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RE-CONFIGURING AND DETERRITORIALIZING SUBJECT OBJECT RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

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For many years in the 20th Century, Western thinking in education has been defined against the background of Cartesian dualisms, both with respect to philosophy and methodology. And it was this Cartesian thinking, the separation of the discursive and material, and the elevation of the philosophy of the subject, the human I, that gave birth to the postmodern era, and in recent years, to the notions that we tend to call new materialisms and post-humanisms. And it was modernity and its ruins, that gave birth to the re-writing of the human self, and of subject↔object relations. As cultural critic Greenberg (1973) argues: "the essence of Modernism lies in the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. Immanuel Kant used logic to establish the limits of logic, and while he withdrew much from its old jurisdiction, logic was left all the more secure in what there remained to it" (p. 66).

Subject↔object relations are a contested area of thought. Many thinkers seek to explore what has become – and what has remained - of the human, in the new materialist, post-human era. The rule and governance of the philosophy of the "I", of the subject, takes different philosophical forms in response to different historical and cultural contexts. The humanistic philosophical tradition, which has permeated much of the educational discourse, plays out in temporal, physical, pedagogical and philosophical places and spaces. It is seen as predominantly occupied with the process of character formation, in relation to the speaking, doing and interacting 'subject'. The notion of the self as a 'subject', as the source and generator of subjective experiences, consciousness and feelings, thus becomes a central concern in the modern Continental tradition in debates over human autonomy. Drawing on various forms of German idealism from Kant and Hegel, and responding to Hume's radical scepticism, the self becomes seen as a bundle of perceptions, where a consciousness of objects then implied some awareness of self, as a subject, separate from the perceived object. Subjects are considered in relation to other subjects, for example, in the 'master/slave' dialectic, or the negation of others, in a 'struggle for recognition', implying self-consciousness (Findlay, 1977; Hegel, 1952/1977). Later philosophical and psychoanalytical treatments of the subject, as in crisis, for instance by Kristeva (2000), allude to a blurring of the boundaries of human subjectivity, conceptualising it as in constant, unknowable construction and unconscious strangeness, within the self.

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This line of thinking tends to elevate the conceptual and methodological shifts beyond the modern Continental tradition. Its aim is to elevate the forces that complicate human experiences, and the simplistic if not dangerous Cartesian world, that lead to a perceived clear distinction of subject↔object boundaries. These boundaries are both political, and formed in terms of the order and ontology of educational research. Against its will, the focus on the human "I" in educational research also provokes and strengthens alternative thinking around subjects and objects, so these practices lead to re-cultivating and re-developing time-tested practices and principles in education. This alternative view challenges conceptual frameworks and ethics through the ability to re-think subject↔object relations. It challenges gloomy, dangerous, expansionist worlds of traditionalism and homogeneity, and a machinic repetition and treatment of education in the global and local public/policy discourses, and in the academe.

Subject↔object narratives work with the elevation of idiosyncrasies, entanglements, breaking down binaries, complicating knowledges, and re-thinking the vibrant action of things, materialities, and vitalities on and within each other. In education, these narratives respond to the theories and provocations of for instance Barad (2003), Latour (2004), Bennett (2010) and many others. These responses re-think subject↔object relations, and their humanist and posthumanist tensions, in discursive and material positionings, and through temporal and experiential timings. Such thinking cuts across disciplines and boundaries, and appeals to multiple perceptions of place and space, as it elevates and interrogates the complicated inter-actions required to account for the multiplicities arising in such narratives. These narratives call us to respond to them, to anticipate shifts, which involve philosophy as a method, exploring what 'post-human subjectivity' might look or feel like, as a perception, or a performance, within the contemporary anthropocentric time.

1 PERFORMANCES OF SUBJECT ↔ OBJECT RELATIONS

Performances of subject↔object positionings arise from the 'hard problem' of capturing multiple complex realities, while the monotony of sameness and everydayness is central to the 'hard problem' of modernity. The emerging empiric humanly shaped objects of this monotony, and the discursive striving for the adventure of diverse shapes, colours and stories, represent the tensions that arise in the performance of these subject↔object relations. These relations need new methodological thinking in education, including thinking with philosophy. They puncture the ability to cement all events, to tame all affects, and to centralise and discipline subject↔object performances in the field, which has a vast, yet also limited, scope of vision and abilities to utilise these performances.

Performances of subject↔object relations are linked to particular methodologies and philosophies, in which the language of sameness shapes and moulds them from every corner, through every fashion, challenging the nature of every interaction and positioning. These

positionings may shape the identity of our field or even our civilization, but they cannot be conceived through merely a landscape of similar subjects or objects or their relations. In the ruins of modernity the idea of constant progress, with its inherent expansionism, and the rapid evolution of science that comes both directly and indirectly with it, the field of education that so many scholars and thinkers call 'home', has been challenged and populated with thoughts that support a construct of a single civilization in a particular time and space. This civilization has become essentially technological, with clear distinctions of subject and object boundaries and performances. This premise leads to the need for methodologies and philosophies to understand, to respect and, finally, to enjoy the performances of complex and shifting subject↔object relations.

