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Nomadic Subjectivity: Movement in Contemporary Student Development Theory

Laura Elizabeth Smithers & Paul William Eaton

Abstract

This essay opens space for movement in higher education~student affairs by using post-structural philosophy as a counterweight to balance the corpus of student development theories that create and inscribe in/dividualized subjectivity onto students. Taking up Jones and Stewart's (2016) structuring of waves in student development theorizing, we unpack régimes of truth that undergird the profession of college student educators: discipline/control (a doubled biopower that centers the whole student), and dividuation (a fracturing of the whole student into component parts). We extend dividuation to include an adherence to representationalism through method in perpetuating and inscribing the student as in/dividual (neoliberal subjectivity). We take up Rosi Braidotti's concept of nomadic subjectivity—a relational subjectivity—as a counterbalance to the in/dividualizing subjectivities of current student development theorizing. In doing so, we advance queered third wave theorizing, provoking movement and necessary ethical questions for college student educators: what does it mean to give up commonplace notions such as student, development, identity, and method? What possibilities for practice(s) and futurities in higher education~student affairs open by embracing movement?

Keywords: *Student development, identity, neoliberalism, dividual, nomadism*

We are intermezzo—in the middle. The provocations of this paper have been germinating for us over several years now. We read~think~live¹ with Deleuze. Ahmed. Guattari. Weheliye. Bergson. Grosz. Braidotti Braidotti Braidotti in our *becoming*: “repetition as the eternal return of difference, not of sameness...a qualitative leap of perspective” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 225). Rosi Braidotti (2011b) suggests one might irrupt notions of beginning by recognizing collective historical moment(s) and geographic location(s). We do not write or think linearly; we locate this paper through various régimes of truth in student development theory. Ideas for challenging the normative conceptualizations of identity and development in the student affairs literature have been germinating for some time—we are not the first. Are we in 2017? Are we on the page, in the text, in France, the United States, or where we met, in Chicago at the 2015 American Educational Research Association meeting? Our entanglement here opened a line of flight that moved us to our present space-time.

Our goal here is to present the possibilities of theoretical~philosophical exploration as an opening up of indeterminate spaces for students and for movement in the field of higher education~student affairs. We understand philosophy to be, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari

1. The use of ~ instead of - as a connecting punctuation denotes fluidity, and is increasingly used by post-qualitative scholars (e.g. Sellers, 2013).

(1991/1994), the creation of concepts, an action which “in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist” (p. 108). If theories explain the present, philosophy creates the future. We are committed to both. This commitment structures this work; we begin with a re-theorizing of the present of student development theory, and introduce the concept of the in/dividual student. From this foundation, we follow the work of Clark/Keefe (2014) in bringing the concept of nomadic subjectivity to the field.

The alternative(s) we offer through philosophical thinking does not replace traditional student development theorizing, but challenges stasis and the concomitant issues that arise from a method-driven, Fordist and commodity-oriented set of theories and models. In creating movement through philosophical thinking, we disrupt that which has become commonplace in our discourse and practice: identity, development, theory, and method. We do so, again, not to discredit the importance of such concepts, but to think through how sedimenting student development theorizing invented the in/dividualized student, and how such an unbalanced reliance on *dividuation* serves advanced neoliberal capitalist states at the start of the twenty-first century.

We explore issues in higher education through philosophy as a means to think outside of what quantitative and traditional humanistic qualitative social science methods, dominant in the field, might prescribe (St. Pierre, 2011; Wells, Kolek, Williams, & Saunders, 2015). Our current piece intervenes in student development theory, a corner of the field which, despite its emphasis on theorizing, still finds itself enmeshed in method (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). Student development theory arrived at through methodological controls has greatly contributed to our understanding and structuring of the college student experience. However, method has also perpetuated false notions of control, (over)determination, stasis, and a hierarchizing of knowledge production we see as increasingly difficult to maintain in the twenty-first century. Thus, while methodologically informed student development theorizing has and will continue to hold importance for college student educators, we seek to rebalance the field’s efforts towards potentiality, the indeterminate, movement, and acknowledgment of other ways of knowing~being~becoming emblematic of un-rootedness. Philosophical thinking, and the indeterminacy that it represents, opens up possibilities for our work as college student educators to exceed the world as currently or ever wholly representable.

As we finalize(d) drafting, editing, and re-organizing this article, the world grapples with the tension between the determinate and indeterminate. This is the generative space of the possibility of different futures, both positive and negative. Nationalist movements in the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Philippines, and elsewhere, premised on determinate identities, harken back to centuries which, according to chronological logic, we left behind. In our nation-state of the (dis)United States, the “election” of Donald Trump to the Presidency has fanned the flames of this particularly anxiety-ridden tension. Do we, individually and collectively, embrace the determining force that is identity and its concomitant inclusions and exclusions? Or do we shift our ways of thinking~being~knowing to include differently constructed concerns cutting and folding among social identifiers? Moreover, as our social world changes—through demography, the opening of social acceptance to those outside cisgender heterosexuality, the election of the first Black United States president, the Whitelash from that election (Jones, 2016), the queering of rigid social identifiers, new waves of global migration, and shifting climates—what new possibilities exist for reimagining the subject? In this moment, we find ourselves confronting the limitations of theorizations in college student development theory that, alone, are incapable of coping with the complexities of our time.

The above mapping of our present offers a provocation for those working with college students, including student affairs practitioners, college student educators, faculty, and researchers. We engage with possibilities for new ways of theorizing~philosophizing the role of college environments in dialogues and assemblages of identity and subjectivity. What possibilities emerge when we mark the frame of identity as incomplete, as well as the mark of a society of control when it is our governing focus?² Put differently, in what ways is contemporary student development theory a function of a society of control? Our project here extends the thinking of scholars such as Abes and Kasch (2007) and Jones and Stewart (2016), who have wrestled with similar questions about student development as a mechanism of control. We use the concept of nomadic subjectivity to create new movement(s) in the practice and thinking of college environments as space(s) of potentiality and *becoming*.

We come to this space with experience as practitioners in the field, as scholars engaging in philosophically informed research, as researchers engaging questions about impacts of institutional structures and technologies on college student experiences. We write as people who hold both majoritized and minoritized identities, and as embodied, (dis)assembling (non)human *becomings* ourselves, living through the tumultuous start of the twenty-first century, which we would categorize as the chaotic and radical unfolding of the world that has always existed. In this moment, we write indeterminacy, or nomadic subjectivity, into the student *development* literature as a means to create the conditions of possibility of a different student affairs, undergraduate education, and world beyond “development,” a world that embraces movement, potentiality, and *becoming* through nomadism.

Subjectivity in Student Development Theory

To shift our perception of changes, movements, and engagements with college students in the assemblage we call postsecondary~higher education from student development, including identity development, toward *becomings* is to defamiliarize, or deterritorialize, oneself from a vision of the subject rooted in identity (Braidotti, 2013, pp. 88-89; Jones & Stewart, 2016). We undertake this defamiliarization through our writing~reading~thinking~conversing, blurring any boundary between theory and practice, “writing as if [identity is] already gone, or thinking beyond the bounded self, [as] the ultimate gesture of defamiliarization” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 137). The determined, or bounded, theorizations we aim to think beyond are those that are student-centered and identity-centered. Together, these concepts mark assemblages of power~knowledge in place since the beginning of the student personnel movement. Extending Jones and Stewart’s (2016) useful articulation of the waves of student development theorizing, we explicitly demarcate these waves by their different régimes of truth: what assemblage of power~knowledge structures what is understood as true within each wave?

