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Intra-Generational Education: imagining a post-age pedagogy

Abstract

This article discusses the idea of intra-generational education. Drawing on Braidotti's nomadic subject and Barad's conception of agency we consider what intra-generational education might look like ontologically, in the light of critical posthumanism, in terms of natureculture world, nomadism and a vibrant indeterminacy of knowing subjects. In order to explore the idea of intra-generationalism and its pedagogical implications we introduce four concepts: homelessness, agelessness, playfulness and wakefulness. These may appear improbable in the context of education policy making today, but they are born of theorising our practices in the age-transgressive field of Philosophy with Children. We argue that these concepts help to re-configure intra-generational relations, ways of being and becoming. They express the longing, corporeality and visionary epistemology of nomadic enquiry. These inventions express a non-hierarchical philosophy of immanence. We draw some tentative conclusions about educational practices more generally.

Keywords: intra-generationalism, picturebooks, posthumanism, post-age pedagogy; Philosophy for Children.

Introduction

Why post-age pedagogy? This is a fanciful experiment in thinking and imagination, not yet a policy proposal, nor a full account of particular practices. It started because we wanted to see what would happen if we put into question something that always seems to be taken for granted in the arrangement of education. Measuring performance and development alongside age, and planning provision very precisely and accordingly, is a strongly established and widely accepted approach. This is supported by very powerful and persuasive arguments: the importance of reaching certain milestones at certain times of life, of not falling behind, of age-appropriate and sequential content and teaching, of making the right progress, in the right type of age-adapted environment. Across the entire lifespan, linearity and ageism give rise to stereotypical and prejudicial ideas about age-related needs, interests and achievements, and lead to over-segregated provision, and increasingly to competition for resources to be

allocated to particular generational causes. Our exploration of the idea of intra-generational education grows out of a strong sense that this ever growing age based categorisation is misguided, unnecessary, limiting and counterproductive. Not only might people of particular ages benefit in specific ways if the boundaries of age-related expectation were loosened, we might also find education enriched and more effectively resourced, in all kinds of unexpected ways.

In what ways are we qualified to carry out this experiment? The idea of post-age pedagogy emerges from our combined years of innovation and experimentation with Philosophy with Children, an age-transgressive practice. Philosophy with Children calls into question many assumptions about age: it engages children (including very young ones) in kinds of thinking that have traditionally been reserved for adults and it proposes that adults who want to philosophise could benefit by becoming more childlike in their thinking. Our writing grows out of our work with children and young people and alongside teachers in many settings, as well as our collaborative theorising and philosophising. Our cumulative engagement with these ideas and practices creates a permissive site of visioning and experimentation. Contemporary picturebooks are also central to this enquiry and have brought these ideas and experiences into being. We argue that contemporary picturebooks are post-age, philosophical texts. They can constitute a kind of curriculum for intra-generational education, albeit not in a traditional sense. This experimentation draws on posthumanist ideas and builds on our earlier work on pedagogy, childhood, picturebooks, and philosophical listening.

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This paper continues to develop these themes and what~~What~~ we now offer ~~in this article~~ is an exploration of four concepts that ~~have~~ e/merged from our ~~the~~ theorising of ways in which picturebooks work as philosophical texts~~.~~, ~~W~~and ~~we~~ show how the~~se~~ four concepts~~y~~ develop as we work ~~when working~~ with Karen Barad's agential realism and Rosi Braidotti's nomadic ~~theory of~~ subjectivity. Informed by her analysis of poststructuralism and feminism, Braidotti (1994, p.25) proposes that 'nomadic consciousness is akin to what Foucault called counter-memory: a form of resisting assimilation or homogolisation into dominant ways of representing the self'. She suggests that the cultivation of such a nomadic consciousness implies rethinking 'the unity of the subject, without reference to humanistic beliefs, without dualistic oppositions' (Braidotti, 1994, p. 31). The subjectivity implicit in most educational theories and practices is the white, grown up and autonomous, male, able-bodied,

heterosexual subject of humanism (Braidotti, 2013). It is the grown-up who is positioned in charge of meaning and knowledge and authorised to set the rules of criticality. It is this view of subjectivity we resist throughout this article, and invite readers to do likewise, developing a pedagogy of emergent and transitional intra-subjectivity. We hope that the choice of picturebooks and playing with concepts approach might breathe life into these seemingly elusive ideas.

We are theorising against the backdrop of ideas and events currently at the forefront of politics – those of human impact on planet earth and questions regarding the responsibilities of each generation for the future of humanity; the ways in which material and discursive features of this politics are (re)-configuring intra-generational relations. It is not the concern of this article to elaborate on the 'grand scale' of this politics but to respond to a time in which new questions are being posed regarding age and different possibilities for intra-generational education seem to be emerging. This space is fragile, and exists within the history and currency of profoundly ageist ideas and practices.

