

Thinking Family with Deleuze:

Expanding our methodological and theoretical horizons in family studies

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Abstract

Qualitative methods offer the ability to utilize theory in innovative ways and create new and innovative knowledge different epistemologies and ontologies. Here we present postmodern and poststructural theories as one way of doing this. We begin by overviewing the state of qualitative methods and theory in family studies and move to a brief overview of postmodern and poststructural theory identifying the major theorists in each area, explaining how we view the distinction between the different ideas associated with post-theories. We then move on to a discussion of the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, specifically their book *A Thousand Plateaus*. We identify two concepts that we find useful in their work and apply them to the study of fatherhood in family studies giving examples of how we might move forward using this innovative and unique theoretical perspective. We close by discussing how this line of research opens researchers to new ways to thinking and living.

One interesting thing about family studies is its “multidisciplinary” nature (NCFR, 2013). As a result, we presume that family studies is more diverse, benefitting from multiple perspectives. However, it is possible that over time family studies has become a discipline in its own right—creating a more insular community rather than a gathering place for varied and differing perspectives (Knapp, 2009). Additionally, we know that professional academic organizations and disciplines are subject to the same social influences as lay people (i.e., power), which shape and even coerce the process of knowledge creation (see Foucault, 1977; Mannheim, 1936). This is done through a variety of mechanisms, and examples are prevalent: peer-review, graduate education, grants, conferences, fame, political milieus and so on. These structures support certain epistemologies, ontologies, research, theory, and methodologies while eschewing others. We are not saying that these mechanisms are unhelpful, but they reproduce “new” forms of old knowledge rather than allowing for the creation of new, creative, and innovative knowledge.

Given the lack of dialogical theorizing (Knapp, 2009), it is not surprising that family studies and human development are struggling to address the shifts in family demographics and the increasing complexity of family relations, including the queering of the family or societal shifts thinking about gender. For example, fatherhood and motherhood are gendered parenting constructs that, while at one time, were somewhat well defined have become less and less relevant since our societies and cultures have become more complex, and in a way more discriminatory. However, family scholars continue to utilize terminology indicative of our structural functionalist roots rather than thinking of family in new ways. Given, this is an incredibly complex issue involving more than just scholars, but we have to start somewhere.

We admit that it is difficult for us to write a linear paper to express nonlinear, “different” ideas. Thus, while we attempt to constrain the form we also cannot expect someone reading it to understand what we are trying to convey without experiencing it. As a result, this paper contains occasional interruptions, intensities that break out, “becomings,” as the paper is deterritorialized by the thoughts and intensities that created it. It is rhizomatic. This work is not to be understood upon the first reading, and should not be, rather it is something to be experienced multiple times and differently each time.

Family is about affect; not affect as an emotion, but movement found in energy and reactions. Massumi (2002) described affect as “a suspension of action-reaction circuits”...“critical point, or bifurcation point, or singular point”...a physical system that “paradoxically embodies multiple and normally mutually exclusive potentials, only one of which is ‘selected’” (p.28,32,33) This article includes various critical points, intensities, versions, and iterations of family, us, you and others- many co-existing energies and voices talking at once. To better highlight these multiple simultaneous energies we have included some excerpts of poetic writing. Our writing is not poetic in the sense of strict structures or poetic forms but it is poetic as expressive and affective. Poetic as personal and more intimate. Poetic as active, more risky than less.

It is Friday I feel tired I cannot to get out of bed

MOOOOMMM DAAAADDD

I cannot find my favorite socks!

I am hungry!

Where did you put my lunchbox? This is parenthood?

This is family?

Eat eat eat!

Drink your milk, drink your milk!

Put your shoes on Put your shoes on NOW!!!

Hurry, hurry, get into the car We have two minutes to get ready

Once I get kids to school

I can

Finally

Brush my teeth

Once I get kids to school

Some scholars wonder if qualitative research can be important and meaningful. Often we hear qualitative researchers complaining about not being taken seriously by scholars from other methodological or theoretical frameworks. It is also worrisome that epistemological preferences guide the job market and that within certain epistemological and ontological intersections finding a job might not be a concern, but this is the reality for many scholars who utilize these marginalized methods. At the same time, these conversations about epistemological and methodological priorities might place qualitative inquiry at a disadvantage because they reify the privileges of more positivistic forms of inquiry. We take the position that qualitative researchers should emphasize their strengths rather than dwelling on relative weakness and part of our task is to convince qualitative researchers that what we do is indeed powerful. The self-doubt that

persists among qualitative researchers prevents us from discovering where we can go because we are too concerned with where we are.