Régimes of truth are grids of intelligibility that both structure our social worlds and our existence as subjects within them into what becomes common sense (Foucault, 2000). Our current régime of truth, hinted at earlier, is one that maintains enormous social, environmental, political, and economic inequities. It also gives a language of identity that can be of great use to minoritized subjects. How might we resolve this tension? To take the work of sociologists, as well as post-structural, indigenous, queer, and feminist materialist theorists (Ahmed, 2006; Braidotti, 2013; Barad, 2007; Deleuze, 1969/1994; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Foucault, 1978/1990;

2. We consider the terms *biopolitics* (Foucault, 1978/1990), *neoliberalism* (Foucault, 1978/2010), and *societies of control* (Deleuze, 1992) as analogous (cf. Nail, 2016).

Weheliye, 2014) seriously is to recognize that there is no outside of these régimes and their concomitant subjections. More accurately, to be outside of a régime of truth is to either be inside another such system of subjection or to be outside of sense-making altogether. We do not propose the making of another régime of truth, or system of subjection; we propose a continued queering of the boundaries (Clark/Keefe, 2014; Kasch, Jones, & Abes, 2013) of our current régime as a means by which we may hold sense-making radically open, and in doing so, hold the potentials of students, staff, and systems open as well. Our hope is that this centering of nomadism, or the indeterminate, or movement, helps students, practitioners, theorists, and researchers create the conditions of possibility for new systems we cannot yet imagine, but which must come for our collective survival. We map the territories of régimes of truth in the span of student development theory below as a means to frame an alternative(s) for student development theory, one that places individual and *dividual* subjects as steps along the path in creating *what might be*.

First Wave Theories: Student-Centered Subjectivity

In the first régime of truth in student development theory (hereafter referred to as the first wave, in keeping with Jones and Stewart's [2016] terminology), concern for the whole student emerged—this is the *raison d'être* of student affairs. Student-centered work became a system of power~knowledge: universities concerned themselves anew with students as an individual unit of analysis, in large part because of new knowledge and technologies surrounding the measurement of masses of students and the student *body*. Student mortality was among the first of these mass concerns that led to the treatment of students as individuals (Lloyd-Jones & Smith, 1938; Preinkert, 1940/2005). Such concerns led to studies on what colleges might do to intervene and promote student development. For example, *Where Colleges Fail* (Sanford, 1967) was a look at institutional impacts on student bodies that gave us one of our first student development theories: challenge and support, a theory aimed at intervening on the individual student. This individual and individualized student is the creation of the first wave's assemblage of power~knowledge: discipline and control.

Assemblage of power~knowledge: discipline and control

First wave student development theories are situated within a régime of truth largely analogous to Foucault's biopower. We refer to biopower specifically in the manner Foucault (1978/1990) describes in *The Will to Know*: a doubled biopower, consisting of both disciplinary force (an anatomic-politics of the body) as well as control (a bio-politics of the population). Discipline is the internalization of subjection such that bodies perform the movements reinforced by the system while attributing such movements, in part or whole, to individual choice. Forces of control operate at the level of populations to create categories and boundaries, including the designation of normal and abnormal, or *developed* and un/underdeveloped (Foucault, 1977/1995; 1978/1990). First wave theories spin between these two axes. Control is implicated in the study of student mortality as the first definition of a population-wide problem in higher education in need of solution. Discipline provided a solution within the individualized, "developed" student.

With these two axes of discipline and control at work, the first wave both constructs an individualized subject through discipline of the body, and norms this individualized subject to a population. These two forces combined, as applied to student development, create the individualized student at the center of the first wave. This individual student is known both through discipline

(student personnel practitioners putting student development theory to work) as well as through their relationship to others in student populations (the tracking of development is an exercise in itself of benchmarking a student to a population norm). Both axes are integral to the creation and maintenance of the individualized student.

First wave theorizing: the bounded cognizing individual

Rooted in psychological empiricism, foundational theories that shape(d) the field also imbibed~embedded~created organizing assemblages that lead to today's *dividual* subject of student development theory. At the dawn of student development theory, the field of college student affairs educators~practitioners, and simultaneously colleges and universities, organized around a

particular philosophical point of view, which coincides with what we shall designate as the personnel point of view, may well further modify the curricular program, methods of instruction, and the extracurricular program of the institution in order to place emphasis upon the individual student and his all-round development rather than upon his intellectual training alone...It would underlie all the aspects of the total program of student personnel work. (Lloyd-Jones & Smith, 1938, p. 19)

In practice, the field of student personnel was founded on an idea of student development that pursued the creation and maintenance of a radically individualized college student.

Concern for the “whole student” (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 18) centers individualization in the work of college student educators. First wave theories embed individual rational choice as a teleological, normative, and desired outcome of the college student experience. In early theories of lifespan, cognitive and moral or ethical development (Erikson, 1959/1980; Kohlberg, as cited in Patton et al., 2016; Perry, 1968), for example, fully developed students come to possess an individual epistemological worldview by shifting their thinking away from externally and dualistically imposed ways of knowing toward internally formulated and relativistic or contextually contingent ways of knowing (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). In other words, a fully developed college student *possesses* their knowledge and development as an individual. The knowledge base used to norm development is determined by studies of populations (Astin, 1977; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perry, 1968; Sanford, 1967), and it is assumed that development is to move along the normal path the population takes. This knowledge becomes possessed through practices of discipline. Under this régime of truth, advisors and student services staff are trained to reinforce the characteristics of normally developing students in their work with all students. To be a properly developed student is to internalize these norms and undertake the actions desired by the system while believing these choices of actions to be your own.

In and through norming knowledge creation and individualizing knowledge possession, colleges and universities inscribe an individual subjectivity onto students. Choices students make appear to fulfill personal interest, and transgressions are seen as individual moral, cognitive, or ethical failings for which colleges and universities can and do hold people responsible. The standard student conduct verdict of *found responsible* is entirely aligned with this notion of a radically individualized subject. The *whole student* is the individualized subject—the figure of students moving forward in their development by individually and rationally pursuing desires, making decisions in their personal self-interest, and taking responsibility for these decisions.

Practices of colleges and universities continue to inscribe this individualized subjectivity on the student. Such practices include the aforementioned work of administrative units such as student judicial offices and policing structures in holding students responsible for behavior considered abnormal, or the work of disciplining positions such as advisors and residence directors. This is also the work of disciplinary structures such as academic majors or career centers, which center individual knowledge and individual vocational production, respectively. Current movements to think academic majors and career centers together (e.g. Koproske, 2017) are premised on the figure of an individual student pursuing their own self-interest who will select an academic major or profession based on their need to take responsibility for their individual self, and who comes to this decision based on their own epistemological (cognitive) development.

Colleges and universities' commitment to producing whole, normed and disciplined, individualized students, as evidenced by first wave theorizing and foundational documents such as *The Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education, 1937), also produced the lines of flight that would usher in second wave theorizing. The creation of a universally normed and disciplined individual within a racist, sexist, homo/transphobic, xenophobic, ableist, and nationalist society creates points of tension with members of communities who are at best not represented within the vision of a normal "whole" student. The recognition of communities along racial, ethnic, gender, ability, sexual, religious, geographic, socioeconomic, national, continental, and many other lines shifts focus to recognizing difference. This produced a norming and homogenizing of these multiple and distinct *dividual* communities rather than disciplining a universal "whole" individual. Whereas the régime of truth in the first wave was a combination of discipline and control, second wave theorizing deemphasizes disciplinary power and lives primarily within a régime of truth of an emphasized control.

