learning as 'worlding': decentring gert biesta's 'non-egological' education

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abstract

Philosopher of Education, Gert Biesta, presented at the 18th ICPIC conference in Madrid and published his paper in this same Special Issue. In this paper, I put these in the context of current transdisciplinary conversations in academia about posthuman subjectivity. By paying close attention to the self/world relationality implied in what Biesta proposes (a shift from 'I' *before* the world, to 'I' *called into* the world), I show how critical posthumanism produces a more radical ontological shift ('I' *as part of* the world), with implications for the subjectivity assumed in philosophy with children (P4C), and education more generally. Through Karen Barad's feminist reading of Quantum Theory, I expose the political (western) nature of the 'I' as transcendental signifier and by including nonhuman bodies, the 'non-egological' education Biesta proposes is decentred. I conclude that learning does not take place *in* a subject (which Biesta is also concerned about), nor *in between* two or more *human* subjects and the world, but that it is a process of material-discursive world-making: a 'worlding' (Haraway, 2016). I illustrate my proposal for a worlding way of working in P4C through an example of the concept 'pet'.

keywords: biesta; posthuman education; quantum physics; feminism.

aprendizado como "mundização": decentralizando a educação "não-egológica" de gert biesta

resumo

O filósofo da educação Gert Biesta apresentou uma conferência no 18th ICPIC em Madri e publicou seu artigo neste Dossier. Neste artigo, os coloco no contexto das atuais conversações transdisciplinares da academia sobre subjetividade pós-humana. Prestando a devida atenção à relação entre o si mesmo e o mundo implicada na proposta de Biesta (uma mudança do "eu" antes do mundo para o "eu" chamado para o mundo), mostro como o pós-humanismo crítico produz uma mudança ontológica mais radical ("eu" como parte do mundo), com implicações para a subjetividade assumida em *filosofia para crianças* (P4C), e na educação de maneira mais geral. Através da leitura feminista da teoria quântica de Karen Barad exponho a natureza política (ocidental) do "eu" como significador transcendental e através da inclusão de corpos não-humanos, a educação 'não-egológica' proposta por Biesta é descentrada. Concluo que o aprendizado não ocorre no sujeito (com o qual Biesta está também preocupado), nem entre dois ou mais sujeitos humanos e o mundo, mas que é um processo de construção de mundo material-discursivo: uma "mundização" ('worlding', Haraway, 2016). Ilustro minha proposta por uma maneira 'worlding' de trabalhar em *filosofia para crianças* através do exemplo do conceito de 'animal de estimação'.

palavras-chave: biesta; educação pós-humana; física quântica; feminismo.

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aprendizaje como "mundización": descentralizando la educación "no egológica" de gert biesta

resumen

El filósofo de la educación Gert Biesta presentó una conferencia en el 18ᵛᵒ IPIC en Madrid y publicó un artículo en este Dossier. En el presente artículo lo ubico en el contexto de las actuales discusiones transdisciplinarias de la academia sobre subjetividad post humana. Prestando la debida atención a la relación implícita en la propuesta de Biesta entre el sí mismo y el mundo (un cambio del "yo" antes del mundo para el "yo" llamado para el mundo), muestro como el post humanismo crítico produce un cambio ontológico más radical ("yo" como parte del mundo), con implicancias para la subjetividad asumida en *filosofía para niños* (PC4) y en la educación en general. A través de la lectura feminista de la teoría quántica de Karen Barad expongo la naturaleza política (occidental) del "yo" como significante trascendental y a través de la inclusión de cuerpos no humanos, la educación "no egológica" propuesta por Biesta es descentrada. Concluyo que el aprendizaje no ocurre en el sujeto (con lo cual Biesta también está preocupado) ni entre dos o más sujetos humanos y el mundo, sino que es un proceso de construcción del mundo discursivo-material: una "mundanización" (*worlding*, Haraway, 2016). Ilustro mi postura como una manera *worlding* de trabajar en filosofía con niños por medio del ejemplo del concepto de "mascota".

palabras clave: biesta; educación post-humana; física cuántica; feminismo.