One of the advantages for qualitative inquiry is that it is uniquely poised to break open typical or “molar” explanations of social phenomena (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) because it opens itself up to a greater number of ideas, ontologies, and epistemologies. These ideas are not as common in family studies, and in social science generally due to the privileging of positivist and post-positive assumptions of the world (see Smith & Hamon, Ingoldsby, & Miller, 2009). We hope that qualitative inquiry encourages one to think about his or her assumptions concerning the way the world is (ontology) and the ways in which knowledge is produced (epistemology). However, thinking about assumptions and being critical of the ways in which knowledge is produced are only a few of the unique ways that qualitative inquiry provides. Qualitative inquiry is at the forefront of knowledge creation. While a great deal of research replicates sameness, qualitative researchers are able to represent difference and explain how these differences are productive. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 5), while many researchers (qualitative and quantitative alike) spend time reproducing the “most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of thought” we believe instead that qualitative research should be “taking leave of the trees...inventing connections that jump from tree to tree and uproot them: a whole smoothing of space, which in turn reacts back upon striated space” (p. 506). This smooth space that Deleuze and Guattari speak of breaks down barriers, structures, and power allowing for new possibilities, for new knowledge, and this is where we believe qualitative research shines.

Methods in their own right contain zero power, although there is significant power inherent in discourses surrounding method. Bourdieu referred to many researcher’s use of

method as a “magic ritual” (Bourdieu, 1988), a belief that through “rigorous” reliance on protocols that validity and reliability can be achieved. In this we see only vestiges of positivism. In the end method is limiting. It produces sameness, not difference. In contrast, theory (philosophy) provides possibilities, new avenues of thought. We echo the sentiments of Jackson and Mazzei: “qualitative data interpretation and analysis does not happen via mechanistic coding, reducing data to themes, and writing up transparent narratives that do little to critique the complexities of social life; such simplistic approaches preclude dense and multi-layered treatment of data” (2012, p. vii). Instead we are calling for researchers to leave binary, dichotomous, “weary” methods behind and consider utilizing poststructural or postmodern theories and inquiry. Specifically, we showcase Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and their concept of a rhizome, which “ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (p. 7).

Postmodern/poststructural Theories

Before we begin discussing a network of interconnected postmodern/poststructural theories and thoughts we would like to note that for some scholars post-theories are counteractions, critiques of different forms and aspects of modernity (e.g., truth, objectivity, and progress) whereas others like to use the term post to illustrate a departure from sameness, epistemological control and order, and stable structures. Postmodern and poststructural theories and philosophies resist stable linguistic signifiers and definitions that aim to close down concepts and processes. Thus, introducing postmodern and poststructural theories through definitions, key concepts, or some type of essential thought is an impossible and immediately inaccurate task, especially if one aims to create conclusive overview of highly complex and diverse ideas presented by postmodernists and poststructuralist. Instead of reducing differences into the

sameness we have experienced that postmodernism and poststructuralism need to be lived. Beginners to the postmodern/poststructural thought should allow these difficult texts and writers wash over themselves and “do their thing” (E. St. Pierre, personal communication, May 2011). Little by little those new to postmodern/poststructural thought could form relations to postmodern/poststructural concepts, authors, practices, cultural artifacts and so on.

At the same time we want to offer some contact base for readers to begin their interactions with postmodernism/poststructuralism since without any introduction readers might be unable to gain insights into the work of many brilliantly creative and innovative thinkers associated with the fields of postmodernism and poststructuralism. Instead of viewing postmodernism/poststructuralism as a distinct body of work we propose that it is a network of interconnected theories and theorists who build on each others’ ideas without forming a stable identity or center [of postmodernism/poststructuralism]. Rather than comparing postmodern/poststructuralism with (neo-)positivism (see Crotty, 1998; Howell, 2013) we will share those postmodern/poststructural networks of ideas that excite us the most.

Maybe some of the most exciting aspects of postmodernism/poststructuralism relate to the ways in which postmodernism/poststructuralism re-creates knowledge as culturally situated, flexible, always changing, becoming, fragmented, and impartial. Knowledge is not linear, predictable, controllable, or stable, but knowledge is a verb and an invitation to relate. Once knowledge is perceived in this way many taken-for-granted concepts and practices are become questionable, usually by examining internal contradictions and how concepts and practices deconstruct themselves from within. Postmodernism/poststructuralism enables fluid boundaries and free play of different epistemological/information systems (Woods, 1999). However, this does not mean that ‘anything goes’ but rather the criteria guiding what ‘goes’ or is acceptable

can be cultural determined, changing, and shifting (see Thayer-Bacon, 2003 for qualified relativism).

