Materialisms, to open up the worlds of De/Coloniality – inquiries that might embrace onto-epistemological incoherencies, impossibilities and contradictions, intentionally seeking to *become-otherwise*, and follow the lines of De/Coloniality, refusals and disruptiveness as the ‘knowledge’ that is produced within research relationalities and collectives.

With a continued sense of De/Colonial response-ability here, I argue that the true transformative potential of New Materialisms emerges in its capacity to hold and be remade from the critiques, fissures, and re-constitutions of itself as enactments of what New Materialisms set out to do in the first place – break away from the familiar towards conceptualisations and co-constitutions of an entangled, relational world that is constantly in motion. It is for us, as coloniser/colonised, as researchers co-implicated in both Eurocentric frameworks and colonial historicity, to hold these critiques and De/Coloniality as ethico-onto-epistemological *emergenc[i]es* that we cannot bypass in world-making through our knowing and being, and in our search for better, expansive worlds. The De/Colonial praxis here then becomes an iterative practice of ethical engagement in the making and remaking of our *Post-H/human* worlds and our refusals of sense-making becomes a refusal of furthering colonial

and hierarchal world-making. This sense of ethico-onto-epistemological entanglement, particularly plugged in with De/Colonial response-ability, is at the crux of what *De/Colonial-New Materialisms* does, and perhaps is central to the trans-disciplinary spaces we might envision with the dynamism of the De/Colonial praxis.

Interruption III - Attending iteratively to the *emergenc[i]es* of our ethico-onto-epistemological entanglement within the world's becoming

If the sense of De/Colonial response-ability plugged into the entangled ethico-onto-epistemologies (the co-implicated response-ability of ethical engagement in our knowing-in-being with/in the world) is central to exploring what the De/Colonial praxis *does* in its encounters, perhaps *re-turning* to the materialisation and co-constitution of “ethical engagement” in relation to the De/Colonial praxis in this thesis/project might offer us further departures. I take you back into the diffractive *emergenc[i]es* that we explore in *The ethics of collaboration* chapter reader, and I draw your attention again to how the *Minor Acts* and *mo[ve]ments* produces *this* particular world as an ethical *knowing-in-being* with/in this inquiry. Perhaps at the heart of *this* mattering, this ethico-onto-epistemological engagement, is my grappling with the ethics of the worlds we might produce through research and we might think here of onto-epistemological disruptions that emerge is problematising the ethics of what we seek to ‘know’, how we ‘know’ and what this ‘knowing’ does as knowledge. For example, we disrupt here, as worldings of De/Coloniality, the onto-epistemological positions we occupy, the Eurocentrism that we get entangled in within these paradigmatic positionings and their historicity, and the ethics of occupying and producing “knowledge”, particularly about onto-epistemological and cultural others, within such spaces.

However, the ethico-onto-epistemological disruptions I can note here are not limited to paradigmatic concerns. We have seen in the process of this inquiry that methodological grappling and fluidity is how we *materialise* these ethico-onto-epistemological disruptions in practice. Reader, you might wonder about my framing of this thesis as a Collective Biography, given the interruptions, disruptions, and refusals. In the doing of this project and the writing of this thesis, I have held close the practice of a fluid, emergent methodology that begins with Davies and Gannon's (2012) conceptualisation of Collective Biography and disrupts itself into *our* De/Colonial Collective Biography. I remind you here of Davies and Gannon's (2012, 371) argument of Collective Biography as "not remembering and representing a self as it really was in some fixed state, but the mo(ve)ments encapsulated in particular memorable moments of being. These mo(ve)ments can be the repetitive citations through which an apparently fixed pattern is achieved and/or the line of flight—the moment when everything changed" from the chapter-1.

My departure from the 'known' here is materialised as disruptions of the process through iterative ethical engagements, *keeping the problems alive* so to speak, and a disruptively collaborative stance that lets us reimagine De/Colonial pathways with/in Collective Biography. For example, within the collective process, our iterative engagement with the ethics of what we do, what we 'know', what we are entangled with and produce in this *knowing-doing-being*, methodologically and paradigmatically, allows us to conceptualise and reconceptualise our very collaboration and what it produces. Rather than offering us a stable ground or a stopping place from where we might "do" our collaboration and consequent "knowledge production", our *keeping the problems of ethics alive* goes on to produce further disruptions where we are called to stop and pay attention to the *emergenc[i]es* of what is it that we are practicing and what are the ethics of producing such knowledge within institutional,

colonially entangled Eurocentric contexts. What De/Coloniality does here is allow us to depart from using Collective Biography as a methodology, or instrumentalising it towards ‘knowing’ the other through gathering ‘data’, writing/analysing of this data, and producing ‘knowledge’, to *using* it dynamically, to running with it and disrupting it from within towards ethical, ontological, and epistemological departures into the *what-else*.

In its encounter with our De/Colonial praxis, Collective Biography here is co-constituted as a disruptively dynamic space in not seeking to ‘know’ or ‘represent’ the collective but instead lets us trace how collectives become agential, ethical and decolonial. Perhaps the most significant thing the De/Colonial praxis does here is shift the focus of Collective Biography, from a research methodology that is geared towards knowledge production, to an ethical, participatory enactment that is committed to making space for the process and needs of a minoritarian collective and explicates disruptions produced within the collective’s shifts and *mo[ve]ments* as the knowledge produced. Our Collective Biography then becomes a story/ies of resistance, refusals, interruptions, and disruptions that emerge in our very *knowing-doing-being*. It is within these shifts that our *[Non]writing* emerges as a catalytic practice that foregrounds what analytic/onto-epistemic practices we must refuse so that such De/Colonial departures might be possible. In engaging with the *emergenc[i]es* of producing knowledge about Global South women and embracing the *[Non]writing* that emerges as a De/Colonial enactment of refusals, the iterative ethico-onto-epistemological engagement becomes the very materialisations that I have stayed with and produced in the *[non]writing-as-worlding* of this thesis as ‘knowledge’ that holds close the De/Colonial response-ability.

