

## **The Jewel in the Corona: Crisis, the Creativity of Social Dreaming and Climate Change**

*The Coronavirus crisis links to the climate crisis in ways that challenge humankind to demonstrate an unprecedented creativity and adaptability to change. This article discusses, both in content and style, this need for creative change and what that might look like. It asserts that the current discourse, with its linear rationality and logic system will fail in the face of the enormity of such epistemological and ontological disturbance. Using the example of social dreaming as a different form of thinking, the article encourages the reader to radically reconsider thought, feelings, reason and creativity as a means to rethinking solutions for a shared future.*

Keywords: social dreaming; crisis; climate change; Deleuze and Guattari; creativity

### **Social dreaming: a starter**

For the reader unfamiliar with social dreaming, I offer this brief explanation: Social dreaming is a method for the sharing of night-time dreams and associations in a group of 8 – 25 people on average. Such a session, called a ‘social dreaming matrix’, may last between 45 – 75 minutes. The aim of the matrix is to allow dream thoughts and associations to weave together meanings from this sharing process. In the social dreaming matrix, the dreams are understood as creating socially shared meanings, hence the term ‘social’ dreaming. In this sense the shared dreams are not personal or individual. While the dream sharing process in the matrix is not open to immediate interpretation - the dreams and associations are allowed to freely ‘float’ among participants - there is a space for some interpretation and meaning-making in a post-matrix discussion that takes place immediately after the matrix. This lasts between 20 – 45 minutes. The knowledge created and shared in the whole process is said to emerge from a ‘social’ or ‘associative’ unconscious. The seating arrangement of the matrix session is

designed to imitate a snowflake pattern, which differentiates it from a group circle and discourages face-to-face dynamics. For further information on social dreaming, see Lawrence 2005, and Manley 2018b.

### **A becoming introduction**

This article discusses how attitudes and actions related to humankind's global struggle with its relationship to climate change can and should be approached creatively, associatively and abductively rather than logically; or rather how the 'logic' of creativity could usefully take precedence over a science of observation, sequentialization and fragmentation. The former approach is discussed through the example of social dreaming as a means of thinking in these ways, using Susan Long's application of Charles Peirce's 'abductive logic' to social dreaming and her discussion of the process of creativity within the framework of the social dreaming matrix (Long 2019, pp. 21-23). The latter is the traditional approach of climate science, which has been spectacularly unsuccessful in stimulating changes in social and economic actions, as demonstrated by the failure of a 97% of scientific consensus supporting the fact of human-caused climate change to lead to meaningful ends, despite (or maybe because of) what Paul Hoggett has dubbed a logic worthy of Star Trek's Spock (Hoggett 2019 , pp. 2-4).

In social dreaming, there would be no place for Spock's lack of emotion and his extreme commitment to the logic of cause and effect. Spock-like logic is also failing to solve global warming. In a social dreaming matrix group, as I have previously described (Manley 2018b), the 'logic' is that of associative thinking that is patterned in a 'nomadic' fashion. That is to say, meanings emerge as the participants' thoughts travel from thought to thought with no

obvious destination. Instead, meanings are created from the emergence of multiple expressions of affect as expressed in dreams and dream-like images and associations, weaved together in non-linear fashion, ‘rhizomatically’, as Deleuze and Guattari would have it. The rhizomatic structure of the thought patterns in social dreaming arise from and lead to a logic of creativity as espoused by Deleuze and Guattari throughout their work, (see especially Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of creativity and the creation of concepts as one of the three essential elements of philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, pp. 77-83)).

This article uses social dreaming to suggest how alternative ways of thinking might make a difference. However, although I use social dreaming as the example of such thinking, I am not suggesting that this particular method is unique in such a process. Instead, I am appealing to a broadening of a human conceptualisation of what it means to think and associate in ways that are similar to social dreaming, without necessarily having to involve oneself in the practice of social dreaming as a formal approach. This embracing of creative thinking is often referred to in publications on social dreaming (Lawrence 2010). Although creativity is popularly accepted as being appropriate for the arts in general, it is not necessarily frequently associated with standard thinking and knowledge, especially of the ‘scientific’ kind. This article will argue, both through theory and in its style, that creative approaches are *not* incompatible with new thinking and knowledge. The style of writing in this article is influenced by the nature of its content - dreams and associations - which may be somewhat disconcerting at first. I ask for the reader’s patience. But I argue that such approaches are useful, even essential, alternatives when faced with especially complex dilemmas, such as *the* Crisis of global warming. By *the* Crisis in this article, I am referring to the climate emergency. Any references to ‘world’ or ‘humankind’ are intended to be comments on the

planet and its peoples in a holistic, even ‘Gaian’ sense. I do not intend to deny difference and diversity in doing so.