Second Wave Theories: The *Dividual* Subject

In the second wave of student development theory (Jones & Stewart, 2016), students become *dividuals*, bounded and measurable subjects of control who are defined as, for example, their grade point averages, their first-time full-time cohort, and their demographic identity markers. Masses of students, or student *bodies*, are now data (Deleuze, 1992). The *dividual* in student development theory is expressed in a wide range of theories, from Cass's (1979) Model of Homosexual Identity Development (a transformational theory for both of your authors during our master's programs) to the R-MMDI (Jones and Abes, 2013). The *dividual* is an innovation of second-wave theories still present today. The *dividual* [student] is the creation of the second wave's governing assemblage of power~knowledge: control.

Assemblage of power~knowledge: control

The second wave is marked by the rise of control and the relative falling back of discipline. Translated into the general functions of student personnel positions, this makes little sense. Have advisors and residence directors, those historically charged with the maintenance of the whole student, been replaced here with institutional research or multicultural student union folks, those who work almost exclusively with *dividuated* students? To say that discipline has fallen back is not to say the professional positions traditionally associated with it have dropped in numbers—it is to say that those positions are increasingly and centrally oriented towards control. This point is more readily seen in the shift of student development theories detailed below. Societies of control

divide the individual person of our previous regime into *dividuals*, bodies known and controlled now through their parts (Deleuze, 1992). *Dividuals* are, for example, citizens, noncitizens, in-state, out-of-state, international, the race/ethnicity codes of an institution's student information system, a GPA, class standing, percent of degree earned, a risk level. Identity as experienced in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century United States is a construction of our control society and is expressed through *dividuality*.

We can now return to the shift in terms of student personnel positions. The positions of advisor and residence director clearly still exist. However, their job functions are increasingly *dividual*-facing, or data-facing. This includes not only specific outreach and programming for historically excluded and erased students, but also data-driven approaches that orient professionals to serve *dividuals* such as GPA or membership in a first-time full-time cohort. The shift in assemblage of power~knowledge between the first and second waves is not a shift in the importance of identity, but rather a shift of the level on which students construct identity (Abes, 2016; Jones and Abes, 2013; Torres, Jones, and Renn, 2009).³

Control and neoliberalism

Dividuation makes populations into discrete packets of data, be those packets in the form of identities, the fields of student information systems, participation counts in high-impact practices, and monetary value under capitalism. In a society of control, the system which centers (dividuated) identity is also the system that centers (dividuated) flows of capital. Thus, in a capitalist system and through the interchangeability which dividuation provides, identity development makes one recognizable as a neoliberal subject. In today's world, capitalism as aided by the modern state structures our recognition of others; in today's world, capitalism is a difference making machine. In the same way that identity development theories function to differentiate students from a single student body and recategorize them into communities along social and familial lines, capitalism functions to differentiate subjects and objects of capital, and then recategorize them in its own image, the image of market value.⁴ Capitalism thus differentiates us from each other and the world, and enrolls us as subjects of capitalism.⁵ Within control and capitalism, bounded subjectivity and identity are many interchangeable things, including images of capital. Whether the source of an identity label is from within a community or from the outside is immaterial; the identity label itself still operates within neoliberalism, our current entanglement of capitalism and the state.

3. One example of this tension concludes Torres, Jones, and Renn's (2009) discussion of current and future work in the field of college student identity development: "It is impossible to predict precisely what direction identity development theory will take, but it seems likely that the productive tension between understanding the whole student and understanding what identities constitute that whole will stimulate new ways of understanding students and their development" (p. 593).

4. In the language of Deleuze and Guattari (1972/2009): "For as we have seen, capitalism indeed has as its limit the decoded flows of desiring-production, but it never stops repelling them by binding them in an axiomatic that takes the place of the codes. Capitalism is inseparable from the movement of deterritorialization, but this movement is exorcised through factitious and artificial reterritorializations. Capitalism is constructed on the ruins of the territorial and the despotic, the mythic and the tragic representations, but it reestablishes them in its own service and in another form, as images of capital" (p. 303).

5. Capitalism "does not thereby escape the world of representation. It merely performs a vast conversion of this world, by attributing to it the new form of an infinite subjective representation" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972/2009, p. 303).

Second wave theorizing: the division of identity

Second wave theorizing is best categorized as social identity theorizing, or as the fracturing of the *whole* into component *parts*. This fracturing of the student (person~human) into component parts is ushered in by rational, scientific, empirical, epistemological approaches to being, and solidified in contemporary times within societies of control. Thus, although second wave theorizing might be termed more sociological or constructivist (Jones & Stewart, 2016) in nature, it shares with the first wave an investment in bounded identity.

Early theories of the second wave in particular still evidence psychological roots of first wave theorizing. For example, early racial identity development theories, such as Cross' (1978) theory of psychological nigrescence and Helms' (1992) model of white racial identity development, center an individual's psychological adjustment to and epistemological positioning of race. Even though these theories recognize race as a social construct, they theorize students who have an interest in rationally coming to understand their racial identities, how their racial identities influence their lived experiences, and how through such understandings they might and can take responsibility for directing their actions in a racialized society and world. For White students (Helms, 1992), this means coming to know one has a race, and taking responsibility for their perpetuation of racism through systems of privilege. For Black students (Cross, 1978), this means coming to understand one's racial identity, overcoming potential internalized racism, and integrating one's racial identity as one component part of their identity. Both of these early second wave theories followed linear, teleological paths—and a fully developed person operated, moved, and cognized the world from an integrated perspective. This is the case for most social identity theories—racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual (Patton et al., 2016). Integration means that one went through the psychological processes necessary to “possess” their various identities and still operate in society—in theory getting the better of barriers and/or opportunities imposed on the individual by societal structural oppression or privilege. The end point of identity integration in the second wave does not, however, produce a single whole student. These early works of the second wave theorize the developed student both as an integrated whole individual as well as a *dividual*. The part remains within the whole, and in fact the part shifts to become the focus of the theory, a shift from the first wave's focus on the whole.

Second wave theorizing in the United States follows the peak of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, feminist movements, and the gay liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Responding to the realities that much first wave theorizing was predicated on research conducted with mostly white, affluent, and male students, second wave theorizing introduced the voices and perspectives of minoritized and underrepresented communities to the field of higher education~student affairs. The addition of these perspectives, theories, and voices was aimed at creating more inclusive and just educational environments, and it made many practitioners and researchers with majoritized identities aware of other ontological and epistemological engagements on college campuses.

Yet, there are limitations to the narrative of giving voice (Mazzei & Jackson, 2008) inherent to second wave theorizing. First, the concept of giving voice remains rooted in oppressive power structures; namely, that minoritized and underrepresented voices need permission to speak. The idea that students need such permission within our academic spaces positions students within a hierarchical power structure, where dominant perspectives remain preeminent. As Jones and Stewart (2016) aptly discuss, second wave theorizing, through its almost exclusive focus on minoritized or underrepresented identities, left largely unexamined privileged identities—be that

whiteness, heterosexuality, maleness, cisgenderness, socioeconomic affluence, religious privilege, and other privileged identities.