Four concepts

The four concepts explored here grew out of our consideration of the character of our many different experiences of working with picturebooks in Philosophy with Children. We wanted to understand what it is that seems to call out and fly out from particular picturebooks: to figure out how these material and discursive texts work when we philosophise with children and teachers. We wanted to try and articulate the being-knowing-relations that emerge in these encounters. We began to connect and assemble memories, disquiet, hopes, desires, movements, postures, expressions, emotions and thoughts – as we did so the four concepts suggested themselves as ways of simultaneously evoking and mapping this material. We find them to be usefully open and suggestive. Assembling Gathering these four concepts together is what Brian Massumi in his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987/2014, pp. xiii-iv) would call a "toolbox", leaving "after images of its dynamism", provoking new thoughts, emotions, sensations and perceptions.

We have selected The four concepts we explore here arise from theorising of picturebooks as philosophical texts (Authors, date). Ppicturebooks to express theare the provocations for the four concepts that shape our philosophical investigations. of this article, and Tthe ideas proposed go well beyond, for example, working with picturebooks in the early years of childhood. Contemporary- picturebook artists have long since breached the confinement of

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picturebooks to a particular age group and the genre has become increasingly sophisticated and taken more seriously. ~~The complexity involved in 'reading' certain contemporary picturebooks opens up a space for philosophical questions about pedagogy and invites speculations about the 'who' and the 'what' (the ontology) of the implied and actual readers of these works.~~ The ethical and political implications of the ontology in the fold of picturebook and reader are radical, often misunderstood (Authors, date) and sometimes misrepresented (see e.g. Arizpe, 2012). The selection of picturebooks as philosophical texts is not incidental (Authors, date), but intricately related to our pedagogy and the child implied in it. ~~In this article w~~We put four concepts into play: 'homelessness,' 'agelessness,'~~;~~ 'playfulness' and ~~:~~ 'wakefulness,' ~~and 'homelessness'~~ as a~~ a~~ means to configure and imagine intra-generational relations and post age~~human~~ pedagogies. With Barad (interview with Juelskjaer and Schwennesen, 2012, p.11) we regard these four concepts as part of the apparatus of our~~this~~ research, not 'found' or 'discovered', but 'data hotspots', that is, 'pieces of data 'experienced…as intensities of body as well as mind – a kind of glow…[which] would continue to develop' (MacLure, 2013, p. 173).

We use picturebooks to communicate and invite the reader into this project through affect and the aesthetic. Affect, as Brian Massumi (2015~~, p.ix~~, p.ix) explains is more than emotion, but the body's response to other bodies, transindividual and relational through which power operates often unconsciously as 'felt intensities of life' '~~…proto-typical. It concerns the first stirrings of the political, flush with the felt intensities of life'~~. These concepts are 'transversal', that is, they cut across the ~~usual power producing~~ binaries of the objective and the subjective – they 'stir the mind' as well as 'strike the body' (Massumi (2015, p.x). They constrain, as well as express desire and freedom. These four concepts characterise a particular onto-epistemology[i], as well as a particular situated and relational ethics. Furthermore, these concepts we have chosen (or have chosen us) express a posthumanist subjectivity, which we clarify and explore through each of the conceptual investigations. ~~Our first provocation is agelessness – an invitation to 'post' age educational thinking and practice.~~

HOMELESSNESS

The nomadic subject does not have one singular stable identity and is not firmly located geographically, historically, ethnically, or 'fixed' by a particular class structure. Crucially, for education this means that in a sense 'adult has become child…a being who is incomplete, always on-the-way, who is never finished developing' (Kennedy, 2006b, p.10). The implication of understanding subject-as-always-in-process for educational relationships is that child becomes a 'fellow traveller' rather than being treated as a 'future-worker-consumer-citizen' (Kennedy, 2006b, p.11). The key idea here is that self is not 'subject-as-substance', but always 'subject-in-process', and always produced involving contradiction and multiplicity. (and diffractions).

What guides our exploration of the concept of homelessness is the picturebook *I am Thomas* by Libby Gleeson and Armin Greder (2011). Like the protagonist of In the Attic, Thomas is also surrounded by powerful visual representations of material objects that suggest play, travel and freedom, for example, a globe, a kite, a snorkel, a boat, an atlas, a Swiss army knife, a skate board. He introduces the reader to his agonising sense of alienation from his brother, parents, teachers, church leaders, politicians, army leaders and psychologists. Identifying himself as different from them, he resists their aggressive demands to conform. The use of colour in the book has material exerts a force in guiding the reader in meaning making throughout this disturbing work of art. The charcoal illustrations made with charcoal suggest that the people who exert pressure on him to blindly confirm extreme black/white views. The colour that was at the beginning of the book with his objects (from childhood) is also active and has agency in the production of knowledge at the end. The objects are scattered on the page and one in particular (a kite) partly transgresses the boundary of a page. The colours make themselves intelligible in the *intra-action* between the discursive and the material. It is of course unusual to think of colours having agency. The posthuman shift in thinking differently about agency is mobilised by Barad's neologism 'intra-action' at the heart of her agential realism (Barad, 2007, 2014). As opposed to the more familiar 'inter-action', intra-action does not presuppose individualised existence of subjects, nor objects. Instead, the concept expresses mutual relationality: things 'are' because they are in relation to and influencing each other. The entanglement of all human and non-human phenomena intra-acting with one another means that it is impossible to say where the boundaries *are* of each child, or the teacher, or the furniture, or the book, and so forth. They do not stand in 'a relationship of externality to each other' (Barad, 2007, p.152). Therefore, 'agency no longer belongs to the human alone who acts upon the non-human' (Larson and Phillips, 2013, p.21).