### **Together dreaming**

In order to attempt a new kind of thinking, a group of us came together to attempt to think differently via social dreaming and the contemplation of artworks. We came together to dream: artists, thinkers, activists, we all found our way to Dorset to participate in a social dreaming matrix accompanied by artworks to re-contemplate ourselves in a heating-up world (Manley and Hollway 2019). Social dreaming is a method that can be used to this effect.

In social dreaming, my dream is your dream is our dream.

The illustrations used in this article throughout, labelled ‘SDM’, are quotations from this social dreaming event.

### **Even barren rocks have feelings**

‘Even barren rocks have feelings’, so we are told in the course of a social dreaming matrix (SDM)<sup>1</sup>; ‘I think about the moon, I keep thinking about the moon, and digging it up to create moon bases. [...] Keep feeling that the moon doesn’t want holes drilled in it’ (SDM). Drilling down to the point, but what about ‘feelings’? Maybe these distant references to holes in the moon resonate with the Deleuzian ‘holey space’ that has the potential to link the ‘striated’

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<sup>1</sup> Social dreaming matrix: Art and climate change, Dorset, 14.10.17.

(that space that Deleuze defines as restricted and uncreative) with the ‘smooth’ (identified with free-flowing and creative thought), or the ‘sedentary’ with the ‘nomadic’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, pp. 413-416). Maybe the drilling down of the holes in the moon combine those digging thoughts with the ‘feelings’ of the rock:

- I heard a voice of that pain of the planet, I guess, coming from deep, coming from under the water, rushing up through the water and it was a scream of pure fire.

- I just remembered I saw Etna in my dream. One of the things I saw in my journey was a volcano, and it was very black on the horizon, red and orange magma pouring out of it.

(SDM)

Here, in the social dreaming matrix, the hole in the rock that is the volcano becomes a magma ‘scream of pure fire’. But a harmony of the rock is possible where striations of rocks as in dry stone walling emerge from the digging up of the land, the ‘nomadic’ unearthing of rocks at random, and the creation of an energy that binds smooth and striated space:

... dry stone walls, and cairns and the beautiful fact that as you clear the fields to plant crops the rocks come out of the ground and you use the same rock to make dry stone walls, so that human beings are working with the land in a completely synergetic way.

(SDM)

‘Even rocks have feelings’, and even if fear turns the brain towards a rock-like resistance to feelings, if brains are petrified because they are petrified - ‘...we’re all able to kind of just talk... about ‘it’, because ‘it’ is the most terrifying thing that there is’ (SDM) - and they can

still retain life, since ‘not all life is organic, but everywhere there are forces that constitute microbrains, or an inorganic life of things’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 213).

### **Start with the non-human**

‘The animal, the machine, and the divinity’, unlanguageed or turned into a language of powers or intensities, finding a parallel in: ‘semiotics, information and revelation’ (Bourassa 2002, p.61). According to Bourassa, it is the third of these – the language of ‘revelation’ - that ‘can begin to make a claim to truth’ (ibid p.62). And it is the writing of Walter Benjamin that clarifies how creativity can become the exalted definition of human potential as the ‘divine’: ‘God rested when he had left his creative power in man. This creativity, relieved of its divine actuality, became knowledge.’ (Benjamin, quoted in ibid, p. 62). It is precisely this non-human, non-language creativity that needs to be reconsidered when our own language has failed us and become the language of Spock. And if this leads to creative overwhelm, then so be it. In such a manner, I am in agreement with the sensation of overwhelmingness as expressed by Hélene Cixous: ‘How good it is to not understand you. I don’t understand you with an incomprehension so vast it surpasses all my great understanding of you’ (Cixous 2005, p. 106). This is an ‘incomprehension’ that can be celebrated and therefore assimilated, not struggled against.