Additionally, postmodern/poststructural scholars are interested in developing finite, fragile, corporeal forms of self and they see individuals as subject with freedom to release creative energies outside foundational morality or normative ethics (Peters & Burbules, 2004). Another exciting line of thought among many postmodernism/poststructuralists (e.g, Derrida, Deleuze) has to do with rethinking, reworking, and re-constructing binaries. Binaries such as father/mother, child/adult, male/female, or school/work create limiting hierarchies and grandnarratives that often display ‘hidden’ preferences and values that are ultimately constructions within particular discourses. To expose structures of nomination embedded in these binaries postmodernist/poststructuralists focus their analysis on power, different ways in which language functions and creates realities, and how discourses and institutions are used to create complex power-knowledge networks. Furthermore, it is also interesting to think about Deleuze’s philosophy of immanence which, instead of identifying and assigning meaning to the objects and their signifiers Deleuze’s utilizes the idea of becoming; becoming of things, forces, and processes through their various intensities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Deleuze, 1990). For Deleuze becoming is a between-ness; being in the middle of folding events and where the beginning and end (of thought, actions, arguments, and sensations) cannot be located (see also Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

Not again

Not another tantrum

You won’t eat, you won’t dress

What is it this time?

You will not wear that shirt? Really.

What's wrong with that shirt? You don't LIKE it?

BUT I thought yesterday....

I need to remember to be stern but I cannot

Let this particular 5-year old control me

Own me

Dictate the roles

Stop this nonsense BUT

I almost forgot...natural consequences...I am a teacher for God's sake

And I am vulnerable and tired human being

Determined I need to be

Well then

you need to go to school without the shirt

(and the pants, and shoes, and socks you took off when you got angry)

FINE

While he climbs into the back seat of our car

I need to sneak back into the house secretly grab a bag with the clothes and

shoes and lunch

that I can hand to the teachers

when I finally arrive to the day care

I think about loving you Can I, should I, do I?

Even during the days like these

Y-E-S

A-L-W-A-Y-S

We also could consider whether it is productive to separate postmodern and poststructural thoughts, even though both terms are sometimes used simultaneously and synonymous ways. And any categorical separation between the following theorists is highly inaccurate, and possibly undesirable. Lather (1991) explained that postmodernism can mean cultural shifts of the post-industrial era whereas poststructuralism processes those cultural shifts through theorizing and linguistic critique (i.e., views on language as differential system). Cultural shifts can include work on genealogy, power, discourse, knowledge, and ethics (Foucault) overproduction, simulations, signs, virtuality, the loss of real (Baudrillard), and grandnarratives (Lyotard) to mention a few. However, not only are postmodernists interested in cultural critique but they also share interest in cultural critique and theorizing with poststructuralists who may refuse the label of poststructuralism overall, but who may still be interested in plural faces of phenomena and complex forces shaping different social practices. Poststructuralism, when seen as a specific postmodern practice, is often associated with theorizing of Derrida including his focus on deconstruction, linguistic inconsistencies, intertextuality, and difference, Deleuze's work on philosophy on difference, desire, events, becoming, and territories, and Levinas focus on ethics, intuition, and otherness. Despite these different conceptual areas of cultural and linguistic critique produced by Foucault, Baudrillard, Lyotard, Derrida, Deleuze, and Levinas all these

scholars focus on critiquing the assumptions of stability, structure, and reality that prior works had been built upon.

Poststructural inquiry, then, is inherently critical of previous and current normative conceptualizations of theory, data, method, and practice, and our intent is to, if nothing else, create a theoretical dialogue about assumptions, ontologies, and epistemologies in family studies, especially as it applies to qualitative research. Current conceptualizations of family focus on typologies, dichotomies, and stability (i.e., what is average). We aim to introduce theory that can disrupt stability, or in other words: hegemony. These disruptions allow for freedom from institutional and structural constraints, but also highlight power in definitions of family and the values and morality inherent in theorizing and conceptualization. Additionally, qualitative inquiry, even in the interpretive tradition, focuses on sameness, reduction to themes, organization, which leads to constraint: Constrained method, constrained creativity, unoriginality. At the same time, in making these suggestions we are not meaning to destroy the field, or to suggest that qualitative methods currently are “wrong” or “bad.” If we did, then we would be simply applying old paradigms with new packaging, instead we are encouraging greater theoretical diversity in the field of family studies as a whole and qualitative inquiry specifically. Regardless of whether the theory is realist, interpretive, or postmodern, theoretical diversity creates research with greater depth and excitement. While we advocate for postmodern/poststructural theory we are not dismissing other forms of qualitative inquiry even if we are critical in our approach.