Second, by retaining adherence to a bounded identity—before, the disciplined and normed whole individual student, now, the normed *dividual* student—many social identity theories continue to perpetuate sameness, homogeneity, conformity, and discourses of normativity. Thus, although there is an implicit set of assumptions in theories of the *dividual* that identities such as race, gender, sexuality, and religion are socially constructed, these theories continue to perpetuate a bounded construction of these *dividual* identities. This is carried out not only through theorizing, but also in practice. Professional organizations such as ACPA and NASPA have codified such normativity and bounded *dividuality* through recent competency-based initiatives (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

As a result of these limitations, second wave theorizing inscribes a now *dividual* subjectivity onto students. For example, in discussing their book advancing reconceptualizations of the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI), Jones and Abes (2013) articulate a presumption of “the presence of multiple social identities; that is, each individual *possesses* social identities, such as race, social class, gender, and sexuality, whether or not these identities are personally meaningful” (p. xxi, emphasis added). This is a statement of *dividuality*, of a model of “different control mechanisms [which] are inseparable variations, forming a system of variable geometry” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4). The variable geometry of the original MMDI (Jones & McEwen, 2000) is visualized in its self-depiction as an atom, a collection of inseparable variations of (electron-like) identities rotating around a (nucleus-like) CORE individual self. In our view, this places the MMDI, as well as the R-MMDI as it leaves this part of the model untouched, within the tail end of second wave theorizing. Even within the articulated social constructivist perspective of many second wave theorists, the language of *dividualization* dominates the discourse.

Theoretically, the second wave retains the vestiges of control while sunsetting the influence of discipline. In more typical student development language, the second wave retains the vestiges of normed and bounded subjects while reducing the influence of the whole (presumed cis het white able-bodied male) individual. In many ways, second wave theories are an incomplete resolution of fights for visibility for marginalized peoples within the existing assemblages of the university. The second wave’s conformity to hegemonic normative (*dividual*) discourses limit its potential for movement within and across difference. Second wave theorizing became enmeshed within the university not only through cultural centers and identity disciplinary structures, but also in-and-through student affairs educators (Patton et al., 2016). The university and nation-state benefitted from this co-optation of second wave theorizing through the inscription of particular notions of identity onto students (Ahmed, 2012; Ferguson, 2012).

Chief among these interests was the perpetuation of bounded *dividualism*. As stated previously, social constructivist perspectives, while beginning conversations about the impacts of sociological, historical, institutional, and context-specific impacts on identity, still center the *dividual*. Such centering places an onus of responsibility for psychological adjustment to oppression, or recognition of privilege and its impact, on in/dividualized⁶ oppressed and privileged subjects.

6. The phrase in/dividualized student refers to the *dividual* subject of control, a subject generally narrated as an individual target of student-centered practice (Smithers, 2017a). In present-day practice, the university holds students individually responsible while engaging and recognizing them as *dividuals*. This is the work of neoliberalism when this practice intersects with capital. Colleges and universities hold students individually responsible for their actions and interests; however, institutions generally work with data points, not individual students. For example, time to degree, financial aid and Pell eligibility, and employment prospects are all data points used to control students toward ends of institutional non-accountability in service of neoliberal capitalist states.

There are significant limitations to this line of thinking. First, such an approach releases educational institutions from truly altering, disrupting, or deconstructing hegemonic systems that keep oppression and privilege in place. Secondly, institutions turn students into fungible data points; human diversity turns people into collections of consumable identities. Colleges and universities utilize the language of diversity as a non-performative commitment, and in doing so consume diversity while failing to practice diversity, leaving oppressive power structures unscathed (Ahmed, 2012).

Our argument here extends Sara Ahmed's (2012) discussion of these forces to second wave student development theorizing. Because these theories do not push outside the bounded in/dividualized student, and precisely because they center *dividual* patterns of learning or cognizing about culture and identity as mostly linear, normative processes, these theories reinscribe in/dividual subjectivity. According to George Kuh (1993), "the crystallization of these diverse aspects of personality functioning into a sense of identity is one of the most important outcomes of college" (p. 281). The notion that one would leave college with a fully formed, relatively crystallized identity is so foundational to the work of higher education~student affairs professionals that it goes almost completely unchallenged; or, as Ahmed (2012) suggests, it fades into the background. This idea of stable and static identity, which begins in first wave theorizing and extends into the social identity theories of second wave theorizing, serves the oppressive power structures of both higher education and the neoliberal nation-state by bounding difference.

Third Wave Theories: The Search for What Comes Next

Jones and Stewart (2016) place us today within the third wave of student development theory, a wave marked by the emergence of critical and poststructural theories. We agree with this naming of the break between waves, and propose a slightly different marker for the next wave: a shift in the assemblage of power~knowledge that governs it. We do not yet recognize the presence of such a shift, but believe that critical and poststructural theories carry the possibility of bringing such a shift about. At present, we know of two examples of work outside of Abes (2016) that push the boundaries of the in/dividual subject: the Q-MMDI (Kasch, Jones, and Abes, 2013), and Clark/Keefe's (2014) appeal to nomadism in student development theory. Both of these works beg the following question: how might we create the conditions of possibility for a new assemblage of power~knowledge in student development theory?

Assemblage of power~knowledge: how might we push past control?

Two sides of the same coin are in need of exploration. On one side, what is to be gained by pushing student development theory beyond control? On the other side, what is to be gained by pushing student development theory beyond the *dividual* subject? Within societies of control, we develop in/dividual identities as members of groups. The distinction here is important—identity work under control is a practice undertaken by *dividualized* bodies, not a practice undertaken by any other conception of in/dividual (for example, shifting and folding affinity groups that form and reform). Even in theories of identity development that include the social, the development of (simple or complex) *dividual* identities are at the core (Abes, 2016; Jones & Abes, 2013). Identity theories that do not critique the in/dividualized human at the core of their analysis are limited in their capacity to theorize radical and shifting forms of relationality (Jones and Stewart, 2016).

Identity development theories thus provide a partial good, and stand to benefit from more engagement and entanglement with critical and poststructural theories that queer notions of identity. In the third wave, the assemblage of power~knowledge at this point remains control, and its subject remains the *dividual*. The novelty of the third wave is its commitment to queering this assemblage. The power~knowledge structure that will come to define the third wave in the future remains an open question.

Third wave theorizing: loosening stasis, embracing movement

It is in the third wave (Jones & Stewart, 2016) of student development theorizing that issues raised within the second wave—particularly the lack of attention paid to the role of environmental context and the perpetuation of normative discourses of identity stability—begin to be challenged. We see in third wave theorizing the potential for shifting student development theory away from reinscribing in/dividual subjectivity onto college students, although we argue that present third wave theories have not dislodged theorizing from control. For example, Jones and Stewart (2016) discuss how poststructural and critical theories challenge conceptualizations of identity as static, potentially disrupting the notion of development altogether. Further, third wave theorists “prioritize attending to the ways that identity classifications (of race, sexuality, gender, disability) reproduce and normalize inequitable power relationships between dominant and marginalized groups in society” (Jones & Stewart, 2016, p. 22). In this critique there is recognition that simply acknowledging minority or underrepresented identity groups always perpetuates a hierarchy rooted in dominance; in other words, dominant groups with power are always reasserted as dominant, and such centering often perpetuates only one type of power—that which critical poststructuralists from Foucault to Braidotti call *potestas*.