Timothy Morton’s work has brought to the fore the central idea of the ‘hyperobject’ as something too ‘hyper’ to observe, except in the minor elements of such a hyperobject that ‘stick’ to each of us and become ‘local manifestations’ of the hyper (Morton 2013, pp. 1-26). The plastic bag is ‘stuck’ to our human existence as a local manifestation of the negative relationship between a human individual and the hyperobject of environmental destruction.

By understanding incomprehension, it is possible to open the door to creative as opposed to logical thinking, and in this way to move beyond Morton's 'hyperobject'. The *objective* reality of 'global warming' as a hyperobject is paramount for Morton, so that wherever the hyperobject is manifest, even if only partially, it is through its viscosity and 'interobjectivity' (ibid, p.1). In the end, Morton states that it is the non-human objects that govern hyperobjectivity, but the paradoxical irony of these constellations of objects is that they can never be understood objectively despite their objectivity, only subjectively, and then only through Benjamin's 'divine creativity', half acknowledged at the very end of Morton's *Hyperobjects*, when he asks 'what sort of god' can 'save us' (Morton 2013, p. 201). Returning to social dreaming, perhaps this 'god' is the boy with the 'golden glow' evoked in the following dream:

I was travelling to the funeral of Mother Earth and I obviously had to deliver the nut<sup>2</sup> to the funeral. Whichever bit of the journey I was on, there was a purpose to it.... At various moments of the dream the random figure of a young boy, who, I never saw his face, but I could tell you what trainers he was wearing, his trousers, he had a beautiful golden glow, with very white blonde hair and he was really happy... I kept seeing him.

(SDM)

Is the boy a metaphor for this 'god-like' quality that struggles to be defined? A rhetorical question, since the 'answer' resides in maintaining the metaphor. In social dreaming there is no restless seeking of answers or interpretations. This often leads to greater understandings through complexity instead of stripping away the dreams and metaphors of their own rich

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<sup>2</sup> The 'nut' in this dream is an object that the speaker of the dream is carrying with her in her dream journey, with multiple associations including potential fertility.

complexities. Metaphors can be important conduits to the understanding of problems that defy rational explanation and yet are not sense-less.

### **Continue to the posthuman**

However the posthuman is defined, (Braidotti boils it down to a ‘nature-culture continuum’ (2013, p.2), it coincides with the Anthropocene, beyond modernity, beyond post-modernity. It is posthuman to have left the detritus of humanity in the geological record. In this posthumanity, Morton’s ‘Nature’ (Morton 2013, p.4), Lovelock’s ‘Gaia’ (Lovelock 2005, pp.21-35), Latour’s ‘Terrestrial’ (Latour 2018, p.40, where he discounts both ‘Nature’ and ‘Gaia’ in favour of ‘Terrestrial’) all occupy somewhere ‘Other’, Other and binary in relation to the human. In Rosi Braidotti’s recent work on the posthuman, however, the Other is reincorporated into the human through Deleuzian ‘becomings’, which, contrary to Morton’s claim that post-modernism is limited by metaphor (Morton 2013, p. 4), goes beyond metaphorization:

The metaphorical or analogue function that machinery fulfilled in modernity, as an anthropocentric device that imitated embodied human capacities, is replaced today by a more complex political economy that connects bodies to machines more intimately, through simulation and mutual modification.

(Braidotti 2013, pp. 89-90)

The Deleuzian ‘becoming’ turns metaphor into the fusion of Braidotti’s Deleuzian take on the nature-culture continuum. Through this creative process that binds together previously unconnected and seemingly paradoxical elements, qualities and affects through associations, syntheses and condensations, intuitively executed by the mind, nature becomes culture and viceversa:

This discussion of the stone and the map makes me think of the map of the artist's process. When you look at the map of New Zealand and all the individual islands, the island of our dreams, and when you begin to draw them together to draw the map, then into a larger map you draw the coastline, you pattern the village and also you start to see new processes, you start to create an entire coastline emerging that you can't see when you are actually in the coastline, you just see the area around your island.

(SDM)

Through the creative process, the human 'becomes' island. The importance of this resides in the removal of binary thinking: an embodied reconceptualization of self, achieved through creativity. Flows and never-ending connections and inter-connections (nomadism through a smooth space in Deleuzian terms), eventually turning into the Mortonian hyperobject that is global warming, but 'seen' through creative embodiment. 'Creativity constantly reconnects to the virtual totality of a block of past experiences, memories and affects, which, in a monistic philosophy of becoming, get recomposed as action or praxis in the present' (Braidotti 2013, p.166).