learning as 'worlding': decentring gert biesta's 'non-egological' education

'non-egological' education

In his conference address, Gert Biesta starts by celebrating the role Philosophy for Children (P4C) could play in the current age of measurement and instrumentalism "for asking questions, for asking better questions and for asking questions better" (BIESTA, 2017, p.1). Quite rightly, Biesta points out that (an analytical-logical approach to) P4C is at risk of putting questioning at the service of a *skills* approach to the teaching of thinking and thereby of losing its *philosophical* dimension, even when critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking are delicately balanced in what many P4C advocates would call *complex* thinking. But thinking remains, he argues "'in the head,' so to speak" and does not "really reach their heart or touch their soul" and he wonders "whether there may be limits to thinking and limits to what thinking may achieve" (BIESTA, 2017, p. 2). He then continues by making a distinction between "our *thoughts about* the world" and "the world *itself*" and gives examples of gardening and animals. Their reality or existence, he claims, "cannot be touched by our thinking", but they ask something from us, they call for attention, care. In this paragraph, there are the beginnings of what the rest of the paper makes explicit, that is, two very different subject positions. The first – the currently dominant paradigm – positions the subject *before* the world, both spatially and temporally, so the natural and social world is an *object* of learning. The subject is the "origin of signification" – the 'I' who asks the questions (BIESTA, 2017, p.7), the self in whom learning takes place. This subject position fits with Biesta's own experiences of P4C – they are examples of "learn*ing*" or "learn*er*"-centred education. Instead, he invites his readers to consider another paradigm, the subject as *called into* the world. This *world-centred* or *non-egological* (Biesta's neologism) education, is

> the subject position of being taught, of encountering (a) teaching, that is, an address that comes to us from the outside (and *radically from the outside*, so I wish to add, not as something constructed by us). The address, the other who speaks to me and in doing so 'singles me out', as it is said in English, puts my subject-ness at stake…The address, in other

words, calls the subject *into the world*…where our subject-ness is being called from *the outside.* (BIESTA, 2017, p.8; my emphasis)

As Biesta explains, the world is not a backdrop, or context, but the reality that offers resistance to the subject, and therefore by the very same token, the subject can become real. Thus, he makes a major shift from a subject who asks the questions (in e.g. P4C) to "the subject who is being put in question and through this is being called into the world" (BIESTA, 2017, p.12). Although the subject is not a thing, but a way of existing, and exercising freedom, this subject-ness is still a *human* existence. The learner is decentred in an non-egological education, but the human is still in the centre. According to Biesta, a school should be a place where a human can come into existence as a subject, which is not instrumental, so neither an outcome, nor a thing to be produced, nor an essence or identity, but an existential *event*. In such encounters, he says, it is the task of the teacher to arouse this desire in *another human being* to become a subject through a world-centred approach to education: existing in and with the world. But what does this mean exactly? How does Biesta conceptualise the relationship between humans, and between humans and the world, or as he would probably prefer to put it, how is it *experienced*? After all, his critique of P4C is that it does not make connections with children's experiences, but remains at the level of verbal, conceptual enquiries and argumentation - the discursive level. It is not my aim to offer a defence of this particular approach to P4C, but neither do I subscribe to Biesta's proposal of a world-centred approach to education (and by the same token P4C). As I will show later, it is possible to practice P4C *and* work with concepts experientially, by moving beyond, but at the same time, not excluding the discursive. P4C is a living organism and as a pedagogy its theories and practices are always threaded through with practitioners' embedded and embodied past, present and future experiences, their passions, hopes and desires, and the complex entanglements of psychological, sociological and philosophical theories they are enacting. Such a situated approach to what P4C 'is' resists generalisations or easy classifications. In a sense, I celebrate Biesta's decentring of the learner in education, but he does not

go 'far enough'[2]. His proposal for a non-egological education does not pay attention to the western political bias of the 'I' that is called into the world and the anthropocentrism involved. I propose a more radical shift of subjectivity to an intra-relational ontological that not only decentres the learner, but also the (western) human.

robot vacuum cleaners and man

Educators are trained to regard schools as places of learning for *human* development and achievement. The advantage of Biesta's articulation of subjectivity is that it shifts the typical teacher-centred versus learner-centred polemic debate towards a different direction. Biesta foregrounds relationality. However, educational relationality is still theorised as *someone* educating something to *somebody else*, and that they learn it for a reason (BIESTA, 2017, p.4). Now, what difference would it make to move the focus away from the *human* individual (either teacher or learner) and put relationality 'between' human and nonhuman at the centre of pedagogy? What difference would it make epistemologically, politically and ethically? Does it shift the 'who' of knowledge production and would the knowledge produced be different? And what would the role of the P4C practitioner be in this kind of education? In order to answer these questions, I turn to the philosophy of critical posthumanism and open up new possibilities of doing P4C.

