

A “REJOINER” TO A RESPONSE-ABLE REVIEWING OF A POSTHUMANIST RE-READING OF TEACHER AGENCY IN TIMES OF CURRICULUM REFORM

W. Appadoo-Ramsamy

Mauritius

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2551-8976>

How would we define a rejoinder (article)? The usual expectations are responses (termed as often “angry” by the Cambridge Dictionary) that would react critically to questions pertaining to a scholar’s expertise or involving a defensive reaction. But for the purpose of this intra-active dialogical becoming, I will focus my attention on the rich dialogical writing and reviewing approach that brought me to this rejoinder article, fully acknowledging the fluidity and complexity of academic landscapes that are always in becoming.

I appreciate the reviewer(s) and editor(s) proposal of this affirmative response-able writing and reviewing process that presents an acknowledgment that a theory/problematic in becoming (such as posthumanism in education) comprises an experimentation. Instead of adopting attack-and-defend binary reactions (where reviewers attack and writers defend or vice versa), what we should be questioning is what can we learn from a critical response-able reading of such experimentations. The initial article, the response article, and this “rejoinder” are in fact engaging with a question posed by Bozalek, Zembylas, and Shefer (2019, 351) – “How ... can peer reviewing be shaped to encourage the academic writer and support scholarly development of their arguments?” Let us firstly acknowledge that Posthumanism can be defined in various ways and is not limited to a fixed interpretation and is currently in flux, as scholars move from humanist foci to a posthumanist epistemological and ontological turn. In such a climate of change, this exercise of response-able writing and reviewing has allowed the voices of both the writer (who traditionally responds/adheres to the authority of reviewers and editors) and reviewers (whose rich and critical engagements are most of the time anonymised) to intra-act and produce layers of complex and diffracted readings that pave the way for richer discussions on posthuman concepts, terminologies, conceptions, de/re/constructions of methodologies, and research on curriculum studies.

Was I (as a writer) disrupted in the process? If disruption is interpreted with a positive connotation that forces one out of traditional practice, I would say yes, it was disruptive. The process of becoming allowed me to delve deeper into my writing and I would here consciously

refrain from using the word “my” when referring to the writing, because the process has now taken a collective dimension of entangled thoughts, criticism and intra-actions. Referring to the “collective” brings me back to my initial article where I am revisiting (de/re/constructing) agency as, no longer a humanist concept, but as one emanating from collective hybrid entanglements as an outcome of intra-actions between subject-subject, subject-object, object-subject, object-object. Among these collective intra-actions, I referred to policy texts/narratives as contributing/exerting influences on agentic possibilities in times of curriculum reform. But this response-able exercise of writing and reviewing during which the article/text is perceived as an actor with which readers are/will be intra-acting and making meaning triggered my thoughts on the need to further understand the hybrid collective agency that influences policy making, implementation and interpretation as teachers and the others (Appadoo-Ramsamy, 2023) intra-act. For instance, can response-able research during which teachers intra-act with researchers, colleagues, stakeholders, and, policy documents, (imposed) textbooks (Appadoo-Ramsamy 2022), rules and regulations (untactile material conditions) within the micro-institutional landscape, contribute to a posthumanist re-reading of curriculum studies?

Moving to the concept of “agency”, which is loaded with contradictions and questions with regard to its humanist conception (Du Preez 2023), I have been forced to think whether a posthumanist reading can include teacher agency in the assemblage and intra-action process of becoming. Agency is no longer understood as an inner capacity expressed by a/an teacher/individual. But can agency be theorised as one that emanates as an outcome of intra-actions between the collective hybrid or assemblage? Can we conceptualise human agency as not the only point of mattering and instead consider the disruptive interrelatedness that takes place through intra-actions?

I also questioned myself on Du Preez (2023) provocative questioning of the use of language/concepts when engaging with posthumanist writing. Embracing the language of the discourse one is pursuing is not always easy and the temptation to transcend or transgress boundaries and experiment is often present during the writing process – especially within an ontological (re)turn in the process of becoming. Language and concepts are definitely not innocent (Du Preez 2023) and they are relational, but should we treat language/concepts as fixed entities or as fluid part of the process of becoming? Can we (or how far can we) push boundaries? Similarly moving from humanist to posthumanist readings or ways of researching within the educational landscape (one that has been humanised for a long time) and decentring the human in the conceptualisation of a hybrid collective intra-acting agency in times of curriculum reform needs further re/thinking.

Another member of the hybrid “other” who has not been included in the article is the

“researcher” and Du Preez (2023) rightly pointed out that the researcher and what is researched (the problematic, the participants, the objects) cannot be methodologically cut. While in the initial study (Appadoo-Ramsamy 2022), which adopted a humanist perspective, positionality and the influence of the researcher were acknowledged, in the article I left myself out of the intra-actions while focusing on subject-object and object-object intra-actions. What can we learn from researchers’ and participants’ intra-actions? What patterns of difference and sameness emanate from such entangled intra-actions? In the ethnodramatic representation, I included my disrupted entangled self in the becoming. Can the ethnodrama then be used as a pedagogic three-dimensional landscape that captures how teachers, researchers, and others intra-act and produce a diffracted collective agency (agencies)? If not as a mode of representation, can the ethnodrama be used to explore how this collective hybrid intra-act in times of curriculum reform?

This response-able process of diffracted, entangled and intra-active writing and reviewing is thus an ethical, healthy and academically rich way of engaging with the multi-layeredness of (re)thinking and (re)becoming (or unbecoming). I will end with this quote from (Bozalek et al. 2019, 357), “Response-able reviewing makes for not only more socially just practice but for arguably better scholarship achieved through collaborative and dialogical scholarship”.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude to reviewers and editors of this special edition for their academic open-mindedness and desire to transcend traditional writing and reviewing process that intra-act and eventually contributes to the becoming of posthumanist discourses on curriculum studies (and education).

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