Reader, you know from my earlier chapters that it is the dynamism of this *[Non]writing*, as an ethico-onto-epistemological De/Colonial practice, that take us also into

problematizing and disrupting myriad methodological and relational research practices like consent contracts and their limitations in thinking of iterative ethical engagement with ‘data’, narrative coherence within research ‘data’ and the ethics of asking, using or producing these as ‘knowledge’, the writing of trauma and pain narratives, what we ask of ourselves and our relational others in service of the academy, the spaces and relationalities that we imagine as facilitative and so it goes on. My encounter here with the emergent De/Coloniality essentially becomes a practice of iteratively engaging with the ethics of our being, becoming, and knowing in relationalities, research or otherwise, and its inseparability with/in the world’s becoming.

We might think here of the expansive, rhizomatic, and diffractive pathways that emerge in foregrounding a De/Colonial, ethico-onto-epistemological engagement in relationalities where inquiring into ethics becomes the very practice, process, and onto-epistemic framework of creative-relational world-making. Such a foregrounding in this project has allowed this thesis to also exceed what it set out to do, i.e. produce knowledge within the field of C&P, and has taken us into interrupting and disrupting the entanglements of that which produces C&P and that which we produce through practice, research, and education within C&P as a *Minor-acts* of transformative world-making. I argue that the true potential of the De/Colonial praxis and its emergent dynamic practices, not just the ones created in this inquiry but as they may emerge relationally in further diffractions of this praxis, lies in this very sense of foregrounding and inquiring into our [un]ethical engagement in the making and remaking of the world in other spaces, practices, processes, and onto-epistemic frameworks; as continuous *Minor Acts* of De/Colonial activism that attend iteratively to the *emergenc[i]es* of knowing, being, doing and producing, so that *mo[ve]ments* with/in in-between spaces such as *De/Colonial-New Materialisms*, *De/Colonial-New Materialist Collective Biography* or *De/Colonial-Counselling and Psychotherapy* might become possible.

Interruption IV - “Going-on-being” with the De/Colonial praxis as an encounter that interrupts, provokes and produces through *refusing to end*

Reader, you might remember me entreating you at the beginning of this journey to pay attention to and stay with the moments we meet and the moments we might clash, so that we might, even when we are tied together in the tensions of an improbable clashing collaboration, produce something new, relational, and expansive together. It is this very sense of *being-with* that I have been arguing for in holding De/Coloniality as a relationality that goes on producing. When I say that we might think of coloniality/decoloniality as iterative and relational, it has perhaps become apparent by this point that my argument is not for *this De/Colonial praxis* to be put into practice, but that we need to make space for *different, new, and emergent* practices of De/Coloniality to interrupt our ongoing knowings and becomings as they inevitably emerge in our entangled relationalities and become a praxis that we materialise within our relationalities as a response-ability. While my hope here is that my engagement and diffractions of De/Coloniality, and the interruptions I offer above, might produce iterative expansions, for me and you, within C&P, New Materialisms, and Collective Biographies, I entreat that we take this further to enliven other unexpected spaces of De/Coloniality that might emerge in us (as individually/collectively entangled co-implicated others) holding the threads of coloniality and unpacking the tensions and *emergenc[i]es* we might encounter. Like my *Knowing-in-being a De/Colonial-New Materialist Collective Biography*, perhaps we can *know-in-being* De/coloniality with/in other spaces, frameworks, methodologies, or practices so we might materialise further transformative worlds. I note this very sense of enlivening other De/Colonial worlds in how I envision *thinking-with* such De/Coloniality in my own therapeutic practice and the way our collective has been re-enlivened for another research project by one of the members towards exploring Feminist angst and tensions of coloniality in its entanglement with gender inequalities. The De/Colonial relationalities and insights that might emerge from within these

newly enlivened space might be different or even contradictory to that of this project, but I draw your attention here to the iterativeness and ongoingness of De/Coloniality as something that cannot be pinned down or resolved but perhaps always relationally present, and our engagement with De/Coloniality as unstable *emergenc[ies]* that allow us to unpack ethico-onto-epistemological tensions and conflicts in iterative co-constitutions.

I am not claiming that these engagements are automatically ethical or productive reader, but just that our engagements and the ethics of it, the relationalities we produce within our (inevitable, always present) entanglements with coloniality and that which we produce as De/Colonial, all these multiplicities and dimensions need to be opened out for problematising and iterative troubling as intentional De/Colonial acts, rather than thinking of decolonisation as a destination or a checklist thing that we do. Our task and need for response-ability here is immense and it is perhaps that we need to accept a sense of loss that we might never truly reach a Post/Decolonial destination. But it is also in this *not-arriving* that we might find the true dynamism of the De/Colonial praxis, as a dynamic relationality that refuses to end and produces, not through being pinned down, but in interrupting, provoking, and *becoming a work-in-progress*. I sit with Pillow's (2021, 48) words here when she claims that "like processes of domination that continue to adapt and grow, processes of decolonial refusal necessarily also will always be ongoing" and offer that our true response-ability within such conflicted/conflicting spaces might be that of *keeping the problems alive* and refusing the short-lived comforts of "sense-making", "ending" or "arriving" at a de/postcolonial destination. In closing, I offer one last invitation to you here in entreating you to hold this sense of "Going-on-being" and take with you this sense of the De/Colonial praxis as a dynamic relationality that *refuses to end*.

(to be iteratively continued...)

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