In higher education~student affairs theorizing, we see poststructural and critical theory discourses being employed to challenge institutional power dynamics and begin shifting conversations away from student responsibility toward greater institutional accountability for deconstructing inequitable power structures that limit or constrain students (*potestas*). Jones and Abes (2013), along with their co-contributors Stephen John Quaye and David Kasch, take up this project by applying, conceptualizing, and theorizing how the Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (R-MMDI) might be altered when entangled with intersectionality theory, critical race theory, and queer theory—all critical, poststructural approaches. We place the R-MMDI, with its focus on (complex configurations of) bounded identities, in the second wave. We place the extensions of the R-MMDI through intersectionality, critical race theory, and queer theory in the third wave.

In a move to resuture multiple theories of identity which were fractured and split during second wave theorizing, Jones and McEwen (2000) articulated the original Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity. As discussed earlier, the MMDI utilizes the atom as visual metaphor, granting students a CORE identity as nucleus and various (*dividual*) social identities circulating one’s core. This visual image has continued through two reconceptualizations of the original model (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007; Jones & Abes, 2013). In each of these reconceptualizations we see the increasing integration of poststructural and critical theories. Perhaps the biggest shift in the reconceptualized models is the R-MMDI’s (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007) addition of a filter to the original Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity, meant to account for the shifting of power dynamics across a variety of institutional, personal, and societal contexts (including home, school, nation, and historical period). Thus, even with its increasing complexity, the original

MMDI and its core reconceptualizations continue to center the *dividual* as the subject of analysis and the subject produced through analysis.

While there are various iterations and imaginings of visual models within Jones and Abes (2013) text, we draw here on the Queered Model, developed by David Kasch, alongside Susan Jones and Elisa Abes. Of the three critical theoretical frameworks in Jones and Abes (2013), we take up the Queered Model because it makes the strongest move to disrupt the boundaries between the *dividual* identities centered in the R-MMDI. However, this model retains some central notions of first and second wave theories. As explained by the authors,

Queer development in this model revolves around the degree to which *individual students* are able to manage the *individual elements* represented within the model and thereby direct their influence on the larger heteronormative context. In other words, the *more developed* the individual student is the more that student will be able to *manage* the motion and movement of individual elements in the model—*directing* how and the degree to which each element influences other elements. (Kasch, Jones, & Abes, 2013, p. 210, emphasis added)

In this model, two particularly problematic notions continue to be perpetuated: the individual student and the notion of development. It remains the responsibility of the student to manage their environment. This comes despite the language of “intra-sectionality” (Kasch, Jones, & Abes, 2013, p. 209), which advances a Baradian (2007) understanding of matter and meaning as constantly in flux, motion, and creation. The perpetuation of notions such as a student being *more developed* leading to a greater ability to *direct* individual elements of action within environments that are statically heteronormative once again reinscribes in/dividual subjectivity onto the student. In pushing solely in/dividual human agency, even the queered Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity fails to account for a world of constantly shifting dynamic relations. Kasch, Jones, & Abes (2013) even account for part of this problematic, asking readers to forgive the visual modeling developed for the text, which transgresses queer theory’s emphasis on remaining unrepresentable, in favor of “utility” (p. 204). We agree, and read this as further evidence of the control society reasserting its dominance on the boundaries of thinking outside the *dividualized* subject.

That said, the queered Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity becomes a movement for us. We seek to ride the language of the Q-MMDI—such as *becoming*, *desire*, and *performativity*—into space(s) beyond development, stasis, control, and representation. We seek to push these notions even further, recognizing that continued focus on the in/dividualized student, or even the human as unit of measure, continues to exert upon our research agendas, psyches, and institutional structures an unnecessarily limiting cut (Barad, 2007). We can create movement and resonance in our practice by continuing to take up other ways of thinking that move us beyond representations and epistemologies. Movement is ontological, encompassing human and non-human elements, forces, and continual shifts of the cosmos. It recognizes everything in a constant state of *becoming*.

The various reconceptualized Models of Multiple Identity usher the field of higher education~student affairs toward a different mode of conceptualizing college and university environments, our work, and our ethical responsibilities. As we ride this third wave that emerges from Kasch, Jones, and Abes (2013), we seek to propose further disruptions and perturbations to the conversation by taking up Braidotti’s (2011b) figure of nomadic subjectivity. We do not do this with the aim of creating a new representative model, or assemblage of power~knowledge, for as Deleuze (1968/1994) reminds us,

It is not enough...to propose a new representation of movement; representation is already mediation. Rather, it is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation; a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind. (p. 8)

In Braidotti's work (2011a, 2011b, 2013) we find language for releasing our imaginative wondering toward new possibilities for post-control and post-identitarian *becoming*. We see the potential of nomadic subjectivity to create the conditions of possibility for a student development theory beyond societies of control, *dividual* subjects, and *development* altogether.

A Break with Bounded Identity

In order to produce new futures outside of the recognition of in/dividual identity (and the nationalism, oppression, and exorbitant wealth disparities it produces today), we seek to defamiliarize ourselves with identity and unlearn *development* as outcomes or goals of the student experience in college. We seek to think beyond the bounded self and bounded identities of the in/dividual college student. We must embrace the paradoxical demands of centering and decentering students in our work. In this new focus, what changes "is not merely the terminology or metaphorical representation of the subjects but the very structure of subjectivity, the social relations and social imaginary that support it" (Braidotti, 2011a, p. 8). Rather than substitute or multiply the configurations of identity under discussion, we shift the focus of the field itself towards *becoming* through an embrace of nomadic subjectivity: "an image of the subject in terms of a nonunitary and multi-layered vision, as a dynamic and changing entity" (Braidotti, 2011a, p. 5). This shift serves as a productive break with second wave identity theorizing: previous theorizations enact the in/dividual student as a bounded subject. Our theorization joins that of Clark/Keefe (2014) to enact the student as a "vision of the thinking and knowing subject as not-one, but rather as being split over and over again in a rainbow of yet uncoded and ever so beautiful possibilities" (Braidotti, 2011a, p. 150).

We need to unlearn student development theory as it is in order to think of what it might be. Unlearning

calls on us to shake things up, to shake it off, to philosophize with a hammer, to take a leap of faith into the abyss of non-knowledge; it calls on us to let go, to fail, to fail again, for better or worse...the question of unlearning worries your clean categorizations, takes you out of your comfort zone, beyond your limit. (Dunne, 2016, pp. 13-14)

Unlearning student development theory does not mean we (r)ect the important insights and perspectives it offers, but asks us to critically examine the cuts (Barad, 2007) and structuring proclivities (Eaton & Hendry, 2017) it places on our practice, our imagination, and envisioning of student affairs educators' ethical responsibility to college students. We propose an unlearning of student development theory in order to pursue what possibilities might exist in an escape of student development theory as it is. In "tak[ing] a hammer" to student development theory, we might invite momentary movement(s) (*potentia* as opposed to *potestas*), disrupting the neoliberal order so dominant in early twenty-first century educational environments, particularly colleges and universities. One way to think about philosophy, as Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre (2011) argues, is to see what

might be produced or made possible. In taking up Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity, we offer a different way of thinking about what higher education~student affairs educators might work with.