Critical posthumanism questions the humanist notion that only humans have agency (Bennett, 2010, Braidotti, 2013; Coole and Frost, 2010; Hekman, 2010; Jackson and Mazzei, 2011). Agency is an enactment (Barad, 2007, p.235). Matter is an 'active participant in the world's becoming' (Barad, 2007, p.136). Karen Barad's diffractive reading of quantum physics provides 'multiple and robust' empirical evidence that atoms 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). So like human subjects, the colour of illustrations in books can materialise different ways of thinking and doing. Furthermore, the very act of 'granting agency' should not go by unnoticed (Barad in interview with Juelskjaer and Schwennesen, 2012:17). *Who has the power to do so*? This question is particularly poignant in the context of granting agency and rights to child. For example, a 'quantum leap' in the contemporary construction of the normative global child has been the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989 (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014, p.56). It states explicitly that 'the end goal of childhood is the formation of an adult citizen competent and capable of living individually and contributing productively to a Western-style liberal democracy' (Cregan and Cuthbert, 2014, p.17). Kantian traces are clearly visible. The adult is the accepted valued norm, and child therefore as a lesser, still maturing, adult-in-the-making: childish, less competent, and less useful – the ultimate 'Other'. 'Immaturity' becomes synonymous with childhood (Jones, 2009, p.39). Barad's philosophy urges us to rethink the alignment between subjectivity and agency.

The relationality between the material and the discursive to which agency is relocated, offers creative opportunities to regard the more-than-human as playing an active part in meaning making. Returning to the analysis of the picturebook, wWAnd when Thomashe decides to continue playing with his childhood toys the colour returns and the book ends with him

boarding a bus. The particular font, including the size and, colour, is used by Greder to represent various voices including Thomas's. We are less interested in what the artwork represents and more in how it *works* – in particular, the thoughts and affect it produces in the non-representational methodology we are using. Knowledge is constructed through 'direct material engagement with the world' and not by 'standing at a distance and representing' the world (Barad, 2007, p.49). Barad points out that one must perform in order to see. She gives the example of a microscope through which one learns to see through doing (Barad, 2007, p.51). A good example of the relationality between human and more-than-human in the picturebook is when Thomas explains how the. He explains how he uses the material space in his headphones works as a shelter for him 'sometimes silent, sometimes spitting angry words across the empty spaces'.

The ending begs the question whether he can really leave this oppressive environment behind. Can he 'uproot' and dispel these penetrating voices that have left marks on his bodymind[iii]? Braidotti's conceptualisation of the nomadic subject suggests Thomas cannot. She would probably suggest that Thomas is an embodied or enfleshed subject, a 'desidero ergo sum' – a subject whose thinking is 'enlarged to encompass a number of faculties of which affectivity, desire and the imagination are prime movers' and not a Cartesian 'cogito ergo sum' (Braidotti, 2002, p.20). Resisting psychologising discourses that assume an inner/outer binary, Braidotti explains this desiring body as follows:

> I take the body as the complex interplay of highly constructed social and symbolic forces: it is not an essence, let alone a biological structure, but a play of…social and affective forces…This is a clear move away from the psychoanalytic idea of the body as a map of semiotic inscriptions and culturally enforced codes. I see it instead as a transformer and a relay point for the flow of energies: a surface of intensities… [Inhabiting different time zones the body refers to] simultaneously incorporating and transcending the very variables – class, race, sex, nationality, culture, etc. – which structure it…The body remains a bundle of contradictions: it is a zoological entity, a genetic data-bank, while it also remains a bio-social entity, that is to say a slab of codified, personalized memories. (Braidotti, 2002, p.20-21)

Braidotti (2002, p.21) reminds her readers that what is meant by 'the body' is never 'pure', natural, biological, but that the body is a complex interplay of highly constructed social, affective and material-discursivesymbolic forces. She insists that we need to think 'of the

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body as an entity that inhabits different time-zones simultaneously, and is animated by different speeds and a variety of internal and external clocks which do not necessarily coincide' (Braidotti, 2002, p.21). These relational subject positions are hybrid, multi-layered, often internally contradictory, interconnected and web-like. The voices of 'his' past will keep re-turning[iii] wherever Thomas is in the world. As Trinh puts it: 'Every gesture, every word involves our past, present, and future' (Trinh quoted in Barad, 2014, p.182). Thomas will not be able to leave the oppressive voices behind.