Deleuze & Guattari

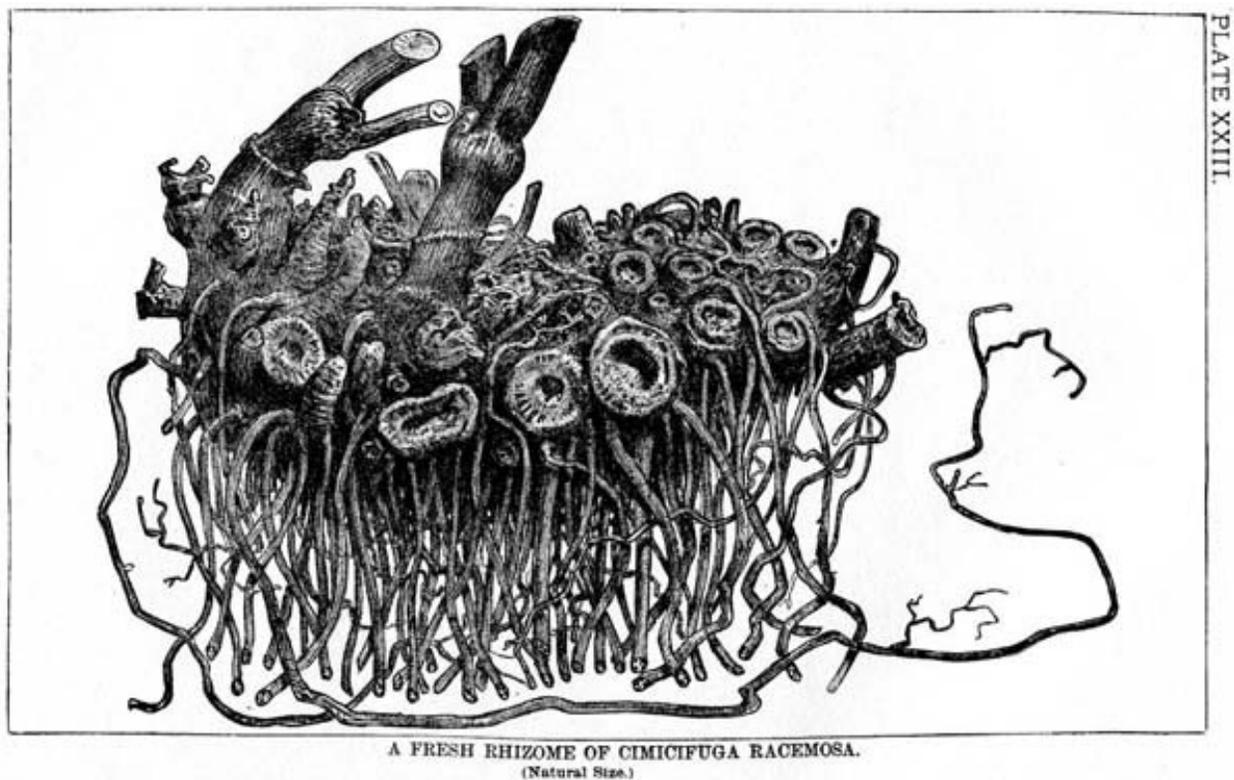
This paper focuses on the book *A Thousand Plateaus* and applies a few of the “plateaus” or ideas to the study of the family. Deleuze and Guattari, like many philosophers, are often

difficult to understand. Part of this stems from their use of neologisms, or nuanced use of common words. In response to this critique Deleuze answered, “it is sometimes necessary to invent a barbaric word to account for a notion with innovative pretensions” (Deleuze, 2013). While we agree with this statement, we also recognize the difficulty in understanding and thinking with Deleuze. As a result, part of our objective is to explain Deleuze in a palatable, but interesting way. Therefore we proceed by highlighting two of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts—*rhizome* and *becoming*— and apply them to family studies. Additionally, because postmodern/poststructuralism falls outside of interpretivist qualitative inquiry we include examples of how one might go about doing Deleuzian research, although (and we cannot stress this enough) there are certainly many ways to do it.

