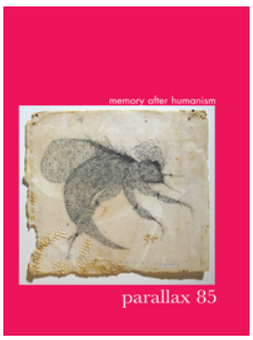
Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group



Parallax

ISSN: 1353-4645 (Print) 1460-700X (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tpar20

Posthuman(ist) Education and the Banality of Violence

Nathan Snaza

To cite this article: Nathan Snaza (2017) Posthuman(ist) Education and the Banality of Violence, Parallax, 23:4, 498-511, DOI: 10.1080/13534645.2017.1374520

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2017.1374520

Parallax, 2017, Vol. 23, No. 4, 498–511, *Memory after Humanism*
https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2017.1374520

Posthuman(ist) Education and the Banality of Violence

Nathan Snaza

On 18 April 1966, Theodor Adorno read a text on German radio called *Pädagogik nach Auschwitz* (later published as *Erziehung nach Auschwitz*) which begins with a statement whose force has not diminished in the half century since its utterance: 'The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again'.[1] The categorical nature of the statement – 'all education' – along with the insistence on ethical priority articulate a self-consciously universal field of reference for an event that is named, perhaps paradoxically, through synecdoche. Before reading, or listening, past the first sentence, we are already dialectically caught between the universal and the particular. In discussions of how particular 'Auschwitz' is as a synecdoche, scholars have tended to run into a fork between radically exceptionalist understandings of the Shoah and attempts to understand that already considerably expanded cluster of institutions and events as instantiations of a still wider field of forms of modern violence.[2] While Adorno was one of the first European thinkers to use Auschwitz, as a place name, to signal the Shoah more generally, in the half-century since his address, there has been considerable pressure to widen the frame still further.[3] Yet this expansion of the reference of 'Auschwitz' to include a series of genocidal and quasi-genocidal projects (including European imperialism and trans-Atlantic slavery) has still tended, overwhelmingly, to draw its limit at intra-human violence. Given that Adorno's address has become a sort of manifesto for Holocaust education, the task of this essay will be to pressure this limit, asking what happens to our thinking of education 'after Auschwitz' if other violences enter the orbit of our ethico-political consideration. As Kalpana Rahita Seshadri suggests, 'perhaps it is time we acknowledge that we cannot do anything at all about the appalling ways human beings treat other human beings or animals without rethinking and renewing our norms, presuppositions, platitudes, and morals with regard to life and what is living'.[4]

This project of 'rethinking and renewing' will be a crucial vector of a posthumanist education 'after Auschwitz'. By posthumanist, I mean an educational practice that is not oriented around the particular version of the human – one Sylvia Wynter calls 'Man' – that has been violently enforced in and through Western, imperialist modernity.[5] In order to sketch the contours of such an educational response, one that might ensure that the systemic violences synecdochically gathered into the word 'Auschwitz' does 'not happen again', I will focus first on borders and on the ontological and political work that this border drawing and policing does. My point of departure here will

be another claim from Adorno's address: 'Since the possibility of changing the objective – namely, societal and political – conditions is extremely limited today, attempts to work against the repetition of Auschwitz are necessarily restricted to the subjective dimension'.[6] By attending to what Adorno here means by 'subjective' and 'objective' dimensions of the causes of Auschwitz, I draw out the necessity for a posthumanist educational response, one that would, in fact, take it as axiomatic that no such separation between objective and subjective is possible.