In this state of constant becomings, a feeling that is often experienced in social dreaming (Manley 2018b, pp. 220-235), language becomes a means of the visual and a direct source of affect through imagery. The use of language becomes not one of transmitting received information through detached observation, as in the scientific paradigm, but a means of feeling thought, as described by the inspired biologists Maturana and Varela in their seminal work *The Tree of Knowledge* (1998):

Language was never invented by anyone only to take in an outside world. Therefore, it cannot be used as a tool to reveal that world. Rather, it is by languaging that the act

of knowing, in the behavioural coordination which is language, brings forth a world... we are constituted in language in a continuous becoming that we bring forth with others.

(Maturana and Varela 1998, pp. 234-5)

### **The becoming-world that needs to be brought forth**

Latour makes the human 'become' earth (although he does not say it like this); he re-terms the human being as '*terrestrials* (the Earthbound)' (Latour 2018, p. 86), another way of visualising the nature-culture continuum. In doing so, Latour expresses the need for a new language where becoming-earth is not the same as saying "We are humans in nature" (Latour 2018, p. 86). As Maturana and Varela showed, it is possible to use language as a process of thinking that creates worlds, and it is certainly a new conceptualisation of 'world' that humankind needs today to survive, whatever part of the planet you live in. This need to re-imagine a world is precisely what social dreaming and similar methods can do, because the dream images are pure affect, where sense-making is refocussed and redefined. This is why the Dorset social dreaming matrix – with Dorset being in itself a privileged part of the inhabited planet, but still another part of 'our world' - was drawn to the language of Lewis Carroll:

Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. How the hell did he come up with that story, which is absolutely barking? And at the same time resonates more than any other story in our modern culture. How did he create a story like that? How do you actually start? The creative process, he probably came up with something, probably quite simply? But at the same time he's made something that just resonates and we carry with us. [...] I

was just thinking about climate: why can't we come up with that kind of story? It has that complexity and barkingness, but actually it's [...]

(SDM)

It is the non-sense 'sense' of Carroll's writing that makes new thinking for the climate possible. This is why Carroll's language became a fascination for Deleuze. This is the 'sense' that also interests Deleuze, when he says that 'it is the task of language both to establish limits and to go beyond them' (Deleuze 2004, p. 11). There are two 'languages' here, that of the 'limits', those predefined areas of explanation that emanate from the self; and that of whatever lies beyond, as expressed in the collages of images in *Alice in Wonderland*. In the matrix, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Manley 2018b), the collage of image-affects from the dreams and associations move away from the bodies of the individual dreamers and create a new extra-bodied collage that is similar to the Deleuzian Body Without Organs. In the context of new sense-making discussed by Deleuze in his study of *Alice in Wonderland*, 'It is by following the border, by skirting the surface, that one passes from bodies to the incorporeal' (Deleuze 2004, p. 12 (Deleuze's italics)). That is to say, Alice moves from the exterior world to that of the rabbit hole, she also moves from one kind of sense-making to another. The latter is also the world of social dreaming.

Some dreams and associations are more surreal than others. The opening of this social dreaming event consisted of a particularly fascinating imaginative leap in the figure of 'Great Aunt Vera', who ended up inventing a means of 'rowing' down a river using the mysterious energy of an inflatable plastic snowman:

I remember hearing that a friend's Great Aunt Vera was driving and that she shouldn't because she is so frail and I had to do something about it, but I didn't know where she

lived, apart from the fact that it was in Devon. So, I went to a local post office store and asked the lady there if she could help. She said she was bound to know someone who could track her down. She went into the back office in the back of the shop and came out again and said “Sorry, we haven’t been able to find Vera, but I believe she isn’t driving, but rowing down a river”. I said “Vera? Rowing down a river? She’s far too frail for that!” Apparently the way she had done it was she had an inflatable snowman in the bow of the boat with two ropes attached to it, and if she pulled the snowman forward and let it go, it sprung back and rowed the boat.

((SDM) Manley and Hollway 2019, pp. 136-137).