Our examples focus on fatherhood as one of many sites for the employment of Deleuzian research. Critics of past postmodern and poststructural theorizing on fatherhood claim that it, “appear[s] too eager to discount the stable, continuous, and orderly patterns of many fathers’ experiences when [evaluating] identity theory” (Marsiglio, 1998). This may be true, especially when scholars claim a generic “poststructural” approach (Lupton & Barclay, 1997), which is vague and akin to claiming some kind of general modern or pre-modern approach. Given, poststructural or postmodern theorists can be similar, but there is difficulty in analyzing in such general terms. Instead we believe it is best to choose a theorist and apply his or her ideas. We have chosen Deleuze and this is in part because his ideas answer this critique and provide a broader means of analysis and understanding. For example, Deleuze and Guattari, while deconstructing stable identity structures, recognize that there are trends in ways of doing/thinking which they call “molar” forms. For fathers this may mean getting married, deciding to have children, having children, raising them, and so on. At the same time, these

molar forms shift over time to allow for change as new “lines” are created and decenter stable conceptualizations. These “lines” as Deleuze and Guattari call actions or events come in varied forms. There are typical lines—segmented lines—which constrain actions, but then there are lines of flight (or becomings), which break open and tear down molar forms. These lines converge or break free creating rhizomes.

Rhizome



Partial to botany metaphors, the authors borrow the term “rhizome” and apply the idea to the social world. The idea is also a critique of modern paradigms of science. They claim that science is preoccupied with constructing order or meaning, reducing and categorizing rather than viewing the messy complexity of the inside. This preoccupation leads to the splitting, dichotomizing of the social world into smaller and smaller parts: reduction. The rhizome, in

contrast, focuses on the mess of the interactions and allows these to be viewed within their complexity rather than by taking each piece out and examining it individually.

In contrast to systems theory, functionalism, or other patterned, structured methods, theories, and technologies, a rhizome appreciates the messiness of complex social phenomena. It is a “map and not a tracing” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 p.12). Allowing one to enter at any point map their experience and leave at any other point leaving with one of several maps. The ability to enter and exit at any point showcases the rhizome is a multiple “connecting any point to any other point,” it is not hierarchical or binary, it is not transcendent, but immanent, it is anti-geneology. Thinking back to the plant analogy, Deleuze and Guattari suggest grassroots, which intermingle, intertwine, and combine into an inseparable mass. In this way a rhizome is not perfectly delineated like tree branches, but is comprised of tangled and messy grassroots where the ends and beginnings are difficult to define and the middles are at the heart of the action. It is an ethereal concept, but extremely useful in thinking about complex social phenomenon, such as families.

Another useful way to think about the rhizome is in terms of lines. Deleuze talks frequently about lines. These lines represent various kinds of action. Some actions are segmented, stratified or constraining. Other lines break out and make connections—think of a root breaking out of a bulb and connecting with other roots from other plants. Thinking about families rhizomatically is helpful because a family is multiple—it is not one, or two, or three or four things, but a family is so connected by multiple things that it, “carries enough force to shake and uproot” any stable conceptualization (p. 25). In other words, while we typically categorize families or family members as stable beings (e.g., mother, father, brother, sister), instead we can think of the family as an event, and family members as lines, which deterritorialize one another

(remove each other from their territory or typical space) creating the rhizome, performing family desires. For example, families are—in many instances—created by persons who act in a “family” via symbioses or becomings rather than some kind of stable definition based on gender or genetics. In these ways a family is rhizomatic.

A father can also be thought as a rhizome, which is comprised of father doings. Many of these doings may be molar, but occasionally the father is brought out of his territory and deterritorialized by another event or action. In this way the father expands his territory. He may be becoming-mother, he may be becoming-student, but there is an interaction, which deterritorializes him and reterritorializes him. This is the formation of a rhizome, actions that deterritorialize and reterritorialize the actor. To help visualize this I created a father-rhizome of my own. By taking videos of many of my daily actions and collaging them I created a multimodal representation of father as rhizome. Some of these are lines of flight and others are segmented. The final video collage can be accessed here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/hochbr8v9qx48gg/Rhizome%20Collage_Final.mov This video emphasizes action and change rather than being and stability. The final image juxtaposes the relative silence of the molar to the action and complexity of the rhizome. This example does not encompass the full utility of the rhizome concept, but it utilizes visual methods as a means of analysis and explanation. Further work might build off of this by creating collages with multiple father rhizomes and juxtaposing them. One may also collect multiple rhizomes from family actors and collage them to simulate the lines of the family rhizome.