Nomadic Subjectivity: Movement through Boundaries

Nomadism assembles as a possibility for subject positioning through a confluence of factors indicative of present times. As part of Braidotti's larger project against methodological rigidity, essentialism, and universalism through cartographic mapping, she frames nomadic subjectivity as arising amidst the dislocations ushered in by advanced capitalist structures, proliferating technologies, and limitations of psychological theorizing on our understanding of identity: "we live in permanent processes of transition, hybridization, and nomadization. And these in-between states and stages defy the established modes of theoretical representation, precisely because they are zigzagging, not linear and process oriented, not concept driven" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 217).

One great limitation of theorizing on identity and subjectivity from psychological and post-structural perspectives is the negative indexing and constraints that are imposed on possibilities for human (and non-human) *becoming*. Nomadic subjectivity is rooted in an ethical imperative of movement—shifting our teleological narratives of control and stasis, which Braidotti labels *potestas*—toward recognizing ethical relationality in shifting ecological, cosmological, and technological spaces. Doing so releases *potentia* of the world. Releasing *potentia* imbues the world with political possibilities.

Rather than consigning ourselves to particular subject or identity positions, nomadic subjectivity affords new opportunities for opening the world to radically different political structures. Politics, often seen as a human endeavor, now unfolds to include non-human elements. Nomadic subjectivity opens a posthuman world, recognizing the relational connectivity between humans, other species, technologies, geographic spaces, chronological and aionic time, which all must be accounted for in understanding the situated perspective of engaging subjectivity. Such entanglement shifts discussions away from solely human (anthropomorphic) perspectives. Further, this disrupts notions of individual subjectivity, ushering in relational subjectivity. Thinking relationally—and not only in terms of human~human relations (social constructivism)—shifts conversations in such a way that make possible a world not focused on the controlled in/dividualized subject, but rather centering the potential of each present moments' unfolding~*becoming*.

Post-identity

The centrality of movement in nomadic subjectivity arises from Braidotti's theorizing with feminist, postcolonial, anti-racist, and technology scholars seeking to challenge dominant normative theorizing of the twentieth century. Part of what makes Braidotti's (2011a, 2011b, 2013) argument provocative for college student educators is introduction of the term post-identitarian. For Braidotti, identity is indexed to the ego-centric, rational, self-interested, and bounded individual human subject, an argument in alignment with our mapping of the in/dividualized student that has emerged as central to the work of college student educators through the three waves of student development theorizing. Braidotti ties the perpetuation of identity as our sole focus and consideration in the social sciences as entangled with many of the most pressing issues of our day. Her text *The Posthuman* (Braidotti, 2013), for example, takes up discussion of not only ongoing societal oppression related to bounded social identities such as race, class, and gender, but also how

these oppressive structures influence issues such as climate change, surveillance, policing, violence, death, genetic engineering, and technological advancement.

Braidotti (2013) is careful to articulate that while she advocates a shift toward nomadic subjectivity, we cannot completely ignore or jettison the role of bounded social identities in contemporary society. The “reconstruction of something we call ‘humanity’ must not be allowed to flatten out or dismiss all the power differentials that are still enacted and operationalized through the axes of sexualization/racialization/naturalization” (Braidotti, 2013, pp. 87-88). Sometimes we need identity, some level of stasis, in order to think about movement. Advocating for a post-identitarian politics is a critique of the limitations that identity and developmental theory places on the cosmos by creating rigidity (*potestas*). Braidotti (2011b) argues that

ideas of identity as multiple, mobile, and nomadic are by now the most accurate way to describe our historical condition. It is also the case, however, that they cause waves of collective cultural and political anxiety. In such a context I want to defend the thesis that there is much to be gained by adopting a nonunitary and multilayered vision of identity. (p. 254)

This is why Braidotti (2011b) refers to her theory of nomadic subjectivity and *becoming* as “anti-developmental” (p. 34) and argues for the “capacity to be both grounded and to flow and thus to transcend the very variables—class, race, sex, gender, age, disability—that structure us” (p. 25). Post-identitarian *becoming* is a both-and argument: we need both identity and movement.

Nomadic subjectivity (or becoming)

This multilayered vision of escaping identity through flows and movement is nomadic subjectivity, and it most closely aligns with thinking in third wave student development theorizing aligned with queer theory (Kasch, Jones, & Abes, 2013); yet, we feel nomadic subjectivity (including as presented by Clark/Keefe, 2014) does more than the Q-MMDI (Kasch, Jones, & Abes, 2013) by rejecting and resisting the call for representational models. In pushing against the limitations of identity discourses, Braidotti calls for us to take up the language of relational subjectivity. Discussions of subjectivity are less present in higher education~student affairs, even though discussions of subjectivity have a rather robust history in the social sciences and education research (Hendry, 1998; Lather, 1994; St. Pierre, 2004). Nomadic subjects seek to differ “from [themselves] as much and as often as possible” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 33). Critical to Braidotti’s (2013) overall argument is the reduction of the in/dividual bounded subject to the limit of its elimination; this means altogether disrupting the centering of the human. If all is relational, and if the world is in constant negotiation in a radical unfolding of only momentary intelligibility (Barad, 2007), then the very concept of identity comes tumbling down. This disruption of the bounded in/dividual human subject is particularly important in pushing back or limiting in/dividual(ism), which we will discuss in further detail below, and ultimately is crucial in the discourse of higher education~student affairs which continues to inscribe such subjectivity onto students.

What Braidotti ultimately calls for in embracing post-identitarian *becoming* is not representations, but figurations. Figurations are “ways of expressing different situated subject positions” that “defy established modes of theoretical representation” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 14). Such thinking upends many of our approaches to higher education~student affairs precisely because in

emphasizing process over product, nonlinearity over linearity, and radical entanglement in a shifting and contingent world⁷ over individual elements with measurable characteristics, we are forced to give up control, prediction, and outcomes. However, it is precisely this provocation that makes Braidotti's notion of nomadic subjectivity appealing as it challenges the controlling, norming, and in/dividual(izing) order(s) and assemblage(s) of modern college and university environments.

Figurations are based on cartographies of one's subject position(s)—locating oneself geographically and within time (both present, and time from a nonlinear perspective—accounting for the simultaneity of past~present~future); and as means of providing “alternative...representation for these locations in terms of power as restrictive (*potestas*) but also empowering or affirmative (*potentia*)” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 216). How might we use the notion of figuration in higher education~student affairs? To begin, while figurations certainly assume an “individual” must account for their positioning in terms of identity, power, and geographic location, the notion of figuration does not actually stop or center on the “individual” subject. Rather, one must simultaneously look outside oneself—through historical memory and narrative, for example—to create notions of *conceptual personae* (Braidotti, 2011b)—which we would argue is akin to notions of performativity advanced in queer theory. In so doing, the “individual” is decentered as the “subject” of analysis. Thus, the notion of an in/dividual student becomes an impossibility—to think, to measure, and to control.