Fields as diverse as, for example, environmental humanities, the performative arts, cultural theory, education, organisational studies, critical geography, architecture, anthropology, political theory, literary and literacy studies, childhood studies and also philosophy for children (MURRIS, 2016), are now questioning human-centred conceptualisations of the subject and see it as the main reason for all present struggles with respect to race, gender, class and the environmental problems in the controversially termed geological period of the

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[2] I am not suggesting that I *develop* Biesta's proposal, as this would already imply linear progression which assumes space and time as containers, but the point is to show how his non-egological is still human-centred, despite his claims about a world-centred education.

anthropocene in which we now live. The 'human' is clearly a political category - White, male, heterosexual, able-bodied (BRAIDOTTI, 2013), although interestingly, age is not really included (yet). Sylvia Wynter's powerful writing makes the receptive reader feel and think differently about the 'I' that has made modernity and colonialism possible. She writes that the western bourgeois "conception of the human, Man, which over-represents itself as if it were the human itself, and that of securing the well-being, and therefore the full cognitive and behavioral autonomy of the human species itself/ourselves" (WYNTER, 2003, p.260). The western 'I' - Man - as universal, essentialising signifier has created identity through difference, that is, the human/subhuman dichotomy. Western metaphysics, reinforced by religious humanist mythology, has spawned an ontology and epistemology that move on binary logic, power relations of inequality and 'otherising' notions of identity. Reinforced by Cartesian dualisms and underpinning capitalism, its onto-epistemology has become so naturalised as 'common sense' and engrained in everyday language (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1987/2014) globally that it is not easy to identify the 'I' as the root cause of structural exploitation, dehumanisation (of womxn, sexualised, racialised and naturalised 'others') and asymmetrical violence (SNAZA & WEAVER, 2015). Moreover, critical posthumanism not only raises awareness of the western Man/human dichotomy, but also queers (an undoing of identity) how we see the more-than-human; not as inert, passive things *in* space and time. Such a shift requires an un/learning of agency "outside the acting, human body" (ROTAS, 2015, p.94). This unsettling of agency as not something subjects 'have' invites us to reconfigure who and what the 'I' is, as well as its relationship to 'the' world. Take, for example, Biesta's analogy of the robot vacuum cleaner with learner-centred education (BIESTA, 2017, pp. 5-6). He says, that if charged with a battery, it can move around and intelligently adapt to its environment when it bumps into things. If the environment is changed, it can perform even better. Similarly, in learner-centred education, it is assumed that teachers can change children's thinking and actions by modifying their learning environments, and that teaching "'old' knowledge" is no longer required. But, Biesta claims, vacuum cleaners

cannot ask themselves "the question whether the environment they find themselves is worth adapting to", so although intelligent adaptive systems might be "aimed at survival", they are "not capable of a meaningful *life*". First, this already assumes an anthropocentric notion of existential worth, as if these concepts (life versus survival) are politically neutral and not already *apriori* assume the identities created through difference by Man: human/subhuman/nonhuman. Secondly, for Biesta, robot vacuum cleaners do not have agency without a battery. But this already assumes a particular notion of agency – agency that is attributed to an individual thing in space and time and in the case of matter, in need of something else to give it agency (i.e., a battery). This second point is key to understanding why the more-than-human (e.g. robot vacuum cleaners) is more than an object in the (natural and social) world that resists human actions. Pausing here, and what might seem like a detour, is important for a deeper understanding about the third subject position proposed below (and with it the articulation of a different kind of P4C). The philosophical shift from Biesta's ''I' *called into* the world' to ''I' *as part of* the world' is materialised through a feminist reading of quantum theory.