Attending to the ontological and political status of borders will also lead me to consider biopolitics, the contemporary theoretical discourse that, without being always posthumanist, comes closest to being able to frame the rhizomatically linked violences with which our educational praxes have to contend. Biopolitics interests me in part because Auschwitz has played such a crucial role in its historical emergence, and my concern here will be with how biopolitics has tended to enact a politics of what Michael Rothberg calls 'competitive memory', where attention is considered limited and different groups or events must compete for limited space and time in political and public consciousness.[7] Theorists of biopolitics have tended to build their conceptual apparatuses by focusing on *one* site of biopolitical struggle: human sexuality and its institutional imbrications, the concentration or extermination camp, the slave plantation, the imperial colony, the sovereign state's ecology, or the factory farm.[8,9,10,11,12,13] Depending on the site that serves as an *Ansatzpunkt*, the theory of biopolitics that emerges will be more or less attentive to particular conceptual and political categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and species. Drawing on Rothberg's concept of 'multidirectional memory', it becomes possible to imagine an *educational* project that situates this diverse set of inquiries within a single frame (one metonymically signalled by 'Auschwitz'), not as content to be consumed or 'understood', but as a matrix of questions that cannot cease to be asked. This matrix enables an educational praxis that eschews the logics of educational ends and 'learning outcomes' that structure modernist and neoliberal educational regimes, drifting instead toward an open, contingent, even aleatory practice of education as a '*becoming-with*' that cannot be restricted to only human actors.[14]

Subject and Object *nach* Adorno

About his pithy opening statement, Adorno claims that '[i]ts priority before any other requirement is such that I believe I need not and should not justify it'.[15] He repeats this statement again two sentences later, calling justification of it 'monstrous', but then quickly offers a powerful justification: there exists 'the continuing potential for its recurrence'.[16] That is: this demand is justified because it *can* happen again since the 'fundamental conditions' which enabled it 'continue largely unchanged'.[17] In the radio address, Adorno largely sets aside the objective conditions – not because they are not crucial (as we shall see in a moment) but because our options for intervening

in them are 'extremely limited today'.[18] Instead, in a move that isn't entirely surprising for the lead author of *The Authoritarian Personality*, he argues that 'the roots must be sought in the persecutors, not in the victims… What is necessary is what I once in this respect called the turn to the subject'.[19] In this turn to the subject, education after Auschwitz would look to intervene in subjectivization processes in order to nurture 'critical self-reflection', as opposed to the 'fury against civilization' that is produced by an overly dense weave of civilization's restraint.[20] The theoretical paradigm here is, quite explicitly, Freudian, and what emerges is an account of civilization producing barbarism through its very operations (this is what Adorno elsewhere, with Max Horkheimer, famously calls the 'dialectic of Enlightenment'[21]). This 'turn to the subject' in order to foster self-reflection takes the particular historical form of a scepticism of collectivities and a vigilance about the violence of binding individuals together into unities. Summoning Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, Adorno suggests that 'one could start with the suffering the collective inflicts upon all the individuals it accepts'.[22] The group, in this framework, produces the tamed, 'civilized' individual through the exertion of violence tied to what Nietzsche famously calls *Schuld* in German: guilt/debt. A sort of socio-cultural-economic blackmail then keeps the individual subject in line (Freud will link this to the function of the superego). Accordingly, Adorno calls for an education that would 'intensify resistance' to this herd instinct.[23] Against the pressures of reification, Adorno champions the ability of education to produce subjects who are 'self-determined beings'.[24]

In his analysis of his writings that include the phrase 'nach Auschwitz', Rothberg has noted that Adorno's 'concern is obviously not with the individual psychology of Germans but with the objective "conditions over which [the majority of people] have no control, thereby keeping this majority in a condition of political immaturity"'.[25] While Rothberg only briefly mentions 'Erziehung nach Auschwitz', this would mean, paradoxically, that the very thing Adorno sets aside as beyond the scope of what 'education' can hope to achieve 'after Auschwitz' is, in fact, the most crucial site of political struggle.[26] By reading Adorno's radio address in relation to his other texts, the possibility of foregrounding the subjective – as opposed to objective – dimensions of the continuing possibility of Auschwitz begins to tremble. But locating the address within Adorno's other writings does more than simply reverse the priority of our politico-educational tasks: it pressures the very possibility of differentiating subject from object.