In the dream, Great Aunt Vera changes from a figure who is being unreasonable but within boundaries by supposedly driving a car on her own (i.e. using a language of ‘sense’), to someone quite outside boundaries (‘non-sense’) by becoming-the-personified-climate-change-problem of the social dreaming matrix and seeking outlandish solutions to the issues: using a carbon-free river locomotion through a reinvention of a snowman made out of snow that, unlike real snow, can never melt. The ‘barking’ quality of this evocation nevertheless has a ‘sense’ of sorts which resonated throughout the social dreaming matrix (ibid).

**‘Where there is a work of art, there is no madness’<sup>3</sup>**

‘Association’, what is it? For Freud, it was the flowing of ‘free’ thoughts and feelings unshackled by the boundaries of the reasoning mind designed to restore reason from unreason. For Deleuze, to associate is not to return to reason but to immerse oneself in the unreasoning mind of the nomad, a journey without guide or ultimate aim, where one stop is

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<sup>3</sup> Foucault (2001, p. 274)

as good as the next, where new thoughts are created not through the logic of sequenced lines of thought, but rather through the double ‘logic of sense’, sense as in sensation and sense as in ‘making sense’ (Deleuze 2004). And for Latour, it is an aspiration, even a desire (Latour 2005). Deleuze takes us further in, closer to the work of art. Take Joseph Beuys, the 20<sup>th</sup> century German artist famous for his concept of the ‘social sculpture’, who made people and creative participation an integral part of his artworks. Cerebral and sensual all at once, Beuys brought creativity to all, an art residing within anyone. By working with imagery and the deeper, intuitive emotions – the image-affects that are with us all the time but unacknowledged – every human being can be an artist, as Beuys famously insisted (Manley 2018a). For Beuys, then, his ‘art’ was a feeling of creativity marked by association. The use of felt in Beuys’s artworks is an association and a sense sensation of warmth, safety and solidarity, as Beuys invokes a fake (or a truly created) story of how felt saved his life.<sup>4</sup> Sensational? Fake news? Today’s news can also be true and fake at the same time. In *the Crisis*, how many people are trying to prove the validity, the danger of climate change?

Although the scientific facts are clear, not everyone is convinced, or not convinced ‘enough’, apparently. So, let’s not worry ourselves with those facts, because we need to make *the Crisis sensible* above all, to give it sense, to create reason from unreason. As Foucault suggested, the inter-weaving of ‘madness’ with ‘reason’, until they become indistinguishable from each other in a work of art, so that ‘through the mediation of madness’, the world is ‘compelled’ to recognise and then repair the damage of reason by ‘restoring reason *from* that unreason and *to* that unreason’ (Foucault 2001, p. 274 (Foucault’s italics)). Creativity, displayed through the work of art, in Foucault’s example, is the merger, the weaver. Through the madness displayed

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<sup>4</sup> Beuys claimed that in 1944 his warplane was shot down in Crimea. He was saved by Tartar tribesmen, who wrapped him in layers of felt to keep him warm.

in the work of art, the world is ‘arraigned by that work of art and responsible before it for what it is’ (ibid). Maybe the reasoning mind needs to be overwhelmed until it becomes an over-whelmed, overwhelming mind, one that merges the overwhelm that paralyses the cognitive function.

But if we don’t deal with the facts, what next?

**‘ “You speak to me of the Chinese, but what about your father?”’<sup>5</sup>**

For Deleuze, traditional psychoanalysis was always seeking out solutions to the problems of the individual through that individual’s intimate past. In criticising this – in his view – overly personalised and individual-centred approach of ‘psychiatrists and psychoanalysts’, Deleuze seeks not to uncover the fact of what individual unreason may ‘mean’ when turning towards ‘reason’, as implied in the goal of psychoanalysis, but rather the sense that may emerge through the act of listening with no intent to interpret. He invites us to accept the unreason as potentially reasonable; especially when that unreason apparently speaks of the social outer states of an individual’s environment, which are not necessarily a reflection of an individual’s personal inner state. When an individual talks about anything outside her personal experience, ‘the Chinese’, for example, is it necessary, asks Deleuze, to convert this thought into something personal, intimate and individualised? Maybe she means what she says, more literally than the psychoanalyst may wish to imagine. Maybe ‘it’s enough just to listen to someone who is delirious: it’s the Russians that worry him, the Chinese...’ (Deleuze quoted in Guattari 2009, p. 51). There may be more sense in the associations the individual might have to the ‘Chinese problem’, whatever that might be, than through a personal interpretation