quantum theory, agential realism and distributed agency

Queer theorist and quantum physicist Karen Barad (2007, p. 155) argues that from a quantum physicist point of view (so not using the *human* eye as a paradigm for knowing), there is an "inherent ambiguity of bodily boundaries", so it is impossible to say that this or that has, or does not have, agency. The boundary between the robot vacuum cleaner and its environment becomes determinate only through particular practices. For example, when holding the robot loosely it would appear to the sense of (our human experience of) touch, to be an object. However, when held firmly, we would lose the sensation that it is a foreign body. An obvious objection might be to say that this is just a matter of how humans *experience* the world subjectively, and not how things *are* in the world? In her seminal work *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007), Barad (p. 155-156) counters this possible objection. It is worthy of quoting at length:

> At first glance, the outside boundary of a body may seem evident, indeed incontrovertible. A coffee mug ends at its outside surface just as surely as people end at their skins. On the face of it, reliance on visual clues seems to constitute a solid empirical approach, but are faces and solids really what they seem?...physics tells us that edges or boundaries are not determinate either ontologically or visually. When it comes to the "interface" between a coffee mug and a hand, it is not that there are x number of atoms that belong to a hand and y number of atoms that belong to the coffee mug. Furthermore, as we have seen, there are actually no sharp edges visually either: it is a well-recognized fact of physical optics that if one looks closely at an "edge", what one sees is not a sharp boundary between light and dark but rather a series of light and dark bands – that is, a diffraction pattern.

For Barad the production of bodily boundaries is not a matter of someone's individual, subjective experiences, or about how we *know* the world, but the way the world is put together *ontologically*. Barad is not just making the point that it is an empirical fact that there are 'clear boundaries' only for the human eye (therefore subjective), and that this *not* the case from a physical optics point of view. Matter, she claims, is an "active participant in the world's becoming" (BARAD, 2007, p.136). With 'matter', Barad (2014) does not mean inert, passive substances that need something else (e.g. a battery) to bring them alive or to have agency. She ruptures the animate/inanimate binary altogether. The distinction between the two is learned, and not given. Matter is not a thing, 'in' time and space, but it materialises and unfolds in different temporalities.

Quantum physics provides "multiple and robust" 'empirical' evidence that atoms (in, for example, a robot vacuum cleaner) are not as "simple" as they were once thought to be (BARAD, 2007, p.353). They are *real* in the sense that they are bits of matter that can be 'seen', picked up, one at a time, and moved (BARAD, 2007, p.354). They can be further divided into subatomic particles such as, for example, quarks and electrons, but importantly they do not take up determinate positions *'in' space and time* (BARAD, 2007, p.354). Nature (or world) is not simply 'there' or 'given', but the *entangled* nature of nature means that things only become distinguishable as determinately bounded through their *intra-action* (BARAD, 2007, p.328). They cannot be *located*, as their being extends ontologically across different spaces and times (BARAD, 2007, p.383). It is the queerness of quantum phenomena that unsettles the distinctions we routinely make between being,

knowing and doing in education. Barad (2007, pp.392-293) argues that the "very nature of materiality is an entanglement" and not only at micro-level as the dichotomy between micro and macro is human-made. A robot vacuum cleaner is always already entangled with the humans using it, capitalist industries, the floor and the carpet, discourses about health, safety, quality of life etc, etc. The vacuum cleaner is *part of the natural and social world*, in that, the distinction between the natural and social is disrupted. Both the thing and the human using it have been decentred as the focus is no longer on individual human and nonhuman bodies, but their relational entanglement, which is ontologically prior. So what are the implications for agency, and therefore for teaching and learning? And how could it help to think differently about P4C? And how does it differ from Biesta's proposal of an 'I' that is "*called into* the world"?

The interconnectedness of all human and nonhuman bodies (her neologism of 'intra-action') implies that there are no individual agents and no singular causes (BARAD, 2007, p.394). The posthuman notion of 'mutual performativity' and 'distributed agency' (BENNETT, 2010) changes how we think about causality, and also shifts what we mean by learning in education. *All* actions of human and nonhuman bodies *matter* epistemologically, ontologically and ethically *and* at the very same time. Barad's *agential realism* disrupts not only ontologies and epistemologies, but also an ethics that takes human exceptionalism as its starting point. Barad (2012, p. 81) explains that "responsibility is not an obligation that the subject chooses, but rather an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness. Responsibility is not a calculation to be performed" (BARAD, 2012, p.81). So what *does* it mean then to take responsibility for one's actions as educator?