Becoming

7 radi NOTE

XIV piano piece for David Tudor 4
disegno del 1949
adegione pianistica: 27.31959

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3 sequenza
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SYLVANO BUSSOTI

“Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation or producing through filiation. Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, “appearing,” “being,” “equaling,” or “producing.”

--Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 p. 239

Visual methods in themselves are unusual in mainstream research, as a result, we move to a more mainstream form of data: the interview. Fathers are not monolithic, although we often think of them in this way. For example, researchers, including fatherhood scholars, often refer to fathers as dead-beat dads (Bartfeld & Meyer, 1994; Tamis-LeMonda & McFadden, 2010), intimate fathers (Dermott, 2003), or nurturing dads (Marsiglio & Roy, 2012) thereby classifying

or tracing fathers using structures such as race and class or averaged behaviors. Further discussions of fathers focus on whether or not fathers are essential (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999), the importance of resident vs. nonresident fathers (Zhang & Fuller, 2012), or how involved the father is (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004). These studies utilize dichotomous continuums to classify fathers on abstract--and sometimes arbitrary--dimensions. The resulting archetypes flit in and out of academia and into the minds of policy makers or other stakeholders who internalize and reify them. These various conceptualizations focus on the father as a stable, linear, “monolithic construct contrived in patriarchy” (Aitken, 2009 p. 25), but these stable, linear conceptualizations do not emerge in lived experience, rather a father is good and bad, emotional and unemotional, involved and uninvolved, he is multiple: a rhizome.

Becoming is a kind of “symbiosis” not correspondence (Ibid, p. 238). How then is the participant/researcher relationship becoming? Interviews consist of a series of disclosures. In many cases the interview consists only of disclosures by the participant, but in others the interviewer also discloses. Regardless, however, the interview can be considered becoming in that a symbiosis results when both participants receive a something from the other actor in the event. This is not necessarily the case in every interview, but there are times, events, in which the participant and researcher may benefit mutually, symbiotically from the event and become. Central to the concept of becoming is the idea of differencing, in that a becoming-father is differencing itself from molar conceptions of fathers with molar being the typical, striated conceptions of father, which has many definitions based on culture, race, gender, class, and so forth. Fathers express their difference through motion, differencing them from a popular idea. For example, becoming-father operates between molar fathers such as his/her own father or

media representations of fathers such as Homer Simpson seeking to difference itself from these forms.

However, Deleuze and Guattari insist that “becomings are minoritarian” (p. 292) in other words, molar forms do not become. As a result there “is no becoming-man because man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular.” As a result, our focus is not on how fathers are becoming-father, but rather on how the molar father is deterritorialized by becomings and how those rhizomes form. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain this idea using a wasp and an orchid. When the wasp interacts with the orchid it becomes the orchid in that it is a part of the reproductive organ of the orchid. Similarly, the orchid is becoming-wasp as the wasp takes a part of it into itself. This is a mutual deterritorialization and reterritorialization, a rhizome. The two actors *become* each other: becoming-wasp and becoming-orchid. Applying this to the fathers we can see how the father is deterritorialized by other events or actor's words and *becomes* a part of that thing that deterritorializes him. It is worth mentioning that this becoming is unrelated to the idea of becoming as a linear transcendent process in which a father becomes a “better” or “worse” father over time.

To understand this more I (we) present some interview data I gathered to demonstrate how Deleuze and Guattari's writing can help us to see fathers differently, and create new knowledge. What I present is not molar (i.e., analysis with interspersed quotes). Instead I present my interview as an event, a rhizome. However, I frame the analysis with personal reflection:

“I'm over at David's having some pizza that he made, it's pretty good, the crust is a bit chewy, but it tastes great. I'm more impressed with the salad, not that it's delicious, but that it looks good, chef-like, okay maybe that's overstating it a bit, but he really knows how to cut lettuce well. I'm not very good at cutting lettuce. I

usually just rip it up because I don't like the brown edge it gets when you cut it with a knife. The problem is that you end up getting a giant piece of lettuce on your fork, which isn't a problem for someone with a big mouth like mine, but it drives my wife nuts.

After dinner we sit down and chat a bit. David stays at home with his two daughters, Megan and Tara. Megan is 7 and he homeschools her, but Tara is just a baby. I'm interested in David's experience because it is different than most men.