AGELESSNESS

The history of childhood, as a particular age related category, and how contemporary notions of age and childhood have been produced is contentious. While Aries (1965) is widely cited for his argument that childhood is a seventeenth century invention, his methods and findings have been disputed (Cunningham, 1995). Philosophical perspectives on childhood, either those that seek to give an account of human development and what a child is, or those that maintain it is a socio-cultural construct, seem to produce new and unhelpful binaries, in particular the Nature/Culture binary (AUTHOR, date). Hendrick (1992) notes the emergence of competing and co-existing conceptions of childhood and argues that children, like women and other marginalised groups, have been 'hidden' from history. What is clear is that age has provided a basis for determining how children should be regarded, on the grounds of being children, often resulting in injustice. Much of this goes unnoticed, particularly in education, as age is treated as a category not to be questioned.

The concept of agelessness has emerged through working philosophically with Colin Thompson's picturebook *How to Live Forever* (1995). We have both worked through this picturebook many times with groups of young people and with teachers. The illustrations are particularly rich and thought provoking. In this tale the protagonist is searching for the one and only text that contains the secret of immortality. Eventually he encounters the Ancient Child, who has read the text in question, and has been arrested in time: aged and ageless, but still a child; young, but having outlived all his friends and family; wise but totally alone. In a world seemingly pre-occupied with age and ageing, agelessness and immortality point towards other imaginary or experimental worlds, where age ceases to exist or to matter; where past, present and future intersect or collide.

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Responding to this text we coined the phrase 'forgetting and re-membering age' to capture the philosophical work of taking age apart and re-assembling it: the thought experimentation that we set out to do here, in the face of the highly age-stratified context of contemporary schooling. When does age matter and when does it not? What spaces can we create for breaching age categorisation? An appeal to agelessness should lead us to an examination of age and generation based policies, ageist prejudices and discriminatory or limiting education practices, across the entire lifespan. It invites a re-imagination of intra-generational learning. The idea of agelessness makes room for new possibilities that might emerge when we interrogate age-determinist thinking and seek to address questions of intra-generational justice from a posthumanist perspective (see for example Weaver and Snaza, 2014).

Forgetting and remembering age is a double-thinking move. As Barad (Juelskjaer & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 22) reminds us in an interview 'all the 're's,' as in re-membering, 'must be taken as questions, not answers, and in doing so policy makers need to confront the questions of agency and responsibility'. The ethical responsibility is for the ways in which we constitute entangled relationships 'between' generations. There are many situations in which a person's age has no bearing or consequence and other occasions where we want to honour, celebrate, mourn, or measure and record individual or generational milestones and critical moments: first steps, first words, first love, last breath; the world wars, apartheid; the sixties, the millennium, the States of Emergency[iv]. None of these entanglements are without consequence or response-ability (Barad, 2007). The affective, social and corporeal appeal of celebratory or communal occasions sometimes erases our 'age-ablist' consciousness or re-enables our bodies and actions–Author thinks of her 88 year old father, whose legs often refuse to move these days, recently twirling several young women on the dance floor at her daughter's wedding, moved by the wine, the love of his family, the dance floor, the many legs dancing. What of the sound and rhythm of music that reaches into our memories and finds us singing every word of a long forgotten song? Equally we all know of 'age defying' yet everyday actions by children: a life-saving emergency phone call; a breath-taking observation, insight or question; the responsibility of care for adults or siblings; children at work. Our surprise or noting of these examples suggests we question our assumptions about how things are, at a particular age.

To speak of 're-membering age' is to hint at a partially illusory character of age: capacity measurements and the common tendency to recall our own being of a certain age to inform our attitudes to others 'of that age'. In respect of considering childhood or youth today, how

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often do we catch ourselves beginning a statement, 'when I was your age…..?'. Equally hindsight, memories, the re-membering of our earlier selves is a continuous and life-long folding, layering, shifting and refolding of experiences – an ever more complicated enmeshing of past and present. Picturebooks, like other artefacts or personal objects, a cup, a broken toy dug up in the garden, a walking stick, often evoke such memories or provoke hindsight and our sensory-bodily-philosophical engagement with these serves to deepen such entanglement and sense of shifting, fractured, or threaded, multiple identities (Braidotti, 2002).

In ~~proposing~~ imagining ageless practice we are not arguing for ignoring age and the landmarks of the lifespan altogether, but for seriously continuing to question and problematize entrenched policies and practices that rest on rigid assumptions of age-ability. We do not yet know what this post-age world looks like. Age is not a finished category, but is often presented as a hardened marker. In the highly age-stratified contexts of schools and their curriculum and assessment practices, an approach such as Philosophy with Children challenges the very idea that what is important, or indeed possible, is to measure and quantify knowledge, and the continuing tendency to frame minds as discrete containers of knowledge. We have argued that the community of enquiry pedagogy associated with Philosophy with Children is an emergent and age-transgressive practice (Author date). By involving children in exploration of philosophical questions, it undermines rigidly developmental accounts of 'the child' that often marginalise children's experiences and influence and can cause onto-epistemic injustice (Author date). The term 'Philosophy with Children', whilst still serving to provoke thinking about the meeting between childhood and philosophy, has in many ways 'outgrown' its name –perhaps we could call it 'ageless intra-generational philosophy' – but that term hardly rolls off the tongue. Like the 'post' in 'posthumanism', 'post'-age signifies that age cannot and should not be erased or discounted in pedagogical relations. The concept 'childhood' suggests a period of time 'we', adults, have left behind, but memory is not a matter of 'the' past. 'It' recreates the past each time it is invoked (Barad in interview with Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, 2012, p.67).