Taking responsibility is not about choosing "the right response, but rather a matter of inviting, welcoming, and… "*providing opportunities for the organism to respond*" (BARAD, 2012, p. 81). Therefore, posthuman ontology implies an *intra-relational* ethics – an ethics that is implied, not *applied* (CEDER 2016) and requires a different relationality 'between' educator and learner.

from ''i' *called into* the world' to ''i' *as part of* the world'

Although Barad would probably be more sympathetic towards Biesta's proposal of a subjectivity of an ''I' *called into* the world', than an ''I' *before* the world', she maintains that meaning and matter are always ontologically entangled, therefore an 'I' is always *part of* the world. It can never be at a distance of the world, as is clearly the case when Biesta makes a distinction, I repeat, between "our *thoughts about* the world" and "the world *itself*" (in his examples of gardening and animals), that their reality or existence "cannot be touched by our thinking" and that the world comes to us (humans) "radically from the *outside*". But our thinking is part of the world, like our bodies. The inner/outer (or soul/body) and nature/social binary assumed here, shows an anthropocentric epistemology - the idea that meaning making is a *social* process and does not involve nonhuman agency (which is different from Biesta's claim that the world resists). Barad (2007, p. 152) writes: "Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically prior or epistemologically prior…matter and meaning are mutually articulated". Teaching, therefore, means "transcorporeal engagements, involving other faculties than the mind…[making] matter intelligible in new ways" (LENZ TAGUCHI, 2012, p. 267). We have seen how for a posthumanist (and many other knowledge systems other than western, including young children's), human and nonhuman matter always exist in entangled intra-active relations. Intra-action should not be confused with notions such as 'inter-subjectivity' or 'inter-activity' (as in learner-centred pedagogies), which assume pre-social, independently existing *human* subjects (in relation with one another). For posthumanists, the subject is not an individual with distinct boundaries, but is "spread out", like "a flow of energies, constituted in a total inter-dependence with other humans and the matter and physical intensities and forces around us" (PALMER, 2011, p.7). The subject comes into existence through the encounter with other material-discursive agencies (PETERSEN, 2014, p.41). It is this move from the discursive to the material-discursive that constitutes a relational posthuman ontology. Now what are the implications of this ethico-onto-epistemological shift for P4C?

learning as worlding in p4c

There are many different ways of relating to the world, of which 'human' ways only constitute a small subset. Moreover, there are other semiotic systems than human language, which also helps to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries such as between the arts, the natural and the social sciences. If the subject is part of the world and not separate from it, the challenge is to find other, more tacit ways of experiencing the world that also account for more-than-human experiences. What is salient here is the idea that there are no absolute insides or outsides and that the teacher and the learner participate in re/configuring the world. Barad (2007, p. 91) explains that learning is not about "about making facts but about making worlds, or rather, it is about making specific worldly configurations - not in the sense of making them up *ex nihilo*, or out of language, beliefs, or ideas, but in the sense of materially engaging as part of the world in giving it specific material form". It involves playful experimentation by paying attention to how human and nonhuman bodies affect one's own being as part of the world. Living without bodily boundaries opens up spaces for imaginative, speculative, philosophical enquiries that rupture, unsettle, animate, reverberate, enliven and reimagine. The agency of both teacher and learner are characterised in terms of intensity, potentiality and flow and doing justice to the in/determinate agency of the material world in learning. So, what would this look like in a P4C session? How does it work? I will illustrate this with a much shorter version of an example published elsewhere (MURRIS, 2017).

Imagine a philosophical enquiry during which the children are voting for the question 'Can animals have pets?' – a question a 5-year-old once asked in a P4C session. Recall Biesta's critique of P4C in terms of its focus on analytical concept analysis "in the head" and does not "really reach their heart or touch their soul". But maybe the question he then asks "whether there may be limits to thinking and limits to what thinking may achieve" is the wrong one to ask as it already presupposes that thinking is *in* the person and not transindividual? For