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<sup>5</sup> Deleuze quoted in Guattari 2009, p.51

and investigation into a hidden meaning that the individual is supposedly hiding and/or repressing. That ‘sense’ may not end up being a concrete, specific or particular meaning, but may still make sense in the social and relational context that was half intended in its utterance. Without any reference to social dreaming, Deleuze points to the same sense-making through association. Just as in social dreaming, there will be no interpretation into definitive meaning; rather an acceptance of creative ambiguity and the expression of sense through association that is a shared sense of sense-making that is sensorially relevant to socially shared ambits of experience, as opposed to the inner, personal world of the dreamers when those dreamers’ dreams are shared in the context of a social dreaming matrix. In his discussion of Carroll’s *Sylvie and Bruno*, Deleuze speaks of this kind of sense: ‘In *Sylvie and Bruno*, the technique of passing from reality to dream, and from bodies to the incorporeal, is multiplied, completely renewed, and carried out to perfection’ (Deleuze 2004. P. 33). This is the ‘sense’ that is the ‘jewel’ that the coronavirus offers. While facts failed to promote necessary change – how could we possibly reduce, let alone stop, flying? – the unreality of prison-like isolation and an invisible death becomes reality, a reality that confronts the invisibility of the facts of *the Crisis*: reason has succumbed to unreason translated into reason: it makes sense. Similarly, dreaming of Great Aunt Vera’s snowman river propulsion makes sense against reason.

### **‘Compossibility’**

The dream that features the conglomeration of Great Aunt Vera’s universe is not impossible, rather it is ‘compossible’. It is a world structured as a composite of ‘individual-world-interindividuality’ (Deleuze 2004, p. 127), where experience and the ‘expressed world’ (in our example, the world of Great Aunt Vera) ‘is made of differential relations and of

contiguous singularities' (ibid, p. 127). It is by understanding this sense that we can understand the compossibility of the Coronavirus and the Crisis of climate change. They are both separate crises and one and the same, not through fact but through association and brought into reason through unreason. This is not proven, this is sensed. Great Aunt Vera's plastic snowman will not melt, despite climate change. It is not 'impossible', it is 'compossible', that is to say, when viewed creatively and associatively, direct opposites can 'talk' to each other in a new world of the possible, which is why Deleuze points out that 'impossibility is not reducible to the notion of contradiction' (ibid, p. 128). The 'rose' is not 'red' until these two qualities are joined together. 'Rose' and 'red' are 'impossibilities' until they are joined in compossibility through the experience of the person who creates this com-position (ibid, p. 129). The same is true of Great Aunt Vera's solution to *the* Crisis of climate change. The difference is only one of degree of experience. Such sense is not directly applicable: nobody will be going to the shops to find an inflatable snowman to replicate Great Aunt Vera's discovery. But what has been unlocked is an openness to the reality of the artist in everybody and the possibility of imagination and 'unreason' to be allowed a compossible space in the world of reason. This is what the Coronavirus crisis shows: it is possible to radically reduce dangerous plane emissions by drastically curtailing flying. The benefit, however, is brought to us from one crisis to *the* Crisis. By changing ways of sense-making, it may be possible to reach this 'immanent principle of auto-unification through a nomadic distribution, radically distinct from fixed and sedentary distributions...' (ibid, p. 118). Thinking, feeling 'nomadically' may enable creative thinking about climate change. Another associative, relational and creative way must be possible and available to the human mind.

### **Invisible visibility**

Foucault describes how modernity came to be defined by the alignment of perception with the development of scientific epistemologies, how increasingly knowledge came to be defined by making the invisible visible (Foucault 2003, pp. 204-205). This process is associated with the observational gaze going deeper and ever-closer into the minutiae of life, as exemplified by the invention and development of the microscope: what was invisible became visible. Post-Foucault, the Large Hadron Collider has demonstrated the ultimate achievement in making the invisible visible. It is a process that assumes that the tiniest particles are evidence to a truth that can be uncovered once they are 'seen'. Thus far, this has proved to be so. However, there are other invisibilities, as in hyperobjectivity, that cannot be unveiled in this way. The incursion of disease in the individual as a precursor of death is visible through advances in medicine. Disease is no longer attributed to some collective malaise, some invisible shared culpability that may have been associated to a form of transcendental judgement. At some stage in modernity, 'death left its old tragic heaven and became the lyrical core of man: his invisible truth, his visible secret'(Foucault 2003, p. 211). This does not work for the massive invisibility of climate change, all too visible to be visible. Instead of magnifying the small, there is a need for the opposite, to make what is so massively visible that it is invisible emerge into a new visibility. The 'condensation' effect of dreams (Freud 1991 [1900]) can provide clues as to how this process may be achieved. Here, hugeness is 'condensed', not magnified. In both, the invisible is made visible. In the case of the condensation of the dream image, which works as a metaphor, what cannot be seen in hugeness, is perceived in a single, condensed metaphorical image. Such condensation is also found in the 'madness' contained in the Foucauldian view of the workings of art. This, passing through the Beuysian vision of every person being an artist, makes it possible to condense the large-invisible to a human perception that is available to all. It is through condensation that a Deleuzian 'compossibility' can occur. Finally, it is through a practice