The relational idea of intra-subjectivity is helpful here. David Kennedy suggests that adultism[v] is sustained by an implicit theory of subjectivity and the intersubjective relations that theory implies. He argues that the deconstruction of adultism requires a normative form of adult subjectivity that is 'aware of its own shadow' and, because of that awareness, 'is capable of moving beyond it, into the common intersubjective space of dialogue' (2006a,

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p72). Kennedy further argues that such a subject enters a 'permanently transitional form of subjectivity, based on a value of world-openness' that assumes an ontological potential for ongoing transformation, for and between adults and children (2006a, p.72). In the final section of his outstanding work on the philosophy of childhood he~~is~~ re- imagines school through a dialogical and radically individualised curriculum that focuses on transitional spaces and projects – one that rejects the habits of regularly grouping students by age or performance. Kennedy argues:

> Because the school is the space where adulthood and childhood can meet and enter dialogue, those who craft and construct schools with the normative principles of the intersubject in mind, however few and lacking in power or influence, are of the utmost significance to the future emergence of a new balance. (Kennedy, 2006a, p.186)

This 'new balance' Kennedy proposes between childhood and adulthood, is given a 'new' materialist direction through the neologism *intra*-subjectivity. As we have seen, t~~T~~he idea of 'intra' as opposed to 'inter' proposes a relational ontology that also includes the 'o~~O~~ther' routinely discriminated against because of age – a taxonomy that locates subjects according to so-called 'natural kinds' (Barad, 2014, p. 172).

PLAYFULNESS

In humans, play is most often associated with the early part of life, with being childlike. ~~More recently play has been released from this confinement and come to be more widely valued as expressing many forms of creative, diverse, inventive, free flowing, absorbing activity. In the context of this experiment we consider playfulness as a means of being and knowing that can be available regardless of age.~~ The concept of 'childlikeness' has been a focus of extensive discussion in the field of Philosophy for Children. Through consideration of qualities such as playfulness, transgression and unrepeatability, that seem to keep philosophy open and alive, rather than focusing on its rules or how it is performed, debate in the field of Philosophy for Children has opened up not only the notion of 'children as philosophers' but also 'philosophers as children' (Gregory & Granger, 2012; Author, date).

For Argentinian philosopher of education, Walter Kohan, childhood is not just a period in a human life, but also a particular relationship with and experience of time (*aion*) – as associated with play and power (as in empowerment, not power over), and in this respect

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adults can learn much from children (Kennedy, 2006b, p.11-12; Kohan, 2015). Kohan argues that each conception of childhood presupposes a particular concept of time. So, childhood conceptualised as the period of time at the start of a person's life presupposes a quantitative chronological concept of time (*chronos*). By contrast, *aion* 'designates the intensity of time in human life – a destiny, a duration, an un-numbered movement, not successive, but intensive' – a particularly forceful and intense experience of being in time: childlike (Kohan, 2015, p.57). As such, the concept 'child' shifts from noun to verb, something all of us can do: to child (Kennedy and Kohan, 2008).

Turning child from noun to verb, as in ~~The verb~~ 'to child'. helps reconfigure the concept of play to include the 'Other' of childhood, rather than as something to be left behind or rejected in order to grow up.~~.~~ Closely connected and overlapping with agelessness we aim to rescue playfulness from its banishment to the island of childhood. Like the boy in the picturebook, *In the Attic* (Oram & Kitamura, 2004) we are bored with the toys deliberately produced for children – often flimsy reproductions of the 'real' material things of the adult world. To child as a verb involves for us, not just calling into question particular binaries such as adult/child, boy/girl, ~~nature/~~culture/nature, human/non-human, white/black, but also the very notion of a binary (Barad in interview with Juelskjaer and Schwennesen, 2012, p.19). Binaries produce relations of power in that categories on one side of the binary are granted power over other categories, in a hierarchically structured understanding of the world mediated by normative judgements of what is more or less valuable according to anthropocentrical criteria of their measurement.~~Barad argues that binaries are power producing~~