Deleuze[3], concepts are a 'toolbox', not bricks to build a wall with, but a 'pragmatics' that does not reduce the meaning of a concept by an *apriori*-determined set of propositions that you can either enter into or not – for example, by answering a question by tracing the meaning of a concept back to its 'roots', or through fixed definitions – in this case, definitions of 'animal' and 'pet'. David Kennedy (2012) argues that the community of enquiry in its communal problematisation of the meaning of concepts offers unique possibilities for *rhizomatic* curriculum development. It puts P4C in a transdisciplinary position to "meet the universe halfway" (BARAD, 2007). For example, by examining the concept 'pet' through different disciplinary lenses: biological, anthropological (treatment of pets in various cultures), historical (mapping its domestication), ethico-aesthetic (docking tails), political (what goes into dog food, puppy farms), legal (animal rights), media studies[4] or literary (pets as characters in literature). The community of enquiry can deterritorialise concepts from "their imprisonment within ideologically locked-down networks of concepts" (KENNEDY, 2012, p.2) and reterritorialise them transdisciplinarily *through our experiences*. (And it includes children as players in this political project.) So how can concepts be explored experientially, not just discursively "in the head" (although the oral and written work *also* matters) and "really reach their heart or touch their soul" through a form of thinking that is transindividual?

In order to answer the question 'Can animals have pets?', a good thinking move would be to investigate first what it means to have a pet. Understanding the concept 'pet' through binary, arborescent logic would mean regarding the concept as *not abstract enough*. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, Brian Massumi argues that abstraction is embodied thought, a "lived abstraction", thereby "actuality swells with possibility" (MASSUMI, 2014, pp. 7-9). Therefore, each enquirer in a P4C session would need to consult her or his own experiences of a concept. As also acknowledged in the P4C literature, participants *connect* concepts with how

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[3] As described by Massumi in his forward to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987/2014), p.xiii.

[4] For example, Laurie Andersen's film *The Heart of a Dog* (2015).

they experience them in real life. But there is an important difference. An abstract concept like 'pet' tends to be understood in P4C as an abstraction from the empirical, and the investigation's goal is to shape and reshape the definition of the concept in an analytical and discursive manner. It is assumed that the concept 'pet' stands for something – re-presents – something in the world that takes up a particular spacetime position. It is a universal, or at least, intersubjectively agreed description of an object or a class of objects that can be adjusted in the light of new ideas or further evidence as the enquiry continues. When disrupting the subject/world dichotomy, a concept does not describe things, but *express events* (DELEUZE & GUATTARI, 1994). For Deleuze and Guattari (1994) there is a crucial distinction between bodies and events: between a pet that licks your face and the licking as an event. Events are immaterial and unpresentable. They have a different temporality and spatiality as they are always 'in-between' bodies. The event of having your face licked by a pet dog can be located by describing the bodies involved (my self and that of my dog), but this is not strictly a description of the event itself, but rather of the bodies transformed by the event. A focus on events rather than on bodies (that are in a particular spatial and temporal position and denoted through language and fixed by definitions) makes it possible to concentrate in enquiries on *movement*. Movement is a form of thinking in the act that is always in-between bodies and not located in a subject that signifies. The 'in-between' does not mean a relationship between bodies that exist *prior* to the intra-action. Thus, a concept like 'pet' expresses a *relationship*, rather than a *position* in spacetime of this or that body.

So in the case of understanding what a pet 'is' in a philosophical enquiry, I need to consult *events* in lived experience, because through my *actions*, I 'comment' on what I am doing as I am doing it, that is, I treat my dog *as a pet* not a wild animal – the difference is in the *performance*. What a pet means cannot be 'captured' through definition, because it is the embodied performance of acts that constitutes the difference between a pet animal and other animals. Importantly, a definition would not do justice to the relationality of *the concept itself*. So in the very same move as the doing, an abstraction is performed on its action: a lick from

my dog, looking in her eyes, walking her, the cuddles, making a space in our home for her, being part of our family, giving her a name and so on – the elements of the entanglements are in/determinate. And they touch my heart and my soul. In other words, 'pet' as a concept is too complex to capture through binary logic. It needs to be explored in P4C through a 'pragmatics', that is, directly embodied in action, creatively and imaginatively. This in turn will be a step towards exploring the question of whether *animals* can have pets, which of course raises other questions that investigate what may, or may not, have already been assumed to be true in the question 'Can animals have pets?', such as, 'Are animals nonhumans?', or 'Can humans be pets?'.