Second, figurations take up notions of both *potestas* and *potentia* simultaneously. Thus, emphasis is on relationality and the continual unfolding of space~time; or, to put it differently, figurations are a process ontology, rather than a product epistemology. Much of first, second, and third wave student development theorizing centers “production” of a knowing, cognizing, and measurable person or student—this is the in/dividual mapped through the waves earlier in this paper. Nomadism, with its emphasis on movement and relationality, emphasizes the ongoing alterity of the world's unfolding. Thus, the world is only momentarily intelligible, to utilize Baradian (2007) language. As a result, we cannot “develop” an in/dividualized student, because in so doing we place restrictions on what may unfold. Nomadism challenges us to give up the quest for such control, which also imbibes the present with radical political potential. Further, it beckons college student educators to remember their own *becoming*, to be present, and to be comfortable with what we call in-betweenness or the *intermezzo* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987): the space between universal, essentialist notions of self (*potestas*), and potential(s) for ongoing difference (*potentia* and *performativity*).

We argue that embracing nomadic subjectivity means higher education~student affairs educators must take up challenging discussions about that which has receded into the background of our practice(s). Certainly this means discussions of the concepts of student, development, and identity, as we have already argued. However, it also means challenging commonplace notions of the twenty-first century academy, such as learning, outcomes, method, functional areas, competencies, academic disciplines, career readiness, teacher, student, and perhaps most importantly—a centering of the human as the focus or sole entity of knowing. The three waves of student development theorizing have so solidified these concepts into our collective consciousness that to question their ethicality is akin to heresy. Yet, we recognize such movement is necessary if we are to imagine (and possibly survive) the dehumanizing and destructive breaks these concepts have inscribed onto the world, breaks that are now visible in the language of advanced neoliberal capitalism.

7. Entanglement in the language of Karen Barad (2007).

Advanced capitalism

Braidotti opens her book *Nomadic Theory* by insisting that our current era, which she refers to as advanced capitalism, has succeeded in commodifying everything—including the human. This commodification includes “the marketing of pluralistic differences and the commodification of the existence, the culture, the discourses of ‘others,’ for the purposes of consumerism” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 25). Such consumptive activity is at least partially predicated and indexed on notions of stability and identity. For example, for one to consume another’s cultural identity, there must be static notions of culture that can be marketed, packaged, and assessed in value. These consumptive activities work on all human subjects, and allow those in particular identity categories to consume the cultural goods and products of the “other.” Simultaneously, those who may identify with a particular cultural identity background also become consumers of their own culture. Identity becomes packaged as dividuated and thus as a consumable—not only something one cognizes internally, or which is imposed from outside the bounded body through structuring of society, place, history, and time—but also that which one actively consumes—for example, through music, art, literature, cinema, clothing, and other material commodification processes. This commodification breeds conformity and sameness. This remains true within our context of contemporary American higher education. Advanced capitalism and neoliberalism impose commodification and consumption on all aspects of university life (Saunders & Blanco Ramirez, 2017).

Technology

Technology is also central to Braidotti’s conception of nomadic subjectivity. Taking up Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980/1987) concept of *becoming-machine*, Braidotti (2013) advances two lines of flight: centering human relationality to technology as having shifted to a new cyborg reality⁸, and discussing possibilities of nomadic subjectivity across technologies. Each of these lines of flight is rooted in radical relationality as well as Braidotti’s insistence that processes of nomadic subjectification rely on cartographically recognizing the ethical relationship between human and more-than-human entities.

For both humans and machines in a technological age, this means unleashing the potential for new subject positions that arise when we tap into energy fields and forces that alter and disrupt the space~time~memory matrix that has guided thinking since at least the time of Descartes (1637/1996). Cartesian thinking split subjectivity from a lived process of situated positionalities to a split of mind, body, and experience; the age of Enlightenment solidified reason, linearity, and logocentric representationalism in the social imaginary.

For starters, most humans often do not recognize the impacts of technologies on the body itself. Increasingly, technologies infiltrate our genetic structures and biological bodies, shifting and opening new ways for our bodies to operate. Braidotti traces these shifts beyond the mere confines of technological appendages to the body, such as prosthetics, pushing down even to the molecular level. Electronic pulses and force fields, not visually or sensorily captured by most humans, can and do alter our bodily functioning and the limits of what our bodies can do.

Braidotti also advances the notion that agency exists beyond the human, including in the machine. Although humans often believe we create machines that we control, Braidotti (2013) argues that machines and technologies move and shift, creating their own emergent nomadic sub-

8. In alignment with other feminist theorists such as Donna Haraway (1985/2016).

jectivity. This line of thinking is particularly relevant—not because it anthropomorphizes technologies—but rather by opening processes of nomadic subjectivity beyond the ego-indexed human, we move through an age of the posthuman. Machinic *becoming* recognizes that machines and technologies also engage in relationship with humans, with other machines, and more-than-human forces, and that these relationships alter the functioning and *becoming* of the machine. Thus, much like we must and should cartographically map human relations and processes of subjectification (Biesta, 2014), the same might be considered when taking up discussions of machines and technologies.

Digital technologies, in particular, have offered new modes of accessing a nomadic subjectivity. Social media, for instance, has ushered in new potential for one to shift space~time continuums by “dislocat[ing] the relationship between the local and the global and thus complicat[ing] the idea of multilocality” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 256). How does one cartographically position oneself in cybernetic space(s)? In digital space(s), one becomes disembodied, traveling through fiber-optic cables, internet and computer servers, and across various technological devices (computers, phones, tablets). Relationality and subjectivity are not controlled by human agency across distributed digital ecologies; rather, our subjectivity is a constantly unfolding relationality beyond our immediate control as human users. Subjectivity is reliant on digital networks, technological infrastructures, electric grids, material objects, human and non-human agencies all entangling and unfolding in space~time continuums where we may not be physically present.

This is one space where our students live and it is one emerging arena where we are greatly challenged in holding on to outmoded notions of identity that have long undergirded the work of higher education~student affairs. In distributed social media ecologies, we do not retain our individuality, our body, or even our consciousness. We become nomadic—even if we choose not to be physically nomadic. This means that digital technologies such as social media and digital networks afford us one possible avenue of movement—a means by which we can envision and enact radical new notions of nomadic subjectivity. This reality has been anxiety producing for many practitioners and educators in higher education (Mangan, 2016; Roll, 2017). There has been continued attempts to stifle movement toward nomadic subjectivity by reasserting a control mentality within digital spaces, in particular. For example, much of the recent discourse and research around the role of digital technologies and the self has focused on how college student educators might teach, assist, or “develop” students and professionals’ habits, practices, self-representations and individualized “brands” (Ahlquist, 2016; Brown, 2016; Linder, in press; Qualman, 2011). While such discussions are important, they continue to assert the individual as the unit of analysis, reimpose normative constructs into digital spaces, often fail to account for the rapid shifting of technological spaces, and often lack accountability for the agency of technologies in creating particular subject and identity positions.

While digital technologies certainly present a radical new possibility for movement and nomadic subjectivity, the nexus of technology and advanced capitalism also exponentially enhances the danger of in/dividual subjectivity reassembling, reasserting, and reterritorializing the human subject. The language of “branding;” the objectification of the human subject into a pack-ageable commodity serving market principles of production, efficiency, and cost-saving; even the language of digital identity or digitized development (Brown, 2016) all seek to (re)impose control logics of capitalist markets. These logics are predicated on perpetuating sameness, and as Braidotti (2011b) reminds us: “it is important to resist the uncritical reproduction of Sameness” (p. 244).