In the Attic plays with many power producing binaries relevant for education: real/fantasy, ~~animalx/~~human/animal, ~~empty/~~full/empty, inside/outside, ~~small/x~~large/small, work/play~~/work~~. They structure what counts as real learning and who and what is included and excluded. The pictorial narrative starts with the main character sitting on the floor completely surrounded by old-fashioned toys. Aeroplanes, boats, cars and other objects used for human traveling are scattered on the floor. There are very few fantasy objects, but some hint at what is in store for the reader: various objects with steps, door openings and windows suggesting freedom and infinite possibilities. Positioned on the other side of the two-page spread far in the corner, but close to the reader, we can see a toy fire engine. The ~~ ~~intimation that the bus is about to drive off the page invites imaginary ~~of~~ travel of some kind, and indeed when we turn the page, the boy is disappearing into what seems an empty attic (at first) via the fire engine's ladder. Is it empty though, the boy wonders? Staring at a family of mice the

background transforms to mice doing human things with household objects, such as squeezing tooth paste onto a toothbrush and moving a fork as a weapon against a cat who is about to pounce on a cornered fellow mouse. The illustrations are cartoonesque, but the body language is far from simple. Kitamura explains how he likes 'to 'read between the lines '. It's the same with poetry — it's in that space between the lines that I find things to illustrate.' (Guardian newspaper interview)[vi]

These imaginative 'spaces between the lines' play visually with the human and animal binary; the empty thought and speech bubbles of the mice invite intra-action with readers of all ages. They exert agency – the bubbles expect to be filled with words. 'Within' the present story are infinite other stories to be told. They are pregnant with philosophical questions generated by readers of all ages – about to e/merge depending on the intra-actions between reader, writer, illustrator, memories, affect etc., philosophising together.

As opposed to the more familiar 'inter-action', *intra-action* (Barad, 2007,) does not presuppose individualised existence – not only of subjects, but also of objects 'in' the world, which emphasises mutual relationality: things 'are' because they are in relation to and influencing each other. Intra-action is different from 'interaction' in that Nature and Culture are never 'pure', are never unaffected by each other, but are always in relation. The entanglement of all human and non-human phenomena intra-acting with one another means that it is impossible to say where the boundaries *are* of each child, or the teacher, or the furniture, or the book, and so forth. They do not stand in 'a relationship of externality to each other' (Barad, 2007, p.152). Therefore, 'agency no longer belongs to the human alone who acts upon the non-human' (Larson and Phillips, 2013, p.21).

The gigantic spider the boy meets in the next page of the picturebook (they are of the same size) could suggest this equality when they spin a web together as with his meeting with a tiger whom he befriends when he wants to share the window on the world that he has found. What is fascinating is how they communicate: their language is different, but with great similarity – a relationship of exteriority within, not without. The scene is outside, in nature, the trope for both child and animal: wild, instinctual, lacking agency and in need of culture to be domesticated. Without sentimentality, there is an immediate felt awareness and experience of the '*transindividual affect* of the unfolding event' (Massumi, 2014, p.78; italics in the original). We tend to be concerned about anthropomorphism when extrapolating human characteristics on, for example, characters in picturebooks who can talk, are dressed up like

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humans, or walk when we cannot see them (Haynes, ~~xxx~~2007). Brian Massumi (2014, p.3) makes an interesting philosophical and political when he suggests that we should become aware of the 'all-too-human' of the political and to see our own anthropomorphism not only in the way we think about animals, but also about humans - another example of our 'vanity regarding our assumed species identity', based on our claimed sole possession of language, thought and creativity'. Massumi's fascinating exploration of play involves putting the human back on the animal continuum, without erasing difference between human animals and nonhuman animals, but resisting prioritising identity.

As we have seen, the homeless nomadic subject invites us to think subjectivities without the subject/object binary. Subject and object are always emergent in transindividual experiences. Understood through binary logic tThe concept play ~~understood through binary logic~~ involves the real/fantasy binary-children at play~~,~~ pretend~~,~~ or imitate~~,~~ what adults do in the real world, as, for example, in playing 'mummies and daddies'. Conceived as such, play becomes synonymous with childhood. Such a notion of play puts the activity in the service of formation, of becoming adult (see above). This logic informs currently popular learning-through-play educational discourses. Binary logic uses the real as the norm by which to judge the pretend. For example, play fighting gets meaning by virtue of combat fighting in the real world. Massumi argues for what Kohan (2015) calls a logic of experience. It is *in the action* that, for example, the concept play fighting can be differentiated from combat. Not because it denotes or represents as a sign something in the real world, but it is the manner of execution that makes it clear that it is 'only' a game. Like the boy in the picturebook, who

they keep changing', ~~-~~it is the transindividual relation with his material-discursive environment - affecting and being affected by human and more-than-human bodies - that differentiates that what he is doing is indeed play. This environment can also have been created by his own imagination. For example, ~~and~~ when his mother asks him at the end of the story where he has been all day and he tells her about the attic, she replies that they do not have an attic. In this liminal space in the void 'between' reality and fantasy – so competently inhabited by young children – the boy stands confidently on the ladder. He looks at the reader and says that she would not know, because she has not found the ladder. Again, t~~T~~his ending could be interpreted as saying that children are naturally inclined to this kind of fantasy play, something we grow out through cultural interventions. The 'wiser' adult surely knows better. But this would mean understanding play as *not abstract enough*. Abstraction is embodied thought, a 'lived abstraction', thereby 'actuality swells with possibility' (Massumi, 2014, pp