Concept creation in a posthuman P4C session moves away from prioritising reading and writing, emphasises oral language and iterative intra-actions with material-discursive bodies, such as the material environment, texts, drawing, music, emotions, questions, ideas, each other, the teacher, smells, sounds and even silences (MURRIS, 2016). The practice includes questioning contestable, but significant concepts as events, and 'responsive' and 'response-able' listening, which involves listening out for the new and unfamiliar, enabling a reconstruction of adult/child relations in education, that is, a disruption of practices of power (KENNEDY, 2006, p. 9). This kind of listening is not with a particular part of the body, for example, the organ 'ear', but manifests itself in the relationship through *action* and making the learning visible through pedagogical documentation (MURRIS, 2017), mind maps, recording questions on paper – a material-discursive world-making process that is sedimented in the world – a 'worlding' (Haraway, 2016). As humans, we are *of* the world, not *in* the world. This material-discursive ontological shift in subjectivity challenges educators to reimagine education as a more-than-human endeavour that dissolves the teacher/learner binary and instead proposes learning as a process of world-making (worlding). Without absolute 'insides' or 'outsides', teacher and learners participate in the always ongoing re/configuring of the world. Barad (2007, p.91) explains that learning is not about "about making facts but about making worlds, or rather, it is about making specific worldly configurations - not in the sense of making them up *ex*

nihilo, or out of language, beliefs, or ideas, but in the sense of materially engaging as part of the world in giving it specific material form". It involves playful experimentation by paying attention to how human and nonhuman bodies affect one's own being as part of the world. Living without bodily boundaries opens up spaces for imaginative, speculative, philosophical enquiries that rupture, unsettle, animate, reverberate, enliven and reimagine. The agency of both teacher and learner are characterised in terms of intensity, potentiality and flow, and doing justice to the in/determinate agency of the material world in learning.

re-turning to the beginning

In his conference address, Gert Biesta points out that an analytical-logical approach to P4C is at risk of losing its philosophical dimension, because it puts questioning at the service of a skills approach to the teaching of thinking – thinking that takes place in "in the head" and does not reach "heart" or "soul". He claims that this currently dominant paradigm in education (also in P4C) positions the subject *before* the world. In the subject, learning takes place; a subject who asks the questions and gives meaning to a world 'out there', using the One language that interprets, represents, and defines what a concept *is*[5]. His critique of P4C (as he knows it, he admits) is that it does not make connections with children's experiences, but remains at the level of verbal, conceptual enquiries and argumentation - the discursive level. In all fairness though, there are many different P4C practices as the theme of the conference – the Wittgensteinian notion of 'family resemblances' – expresses. Still, Biesta's main argument is that the subjectivity presupposed in P4C, assumes that the world is a mere backdrop or context. In contrast, P4C that also claims to be philosophical should be a place where a human can come into existence as a subject, which is not instrumental, so neither an outcome, nor a thing to be produced, nor an essence or identity, but an existential *event*. In Biesta's non-egological education, questions do not come from inside the learner, and the task of the P4C teacher should be to arouse the desire in

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[5] To define, MacLure (2013, p.661) points out, is "to return to the logic of representation, where words 'refer' to entities as if they were separate and distinct from one another."

a learner to become a subject through a world-centred approach to education: existing in and with the world. I have shown through critical engagement with Biesta's robot vacuum cleaner example, that his proposal for a non-egological education is perhaps not learner-centred, but still *human*-centred, and also has a western geo-political bias. Without cancelling out the role of the discursive, nor the role humans play in teaching and learning, I have argued for a relational ontology in P4C using Karen Barad's feminist reading of quantum theory and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of language. Through an example of an analysis of the concept 'pet' that expresses an event, I have shown how it is possible to practice P4C *and* work with concepts experientially, transdisciplinary and rhizomatically, by moving beyond, but at the same time, not excluding the discursive. I propose a more radical shift of subjectivity to an intra-relational ontology that not only decentres the learner, but also the (western) human.

My example has illustrated how the question 'what does a concept mean?' is not crucial but 'how does it work?' in lived, embodied and transindividual experience. Seeing learning as worlding, positions children as *part of the world* they share with other human and more-than-human others in in/finite, in/determinate temporal and spacial entanglements. The educator's role as teacher and assessor of learning is to trace the entanglements of which she herself is always already part of, in her effort to offer 'new' 'beginnings' that are in the middle (and not). A more radical decentring is required in education: not only of Man (fixing the meaning of concepts), but also of Man differentiating himself from the nonhuman and subhuman.

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