Movement: Dislodging In/dividual Subjectivity

What we see in Braidotti's (2011b) theoretical conceptualizations of nomadic subjectivity, *becoming*, and figurations are possibilities to extend the third wave of student development theorizing discussed earlier. This extension of the third wave, importantly, also disrupts the inscription of the in/dividual, neoliberal subject in college environments. This will require a radical rethinking of our responsibilities as college student educators.

To begin, nomadic subjectivity disrupts the language(s) and representational logics of developmental discourses. As a result, there is a shift away from focus on the bounded in/dividual subject as the center of the educational (college or university) process. If our aim is not to (re)produce the bounded subject, what becomes the objective of education? We argue that the process-oriented nature of nomadic subjectivity emphasizes a more ethico-onto-epistemological (Barad, 2007) approach to education. Under nomadism, education becomes less concerned with an outcomes oriented approach, in/dividual student achievement, rigid measurement, or development. Rather, education becomes more focused on relational entanglements—both with other human *becomings* in the assemblage of an academic environment, as well as with non-human others (such as animals, plants, material objects, technological instrumentation, and forces unseen). College becomes less about producing a disciplined and controlled in/dividual subject in service to the nation-state and capital enterprises, and more about releasing movement. Again, we do not seek a replacement of in/dividualism with nomadism, or in other words of the first and second wave with the third wave; we seek a rebalancing.

Embracing nomadic subjectivity and *becoming* also disrupts the troubling legacies of rational choice and personal interest. Braidotti (2011b) clearly articulates the problematics associated with our continued adherence to Cartesian rationality—for example, by emphasizing our failure to pay sufficient attention to the body, the senses, or other vibrant forces beyond rational detection. For Braidotti, these are spirituality and death, or in the realm of postsecondary~higher education, this would include liberal education and learning (Smithers, 2017b). In the college or university environment, challenging the hegemonic power of rationality (re)opens spaces for new inquiries in living.

Nomadic subjectivity and *becoming* challenges us to think outside the bounded body, particularly in terms of choices we make that may advance personal interests to the detriment of our entanglement with other bodies and matter. For us, this notion of moving beyond self ushers in space for students to experience the world from more communal and integrated perspectives. Further, it challenges the very notion of individual human agency. The focus of nomadism shifts from the student and rational choices to processual relationships across contexts that momentarily shift our emergence. This is not at all a focus on our individual emergence, but rather the emergence of assemblages of possibility through constantly shifting, moving, and unfolding intra-actions (Barad, 2007).

Thus, nomadic subjectivity gives us the tools to radically rethink politics, or relationality. The project of shifting toward nomadic subjectivity is overtly political, and in the vein of Braidotti (2011b) we seek to move beyond the negatively indexed politics of identity rooted in simply providing space for one to conform, or to survive oppressive power structures, or to emerge as a consumable product in service to advanced capitalist modes of production. This is why Braidotti (2011b) emphasizes *potential*—the harnessing of ethical relations toward ends of *becoming* as different from oneself as often as possible. Such rethinking of politics in terms of *potential*, the

creative force of power which is often underemphasized in much poststructural thinking, “engender[s] possible futures” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 96). Nomadic *becoming* centers such potential, and can best be described as both a hopeful and spiritual act. Braidotti (2011b) herself discusses this spiritual component by expressing how nomadic subjectivity

encourages us not to think in terms of within/without established categories, but rather as encounters with anomalous and unfamiliar forces, drives, yearnings, or sensations. A sort of spiritual and sensorial stretching of the boundaries of what one’s body can do. (p. 96)

Nomadic subjectivity ushers in hopeful actions, carried out through small everyday micropractices, often unrecognizable in terms of agency, and completely unpredictable, unmeasurable, or unrepresentable.

Nomadic subjectivity asks us to embrace movement. Avoid stasis. Give up control. Become open to the radical possibilities and *potentia* of the world. It asks us to make the bold attempt of unlearning our controlling proclivities in higher education~student affairs. It is, in short, a different way of thinking about our responsibility to educational environments by being open to the radical possibility that every place, thing, and intra-action is an educational environment. In asserting subjectivity as an always contingent unfolding, nomadic subjectivity asks us to move outside the boundaries of in/dividualized identity politics and toward an assertion of radical relationality. This hopeful, spiritual vision is one approach that might unleash the creative potential of a world—and of colleges and universities—currently mired in the restrictive power structures of control, of the neoliberal nation state, and of advanced capitalism.

The Intermezzo

Our combined years of working in higher education~student affairs; the rapid technological shifts ushered in during the early years of our career; our movement among post-qualitative non-traditional methodologists and critical theorists (Hames-Garcia, 2011; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Koro-Ljungberg, 2016; Nicolazzo, 2017) and philosophers across space~time continuums; our cutting across multiple academic disciplines; familiarity with the challenges currently facing college student affairs educators; observations of the continual tilting of colleges and universities toward an embrace of the neoliberal agenda (Giroux, 2014). These and so many other forces have ushered and pulled us toward recognizing our own intermezzo: the middle; the space between.

We see this paper as an assemblage, an arrangement of the perturbations that guide us in our thinking about a higher education~student affairs profession that appears to us as riding a wave toward a future under control. A profession that appears increasingly committed to advancing and (re)producing the in/dividualized human subject in support of advanced neoliberal capitalism, and in support of the neoliberal state. A profession that in many ways appear(s) to be doing so for its own supposed survival, and in so doing, undermines criticality and the potential for radically different futures rooted in relationality, rather than in/dividualism.

We are untroubled—for we do not believe in predictability. However, we recognize that “established mental habits, images, and terminology railroad us back toward established ways of thinking about ourselves” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 263). In this assemblage, we provide evidence of the perpetuation of this cycle in higher education~student affairs theory, research, and practice

through our mapping of how the three waves of student development theorizing have created and continue to perpetuate notions of the in/dividual.

En route to releasing the *potentia* of the world, we begin critical interrogations of how our language, theory, and approaches to research reify neoliberalism through creating students as in/dividually knowable and fractured into consumable parts. We mapped the associated assemblages of power~knowledge, doubled biopower and control, in relation to the three waves of college student development theory, making the claim that college student affairs educators and our foundational theories are implicated in the (re)production of neoliberalism and its related dividualum of identity, development, theory, and method. Finally, we recognized that the third wave of this theorizing offers us cracks in dominant thinking. These cracks do not go far enough, as even the current efforts of the field perpetuate the language and structuring of in/dividual subjectivity, representational logics, and method as means of achieving such ends. We offered nomadic subjectivity as one philosophical argument that may extend the cracks of third-wave theorizing. We offered movement as a means of rebalancing the assemblage of postsecondary~higher education.

Our questions remain—in this middle space we always inhabit—can we think~theorize~philosophize our way out of the stranglehold of advanced capitalism, method, bounded in/dividual subjectivity in college and university environments? Our practice? Our students' very subjectivities? There is no answer here, only musing. In Braidotti, we feel the possibility for a more process-oriented, hopeful, and challenging ethico-onto-epistemological set of engagements with a world we recognize as increasingly fractured, constraining, and restrictive. What becomes possible when college student affairs educators embrace nomadic subjectivity and *becoming* in our work? Will we release the potential of our collective futures? In this final question, we recognize that the many waves of student development theorizing continue to provide important insights, including the ever-shifting and disrupting third wave. We offer this extended discussion of nomadic subjectivity as a provocation, knowing it to be a position we as a field can never reach, nonetheless remaining passionately committed to its continual movement.

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