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7-9). Following Massumi (2014, p.5) we argue that in the action, the boy is 'commenting' on what he is doing as he is doing it. Going back to Massumi's play fighting example: in play, you nip, you don't bite. The difference (quantitatively and qualitatively) in the force and intention between the two cannot be 'captured' through definition, because it is the embodied performance of acts that constitutes the difference between real and pretend. 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 smile, a particular look in the eyes, the holding of his body. In other words, play is too complex to capture through binary logic. It needs to be understood through a 'pragmatics', that is, directly embodied in action, creative and imaginative.

not only on ageist, but also on modernist assumptions about intra-actions that are not relational (ontologically speaking). It is often argued that what children like to do naturally is being immersed in fantasy play where they often transgress boundaries between animate and inanimate – not being able to make that distinction is typically regarded as symptomatic of a particular stage of development. In an interview, Barad points at the resilience of the animate/inanimate dualism 'that stops animacy cold in its tracks, leaving rocks, molecules, particles, and other inorganic entities on the side of those who are denied even the ability to die, despite the fact that particles have finite lifetimes' (Juelskjaer and Schwennesen, 2012, p.21). Matter, she writes, is an active participant in the world's becoming' (Barad, 2007, p.136). We put forward the case that thisa different philosophical orientation flattens the playing field ontologically by queering these binaries that include and exclude: adult/child, human/human, animate/inanimate. We want to propose that playfulness helps to give teaching its distinctive, affirmative, forward looking, creative, humorous and subversive character. More recently A posthuman understanding of play has been releases itd from itsthis confinement to childhood and come to be more widely values playd as expressing many forms of creative, diverse, inventive, free flowing, absorbing activitiesy. In the context of this assemblage of four conceptsexperiment we suggestconsider playfulness as a means of being and knowing that can be available regardless of age.

WAKEFULNESS

We invoke this ~~idea of wakefulness~~ ~~characteristic aspect of insomnia~~ to underline ~~our~~ the appeal ~~of this article~~ for new thinking about intra-generational justice in the classroom and to challenge habits of routinely assuming the epistemic authority of the teacher and grouping students according to narrow age bands or specific academic attainments. We suggest this might be a time to be particularly alert to the impact of ageist tendencies and habits and that our between-age practice requires exceptional attentiveness.

In *The Princess and the Pea*, ~~playfully~~ humorously rendered ~~and illustrated~~ by Lauren Child and Polly Borland (2005) a prince is looking for a princess to ~~marry~~marry. One night a young princess is w~~andering~~alking in the ~~woods~~forest and stops at the ~~door of the~~ palace that is home to the bride seeking prince. She is invited in for ~~to stay over~~the night. The Queen tries to ~~establish~~ascertain her ~~authentic~~ true 'princessness' by p~~lacing~~lanting a tiny green pea beneath a pile of mattresses. Should the~~If the~~ visitor be~~is kept awake~~ unable to sleep because she is so sensitive to ~~the feel of~~ the pea, it will ~~show~~demonstrate that she is a true princess.

Thi~~s~~e ~~playfulness of this~~ particular text production, based on photographs of three dimensional tableaux lovingly assembled, gently awakens readers to the power and politic of fairy tales whilst remaining faithful to the memory of the familiar narrative and leaving us to dream of romantic love if we wish, but on more equal terms.

In our work with teachers for example, it has been a very apt and powerful analogy in the context of talking about P~~p~~hilosophy with C~~c~~hildren. The idea of a proper princess with particular qualities alludes to the idea of 'proper' philosophy that critics of Philosophy for Children have suggested is something only 'proper' academic philosophers can do (for example Fox, 2001; Kitchener 1990). The humour of this analogy seems to communicate the politics of this serious debate very effectively.

As part of this critical experimentation with post age pedagogy ~~W~~we propose a counter narrative derived from our reading of this picturebook: the Pea here is the ~~(felt~~ provocation ~~to)~~ philosophical thinking – perhaps as a result of action by the educator, material brought to the classroom, and in the interaction~~s~~ between teacher, students and what is thought-provoking, their experiences of playing 'inside' the text~~.~~ This exemplifies the bodily and aesthetic aspect of wakeful alertness that we observe and we experience when philosophical texts engage both affect and intellect and energise our philosophical reading. They wake us up. The many mattresses the Queen puts on the 'test' bed might symbolise the current state of globalised education policy – the many possible barriers to thinking. In philosophical

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teaching, educators and students are 'kept awake' by the pea beneath all the curriculum mattresses. The picturebook analogy conveys that restlessness that we can all recognise as beings who sleep, the restlessness that forces us to do something.

Philosopher Maxine Greene (1995) draws on the theme of 'being awake' as the opposite of indifference, as alertness to/curiosity about mystification, as breaking with the mundane and taken for granted (the cotton wool), as necessary to identification of the moral in exercise of choice and freedom. It's been our experience that teachers and students view the space of philosophical dialogue in the classroom as a space of thinking afresh and with new alertness.