"What is it like for you?"

"Being a father?"

"Um, like in what way?"

"What are you? What makes you a father? What things would you say?"

"I am responsible for who my children become. I see my parents' positives and negatives

that influenced me. I am responsible that she becomes a good person, you know, we could totally mess her up screw her up by the way that we treat her. I feel responsible. It is my job to make her and them both into good people. Capable of living in the world."

"Are there things that are, um, so I mean so there's a wide variety of fathers what do you think it is that makes you unique as a father?"

“Um, besides being a stay-at-home dad, I mean I'm not unique, but like one of the things is like a total hands-on approach to everything that we do and...we try to, I mean it's hard for me because of the way I was raised where it wasn't so intimate, but I try to be as intimate and as open as possible and we try to do everything we can together as a family and me I try to do as much as I can with them—except play Barbies, I don't do that, it's boring—um but I, I, you know I just try to be as involved as possible so that I can be there every step of the way. I mean I didn't realize what I was missing when I was working, my wife was taking care of our oldest daughter, Megan, and now that I'm taking care of her I realize all of the things that I missed and that parents miss and you're always going to miss something, but I think that's one of the things that differentiates me is that I want to be totally involved, I want to be totally open, and I don't want to be friends, ya know some parents want to be friends with their kids, but I wanna be, I just want to have total relationship where we can always do stuff together, always talk together, I mean that's what we do now hopefully it will go on forever, but...”

“So you do a lot of things, um, on a daily basis that are, that would be considered mom things, do you consider those to be father things?”

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. .

(very long pause)

.
. .
. .
. .
. .
“So, uh, uh, uh”

“Yeah, I know what you're saying, yeah, I know what you mean. Um.....I mean I should say, “yeah, I consider them,” but I don't just because the majority of the people doing them are not fathers, um, but when you break it down like cooking I see that as a father thing yeah, no I don't see them as father things, which is kind of sad because, but I don't see them as mother things anymore, I did when I was younger when I was growing up it was like "yeah this is what moms do" because that's what my mom did I mean she had a degree she was a nurse she could've worked, but um--yeah that's sad”

“So, so what it sounds like to me that you're saying is that these things aren't really mother things any more, but they're not necessarily father things anymore”

“Right, yeah”

“But there are things that you do and you consider yourself to be a father then what do you do are there things you can point to that say yeah this is uniquely a

fathering act like something you do that you can say, 'yeah, I'm a father and I do this.'"

"I don't know, I haven't thought about that. I mean, I mean it's hard to say because like in my growing up my mom didn't play soccer with us or wrestle with us, but my dad did sometimes, and I do those types of things with my daughters, we play soccer together, we wrestle, we have thumb wars, and that's not stuff that I ever did with my mom and Megan doesn't really do that with Ashley (his wife), I don't want to think of those as father things, but they're things that my father did and I don't see a lot of moms doing them um so I guess that's something that I do. I'm trying to, yeah..."

"What do you think, what do you think are, if you had to say you know what, I guess if I was to ask you"

"Yeah"

"What is a father?"

"Yeah"

"What would you say?"

“Hmmm, that's a good question. I think it's it's...like an an an like and not a mother?”

“Sure, yeah ha ha ha!”

Ha ha ha! Because it's like things have been so blurred, the traditional social terms have been so blurred, um, in my life now, what is a father? I mean it's it's it's the man that helps the house run in whatever way he can, yeah. Ha ha ha! This is a hard question I have not thought about the gender roles as much as perhaps they affect me I mean I've thought about them because I see them every day, but I haven't really internalized them a whole lot or even talked about it a whole lot because there's not a lot of people to talk it about. I mean I can talk to my wife about it, but we'd rather talk about other stuff and there's less dads that are stay-at-home dads, so I don't really ever to talk to them, so.”

I don't know if I could do what David is doing. In a world where dual-earner families are becoming the norm it is strange to see David giving up his career for his family. It's interesting how his being a stay-at-home-dad deterritorializes everything about child care. At one point he talked about how he would come to a church play group and that the room would get quiet or the conversation would change quickly, breastfeeding women would leave the room. His presence deterritorialized mothers and reterretorialized himself as well.

As is the case with most of my 'participants,' David changes me. I see him a few days later and can't help but feel like we share something. As men we aren't supposed to think of

things in that way, but there is a fair amount of personal information disclosed in interviews. I am deterritorialized by David and we are both reterritorialized by the interaction. We are both becoming-father or are we becoming-mother?. He is left to question his fatherhood status and so am I. Am I doing enough at home? Do I cook? Not as much as my wife, and the lettuce doesn't look as good as David's when I do, nor do I cook pizza dough from scratch, but is that fatherhood? David is left wondering what fatherhood is, but we are as well.