This technological civilisation that grounds subject↔object relations is enmeshed in real, hard narratives of algorithms and networks that can take up billions of tiny threads, or capillaries of information. These units transmit information in intra-human, inter-human, and intra-species ways, at lightning speed, but also convey integrated models of social, political and economic performances. They are conduits for legal norms, as well as for billions of dollars appearing and disappearing, discursively and empirically, around the world while often remaining invisible even to those who deal directly with them. In current times, still driven by the remains of modernity, our, what we might call global civilization of humans, gives human and non-human entities, and subject↔object relations not only the capacity for worldwide communication, but also, in an idealistic sense, a coordinated means of defending themselves against many common dangers. It could also, in an unprecedented way, open us up to hitherto unexplored horizons in our knowledge of our ontologies of ourselves and the world we live in. And yet, there is something not quite right about the contemporary subject↔object relations.

A source of the dangers that shape subject↔object relations arises in spite of this global civilization, and often directly as a result of it. Partly, it is because the methodology and philosophy of our educational enquiry has a very clear, human centric name. This has been the case for centuries of philosophical ponderings and related methodologies. 'Naming' is at the heart of many disciplines and at the very core of human existence, ruling everything that we can determine – all objects and subjects, all human and non-human entities. Many of the concerns that we as humans face today, as far as we can understand and articulate them, have their origin in the very idea that our global civilization, though in evidence everywhere, is no more than a thin veneer covering the sum total of human awareness. This limits its scope. Naming methodologies and philosophies not only enables this limitation, but permeates all levels of our inquiry.

Philosophy as a method is an ethical relationship with thought in subject↔object relations. As an underlying approach it carries theories and thoughts into these contested practices, questions each and every ontology, and up-roots established epistemologies. Philosophy as a method remains a methodological engagement that has the potential to not be

named, to cover a vast territory of thought. Philosophy as a method has diverse ontological commitments, that are not necessarily linear or compatible with each other. Perhaps, the concern is, how can not naming a methodology and philosophy deterritorialize educational spaces? Through the histories of global civilisations, named methodologies and philosophies have become an entrapment that have desensitized, if not paralysed thinkers, researchers and humans in subject↔object relations. As Moses (2002) points out, "policy, methods, and practice in education presuppose philosophy and theory, though they often remain hidden" (p. 17). Ruitenberg (2009) argues that methodologies and philosophies, or philosophy as a method, can refer to "the various ways and modes in which philosophers of education think, read, write, speak and listen, that make their work systematic, purposeful and responsive to past and present philosophical and educational concerns and conversations" (p. 316). In this thinking, philosophy as a method allows the complex performances of subject↔object relations, and enables working within philosophy of education to analyse, interpret, and portray educational concerns.

2 CONTESTING SUBJECT ↔ OBJECT RELATIONS

Philosophy as a method, ranging from Plato to Aristotle, and more in modern philosophy, contests these subject↔object relations. At the heart of these ethical relations with thought, are questions about how theories and philosophies enter practice, about how methodologies gain their traction, and how 'thinking,' 'doing' philosophy as a method links with educational space and place, then and now? If philosophy as a method were to remain unnamed, there would be multiplicities and non-singular conceptualisations and performances of this method. Not to name a methodology or philosophy is not necessarily a sign of ignorance, but rather an ability to think the unthinkable, to play with temporalities and space, allowing space for continuous thinking and doing philosophy. This is the thinking that deconstructs modernity and challenges subject↔object relations.

Human-centric thinking and philosophy, with its methodologies, has accepted this idea with dizzying alacrity, without the necessary grounding for changing our being and doing in any substantial way. Human subjects have many names for methodologies and philosophies, and have gradually named and shaped subject↔object relations, their being and becoming, and relations with the world. Ultimately, this impacts on both preferred, and not so preferred, models of enquiry, and thus the values and ethics that human subjects can accept, recognize and respect in subject↔object relations. In essence, it is a toxic view, not unlike a singular epidermis (regardless of how diverse, plural or technicoloured it may be perceived as). Often these philosophies and methodologies miss the very basis of the world of other than human and non-human entities. At the heart of de-centering human practices there are thus tensions, as an inherent element of subject↔object relations.

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Elevating subject↔object relations enables thinkers to understand diverse methodological and philosophical traditions. Many of these philosophies and methodologies struggle against the remains of the toxic ruins of modernity. Often, however, they carry on their struggle using means that were provided to them by the very methodologies and philosophies that they oppose. They employ the rejected ways of thinking – most of all the naming of philosophies and methodologies – and include all the dreadful, irrelevant commodities of those philosophies and methodologies. They become part of the global networks they oppose. They unite under a banner of 'justify and name'. In contrast with these technological inventions, other products of this civilization, as methodologies that thinkers are so quick to name, tame and reject, are still not accepted in many places in the world because they are deemed to be hostile to local traditions. How many 'post' and 'new' turns does it take, we might ask, to persuade local tribes, that using a proper name for a methodology is a useful, important and 'correct' pathway to take?