such as social dreaming that such processes can take place (Lawrence 2005, 2010; Manley 2018a; 2018b; 2019; Long and Manley 2019; Berman and Manley 2018).

**‘By now there were no longer any individual destinies, but only a collective story which was the plague and the emotions shared by all’<sup>6</sup>**

In Camus’ *The Plague* it takes this disaster for individuals to comprehend their collectivity. One way of ‘condensing’ the hyperobject is through collective knowledge wrought from the fragments of each individual. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call an ‘assemblage’ (1988), where knowledge is the property not of an individual but of an aggregate of organic and non-organic. In *The Plague*, the assemblage is condensed into the becoming-metaphor of ‘the plague’ itself (‘a collective story which was the plague’). This is not each individual in Camus’ fictional town, but rather those individuals combined with the streets, houses and rats that form this collectivity or assemblage. In our world, the totality of the Coronavirus is the assemblage: It takes a crisis to bring convergence and make the social collective the vital aspect of understanding the assemblage of crisis. By its very mirror action, where individuals are forced to distance themselves from others, the value, even the vitality of the collective is brought to the fore. In the UK, people clap together for the National Health Service; in Italy, neighbours sing from balcony to balcony. It is the breaking of relationships that teaches the value of relationships. Perhaps being unable to visit that relative who lives abroad because the planes are not flying makes flying less taken-for-granted than before? In this way, it takes one crisis to educate the social assemblage in the actions necessary for dealing with *the* Crisis. To put it another way: the plane is not a plane as a thing which has properties and uses which emerge from its ‘thingdom’. On the contrary, the plane has changed itself according to

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<sup>6</sup> Albert Camus, *The Plague*, (1988 [1947]) p.155, Author’s translation)

our collective perceptual change. It is no longer the thing that it was. Consequently, so has the collective view of *the Crisis* (at least temporarily). This is what the scientist, David Bohm, learned from quantum physics and applied to the social sphere:

Ordinarily we aim for a literal picture of the world, but in fact we create a world according to our mode of participation, and we create ourselves accordingly. If we think in our present way, we will create the kind of world that we have created. If we think in another way, we might create a different world, and different people as well. Only the two together can change.

(Bohm 2004, p. 130)

In different ways, Deleuze and Guattari reach similar conclusions to Bohm. The personal struggle is in how to acknowledge the collective when trapped in one's own private being, especially since this individuality has been praised and held up as unique, a sign of the elevated position of the human being as a species, from Descartes through to today's neo-liberalism. This is how Guattari describes this perspective in his conversations with Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger. For Guattari, the way of transcending the individual comes through an acknowledgement of the unconscious, which forces the gaze away from the 'thingdom' of the body as object and its own subject to something more like the 'fuzzy aggregates' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 407) of the Deleuzian assemblage:

The unconscious, as Lacan formulates it or according to any other definition, is only a *model of production of subjectivity* that creates itself in and for a certain context, and is measured by its *existential function*. For me, individual, collective, and institutional mechanisms work in concert in the production of subjectivity.

(Guattari quoted in Lichtenberg Ettinger (2002), p. 241 (Guattari's italics))

Since this is not obvious to the individual who relishes the world that exists within herself, an act of transformation has to occur. The transformative metaphor of the Coronavirus crisis is a shock event, almost a shock treatment, like a flash of lightning that creates an intensity that instantly transforms all in its way, with no 'before' yet possibly an 'after'. The lightning flash is an inorganic intensity of energy that has no subjective origin (although cultures may render the event a 'mythopoietic' source, such as the God Zeus (Massumi 2002, p.xxv)), but is wholly and unpredictably transformative.