We suggest that all educators, regardless of the sector in which they are employed and the general ages of their students, should be kept awake by feeling the 'P'; the Political and Philosophical of all Pedagogies. Unlike the princess who (out of politeness) keeps her wakeful disturbance to herself, as philosophical educators and philosophers in educationers of education we continue to ask the difficult questions.

Towards a post-age pedagogy

A thread throughout these conceptual explorations towards a post-age pedagogy has been a critical response to ageism in education all its many forms and to current political contestation around age and ageing.. Education does not exist in isolation. In the wider world, ageism The latter is driven by factors including demography, human rights, changes in law, such as the Equality Act 2010 (gov.uk), and technological advances. For the argument of this paper it is important to note that Aattitudes to age *are* changing as a result of research on ageing, culturally diverse counter-narratives of older age (New Dynamic of Ageing Programme), critiques of developmentalism (Burman, 1994, 2008; Egan, 2002; Walkerdine, 1984), and ideas that unseat classical notions of human nature and progress (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, 2012; Gane and Haraway, 2006; Haraway, 2008). While views of age and ageing are constantly shifting, there is widespread injustice against the youngest and oldest generations, particularly when it comes to policies and practices in education and social care. While Ginn (2013) argues that it is the poorest sections of society that bear the brunt of austerity measures, rather than any particular age group,

political discourses are often dominated by ideas of competing economic interests, social conflict between generations, stereotypical capacity-age categories, and infant and elderly care as a social and economic burden.

Ageism describes ideas, policies and practices that rest upon rigid correspondences between a person's age - the *performative agency of number* - and their views, status, behaviours or abilities. Numbers and other quantifications (e.g. statistics) clearly materialise certain kinds of ageist relationships. Originally coined to refer to prejudice and discrimination against the elderly (Butler, 1971), this term is now applied to both young and old. Ageism can be further linked to notions of childism and adultism (Bell, 1995; Kennedy, 2006a). Not only does it categorise people rigidly according to age but determines what kinds of relationships can exist between them. There are many cases where the guidelines regarding relationships between people of different ages are defensible (predatory or exploitative relations being such a case), however there are huge limitations when such age relation boundaries and possibilities are essentialised and universalised. Such one way generalisations leave little room for reciprocity in adult/child or elderly/young relations. Neither do they allow for indeterminate and ageless subjectivity.

Our theorising has generated some improbable and provocative ideas that are unlikely to find their way into the current target driven education policy discourse but appeal to our philosophical imagination. These ideas - clustered in a few philosophical concepts - have e/merged through picturebook exploration and dialogues. ~~What connects them is their pushing at the limits of the Nature/Culture binary. Importantly, these concepts are not just discursive ideas. They are also material and have, as we have seen, performative agency and power. They can transform our thinking and being.~~

The four themes together weave a new fabric for posthuman pedagogies that are nomadic, relational and situated, opening up fresh educational possibilities for playful and ageless 'intra-actions' (Barad, 2007). Such intra-generational relationships demand a listening that is ethical, that includes listening to bodies and to the non-human, and prevents all in class from falling asleep (Authors dates).

The exploration of picturebooks through four improbable concepts is a reiterative re-working of the past and doing justice to the boundary making practices of all research. Such political engagement with picturebooks, pedagogy and philosophy pays attention to matters of affect, memory and imagination. Materially entangled with our current thinking about the ontology

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and epistemology of philosophy with picturebooks as materialised in this article is *at the same time* thoughts and ideas we are not yet aware of and still to be(come). Resisting dominant academic practices that focus on criticality (Latour, 2004) and linear temporality we have chosen to use picturebooks as material-discursive vehicles to argue for post-age pedagogies in education.

[i] The term onto-epistemology expresses the idea that for posthumanists nature cannot be reduced to a mere object of human knowledge. The physical world does not exist 'out there', passively, to be discovered by humans' thinking about or experimenting on 'it'. For Barad it is impossible to separate or isolate practices of knowing and being: 'they are mutually implicated' (Barad, 2007, p.185).

[ii] The conjunction 'bodymind' is used by Floyd Merrell (2003) to describe how mind and body always act in concert, although he still holds on to a "relatively autonomous mind" (p.52), unlike the posthumanist conception of 'bodymindmatter' (Barad, 2007).

[iii] The significance of the use of 're-' with a hyphen is explained below.

[iv] In South Africa, two States of Emergency occurred in the sixties and eighties when the government faced unprecedented internal revolt. See: http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/state-emergency-south-africa-1960-and-1980s. [Accessed: 18th June 2015]

[v] Bell (1995) defines adultism as the systematic mistreatment and disrespect of young people and that it is a pervasive and difficult form of mistreatment to identify and challenge because it is widely experienced and considered 'normal'. Kennedy (2006) compares adultism with colonialism, classism, racisms, sexism and homophobia. See also Philosophy's Children, Chapter 10 in [book title] (authors, date).

[vi] Kitamura in interview with Joan Carey. http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/nov/08/satoshi-kitamura-angry-arthur-illustrations; accessed 24/11/2015.

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