3 NARRATIVES OF SUBJECT ↔ OBJECT RELATIONS

In this special issue we present a number of intriguing subject↔object narratives from various perspectives and authors. Hargraves positions the argument and frames her questioning of subject↔object relations through a Deleuzian lens. As she argues, her paper traces "how an immanent materialism affects understandings of doing research, what it means to fail to distinguish researcher from research or method or findings, and to abandon attempts to fully extract the research data from its ongoing relations with all matter". How might something new emerge through these relations, and what might it look like in an educational space? It is through engaging and working with entanglement, as she argues, and doing entanglements as methodology in education, that allows us to access the 'unlimited potential' of methodological thinking. Hargraves' work is an excellent opening examination of subject and object and their relations.

Coutrim utilizes thinking about subjects and objects to interrogate practices around foreign language learning. In her writing, agency or power is seen through the lens of new empiricism and contests the division of "the social studies in dual categories like subject/object, mind/body, theory/practice, real/virtual". Utilizing Barad's methodological positioning, her work is an intriguing contribution to elevating subject↔object relations utilizing new empiricism as a framework for the virtual foreign language acquisition process. On the other hand, Backes and Ratto approach subject↔object relations through the lens of relationships of the subject – the educator – with objects through digital technologies. Theirs is a fantastic narrative of encounter, of virtual digital acquaintanceship between subjects, and subjects and objects. Their study presents an empirical study of a virtual space to think about subject- object relations in a way that provokes and shifts educational space and experience.

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Lameu's paper aims to disrupt traditional understandings of the classroom environment. The theoretical framing of vital materialism is a refreshing view on subject↔object relations in the classroom, and the performance of the "composition, decomposition and re-composition of the assemblage". Rohr's work utilises Karl Jaspers' philosophy of periechontology, and works with the concept of liminality and the limits of subject↔object relations. This paper focuses on Being, and how final knowing is impossible. As the concluding paper in this collection it makes sure "to elucidate the pedagogical thinking, underpinned by Jaspers' Periechontology, which is characterized by openness, tolerance and existential realization". This openness and interrogation of subject↔object relations is what connects this special issue, foregrounding creativity and aesthetics as equally critical as rigorous philosophical and methodological thinking.

4 CAPACITIES AND POTENTIALITY OF SUBJECT↔OBJECT RELATIONS

Subject↔object relations that the Euro-American white, male-centric world has equipped parts of the globe with could very well cripple the human capacity to engage with other than human and non-human entities. Their instruments and methodologies, and proper names, could effectively destroy the important values, stories and secrets, which, among other things, made possible the invention of precisely these instruments and methodologies (Jones & Hoskins, 2016). Methodologies and philosophies with no name pose a clear challenge not only to deterministic desires for knowing in a human-centric world, but to subject↔object relations. This is a challenge that human subjects need to interrogate, as perhaps the importance of naming philosophies and methodologies might lie not in undermining the individuality of different spheres of methodologies and philosophies, but in allowing methodologies and philosophies without a definitive name to be more complete in themselves. Such subject↔object relations will be conceivable if humans accept a basic code of mutual co-existence with other than human philosophies and methodologies, a kind of shared common minimum onto-episto-ethical grounding code. Yet such a code will not stand a chance, and will not make any sense, if it is merely the product of a few who then proceed to force it, advertise it, push it, name it and preach it on the rest. If it is merely disseminated through the capillaries and the epidermis of the skin - as a commodity offered by some to others - such a code can hardly be expected to take hold in any profound way for anyone, let alone to meaningfully interrogate subject↔object relations.

Perhaps human subjects have no capacity to fulfil such an undertaking, and perhaps this is merely a hopelessly utopian goal for subject↔object relations? We suspect, however, that a sense of such relations lies dormant in the deepest roots of most human and non-human subjects. We suspect also, that the need for a new code for subject↔object relations is firmly anchored in the diversity of traditions and performances of subject↔object relations. These relations can challenge the millions of marvellous, wonderful and 'useful' achievements of

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our educational field that on the surface appear to enrich human subjects, yet, can equally impoverish, diminish, and destroy these subjects and their fragile relations and their wider ecologies. Human subjects could collapse under an attack or attempt by methodologies and philosophies to crack the code of complex subject↔object relations, and instead of interrogating these relations and living with their complexities, become enslaved by the methodologies and philosophies. Instead of developing identities in cognisance of fragile subject↔object relations, they would be shattered and diminished. Subject↔object relations must divest human subjects of their egotistical anthropocentrism, of their deep methodological and philosophical habitual conceptions of themselves as the rulers of philosophy, methodology and life itself. Perhaps this special issue can make a step in this direction.

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