### **Let there be art**

Where there is no sudden, catastrophic event, some other way of re-visioning the non-human in its relationship with the post-human must come in to play. For Lichtenberg Ettinger, this is creativity as an artistic transformation, where the artist and the viewer are mediated through the artwork in a series of transferences and counter-transferences. For Lichtenberg Ettinger, this is akin to therapy, a reconfiguration of the self (2002, pp. 215-216). The process is similar, although not identical for Guattari in his appreciation of 'schizoanalysis':

Although I wouldn't equate art with therapy, anti-Oedipal schizoanalysis operates with a complexity that Freudian analysis does not take into account. It therefore leads to a different aesthetic analysis. It doesn't limit itself to the individual, or even to the human.

(Guattari quoted in Lichtenberg Ettinger 2002, p. 243)

Guattari, writing in 1992, describes his schizoanalytical approach as a means of devising creative transformations that could serve to radically change the collective perspective on

humankind's relationship with the world without having to suffer transformation through shock. This rebalancing and reconfiguration of ourselves was creatively re-imagined in terms of what he called the 'three ecologies' – the environment, the social state and the collective psyche. Schizoanalysis was Guattari's way of reaching this anti-capitalist, anti-neoliberal perspective, a means of thinking and feeling that is 'more open, more processual, more deterritorialised' (Guattari 1995, p. 61):

Schizoanalysis, rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modelisations which simplify the complex, will work towards its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity.

(ibid)

By 'complexification', Guattari directs the reader to the complexity of the hyperobject, acknowledging the assemblage of such complexity and the need to 'see' it by association of its heterogeneous components:

Our survival on this planet is not only threatened by environmental damage but by a degeneration in the fabric of social solidarity and in the modes of psychological life, which must literally be reinvented... We cannot conceive of solutions to the poisoning of the atmosphere and to global warming due to greenhouse effect, or to the problem of population control, without a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society.

(Ibid, p. 20)

This 'art of living' he later compares to poetry – 'poetry today might have more to teach us than economic science, the human sciences and psychoanalysis combined' (ibid, p. 21). Like Lichtenberg Ettinger, the construction of an alternative thinking is attached to creativity. In

the case of poetry, the metaphor comes closest to the effect of condensation in the dream image: the combining of disparate meanings into a new sense through association. It is thinking via the ‘associative unconscious’ (Long and Harney 2013) that may help us to reconsider *the Crisis*, post crisis.

### **Birthing or becoming from the social dreaming matrix?**

*[Figure 1 here]*

In social dreaming, the metaphor, poetry, creativity, new thoughts and feelings are shared with others in the social dreaming matrix. Perhaps the ‘snowflake pattern’ of the seating arrangement<sup>7</sup> creates a containing field that is held together as or by a different kind of energy:

... most of the molecule or atom is space, there’s nothing in it except energy. And I get this visual of walking across a floor, and actually you are just walking across a piece of energy. You think of it as solid but actually it is just energy repelling energy, and floating in free air. And then I think about what would happen, what would we need to change to be able to drop through that energy floor or that energy level.

(SDM)

A new space is a beginning for new thoughts...

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<sup>7</sup> The seats in a social dreaming matrix are arranged in a ‘snowflake pattern’, as opposed to a standard format, such as a circle. This allows for a sense of sharing a space with others but at the same time being unable to see all the participants. This means that when a participant contributes with a dream or association, this is never directed at any particular other participant but to the ‘space of the matrix.’

- It's funny because it looks really close but also a feeling of space like the atom you were talking about. The way of talking and sharing in the now

-Every single snowflake is a different structure, blows your mind, to see all of the snow falling and you think that each one of them has a completely different structure.

(SDM)

When each different snowflake is joined to another, it becomes one with all the other snowflakes and yet at the same time retains its own special form and structure, its heterogeneity. The snowflake pattern of the social dreaming matrix is itself a metaphor for new thinking. In this way and in other different ways, new thinking has to be co-created by all of us if we are to survive the Coronavirus crisis. Maybe the jewel in the crown is that this experience might help us to solve the other, ultimately greater crisis, *the* Crisis of climate change and its myriad consequences.

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