My reterritorialization takes place in the presence of David, in the moment, in the event I am de and re-territorialized. Not ontologically, not additively, but momentarily. Like Deleuze and Guattari's wasp meeting the orchid the wasp is reterritorialized with the orchid. So I am reterritorialized by David. I move in-between, molecularly, relative to my conception of David as molar stay-at-home-dad. He is staying home, I am not, but I am nurturing. I do not fit other molar forms, I am not aloof, or uninvolved. I am becoming-stay-at-home-dad.

David goes from striated thinking along gendered lines to realizing (even if he had been acting this way before) that what he does as a father is not constrained to gendered roles. There may be things that he does that other men do, but most of what he does (staying home, making meals) does not have to be gendered. Speaking abstractly, gender is a structure that we are encouraged to think about in striated ways (Butler, 1999 p. 13), but the rhizome breaks down striation to create smooth space, space that allows for connecting directly and non-linearly from point-to-point. David describes his experiences as becoming-mother, but troubles these ideas because he has reterritorialized them as father. David is also becoming-researcher in our interaction as he begins to think about things that he had not previously entertained.

David experiences becoming precisely because he is not the molar form. He is molecular because he "passes in between points...runs perpendicular to the points first perceived [in this

case Mother and Father]” (p. 293). His place is a “no-man’s-land, a nonlocalizable relation sweeping up the two distant or contiguous points, carrying one into the proximity of the other” (p. 293). David breaks down dichotomous thinking, through his actions he is father and mother, man and woman: a rhizome”

Conclusion

In this paper we wanted to “lift a dynamism out of” fatherhood and “incarnate it [fatherhood] in a foreign medium” (Massumi, 1992 p. 8, with an emphasis added). By doing so we hoped to show the multiplicity, shifting events, things, impulses, sensations, and encounters that produce fatherhood in different ways. Thereby giving the reader a way to deterritorialize family and subsequently reterritorialize it, creating new thoughts, emotions, feelings, sensations, and perceptions (Ibid). Because of the important role that families play in the lives of adults and children, families must be thought of more individually, moved from white, middle-class, heteronormative, molar formulations to molecular events of family that avoid ontological stabilizations. We argue that we might accomplish this by thinking about and studying family through (poststructural) theories and qualitative methods . Moreover it is possible to see theories and different uses of theories as methods. Using theories as method is possible when one sees methodological tasks as crafts. Law (2004) proposed that a method is the act of crafting boundaries, what is present, what is manifestly absent, and what is Othered. However, these boundaries are flexible and include various and differing forms of presence and absence. The use of theories as a method also focuses on relations. Theories can help scholars to shift from knowing (certainty) toward processing different ways in which us (scholars, participants, communities, object, materia, humans) relate to the world and to each other. From this perspective, methods are not only descriptive or generative but methods also perform.

Concepts such as family or fatherhood are not empty signifiers; concepts do things and relate. When one views concepts as doing which is an active happening it is easier to see how different systems are operating and what states of things are. The question is not can or might this concept and doing work for all, but might it work for you?

Family and fatherhood studies qualitatively and especially when reading and working through Deleuze are molecular becomings; spaces of betweenness. Family and fatherhood are not about binaries such as individual-family, father-mother, parent-child, subject-institution but about tiny cracks that the doings of family and fatherhood can cause to governing thought. Instead of pathologizing or individualizing various forces of surveillance and judgment, scholars could recognize and highlight those aspirations that escape nihilism (see also Coleman & Ringrose, 2013).

The difficulty in applying something like poststructural theory is the question of pragmatics. In the non-Deleuzian fashion it is a question of becoming. Becoming something else than present, something unknown and rhizomatic. Doing poststructural theories is to get confused and allow oneself to be done and redone, to do and redo, move and return. Deleuze opens doors in unanticipated directions in theory and practice. Poststructural theories can help us to understand difference and the continuously changing world. They can help scholars make sense of complex phenomenon without being totalizing or governing. Instead of concluding and closing research, poststructuralism allows researchers to move and shift through relations; to stay alive and experience. Knowledge or learning does not end. This type of scholarly work is about connecting and living; focusing on events and particulars rather than hierarchies and structures of dominance.

Deleuze

The answer?

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