Adorno's account of the dialectic operating between civilization and barbarism always insists that they are as opposed as they are inseparable. In other words, there are not in fact *two* forces, each neatly outside the other, interacting, but a confluence of forces that *tends* both toward civilization and barbarism and which always materialize in particular ways at particular moments. To use the language of Brian Massumi, to think through this we have to reject the logic of the excluded middle (either/or logic) and work through the 'included middle', attending to what Henri Bergson calls 'tendencies': 'The zone of indiscernibility that is the included middle does not

observe the sanctity of the separation of categories, nor respect the rigid segregation of arenas of activity'.[27]

This logic of the included middle is, without being named as such, already operative (to some degree at least) in Adorno's negative dialectics,[28] and structures his account of the subject/object relation in his essay 'On Subject and Object'. Noting that 'one can hardly be comprehended without the other',[29] Adorno argues that when the two are seen as separate, 'subject swallows object, forgetting how much it is object itself'.[30] To put this differently, subject and object are *tendencies*, not ontologically separate entities. Every subject has something 'object'-like about it, and every object has some qualities of the subject.[31] In Adorno's reading, the separation of subject from object is part of a particular *epistemological* project, but not something that corresponds to the ontological facts of the world.

Most posthumanisms take it as axiomatic that the subject/object distinction, as it has governed Western epistemology and politics, is untenable. In these discourses, the human may be in many ways a subject but it is *also* an object. And every object has something of the subject in it: objects, things, matter: everything can *affect* and *be affected*.[32] This notion of affect – which has become ubiquitous in certain forms of feminist and queer theory that refuse dominant modes of humanism – highlights how action is not reducible to *conscious* and intended action.[33] This has far-reaching consequences for reimagining what happens in education, but it means, most immediately in this context, that what a subject learns in school is largely determined by the objective conditions in which it takes shape. I will come back to this crucial point at the end in more detail. For now, I will consider how this queering of the subject/object distinction requires us to cultivate new forms of attunement to the world and, in the process, to re-imagine politics.

As Elizabeth Grosz argues in her recent work, there is a question of scale in analysis. At one level, we can see entities (objects, persons, systems) as 'isolatable' but at another, more ontologically primary level, there is relation, connection and blurring. This leads her to claim that 'as an interconnected whole, the universe itself exhibits hesitation, uncertainty, and openness to evolutionary emergence, that is, the very indetermination that characterizes life'.[34] Grosz reminds us that the level at which one pitches one's analysis determines what one sees (or hears or feels or in some way senses). At one level, there are discrete, bounded entities that enter into 'extrinsic relations'. But at another level, there is connection, indistinction, and what Karen Barad would call 'entanglement': 'highly specific configurations' of matter, even across what seem like impossible distances in space-time, that allow for seemingly discrete things to emerge together through relational events of intra-action; discrete things don't pre-exist these events.[35] Posthumanist ontologies and ethics tend to be highly attentive to the fluid and porous yet constructed and policed nature of borders.

All of this to say that the ways we talk about subject/object distinctions tend to reveal a great deal about our politics and our ontological presuppositions. To claim to be able to separate a subject from an object, or the subjective from the objective, is to stake one's epistemological access to truth on an imagined world of separate and separable entities. While there may well be instances where this is rhetorically expedient (and I would include Adorno's radio address here), it seems to me that there is much to be gained by adopting the position, more common in affective and new materialist versions of posthumanist thought, that what might appear, at one level, to be bounded entities are, at another level, *effects* of more diffuse, entangled, uncertain relations and forces.[36] This necessitates a consideration of how politics is entangled with matter and life in general.

Boundaries, Biopolitical Violence, and Multidirectional Memory

Generally speaking, biopolitics attempts to 'illuminate the relations between life and politics'.[37] Foucault builds his seminal account on the distinction between a classical sovereignty as the right to kill and a modern biopolitics that exercises the power to *make live*.[38] This is, of course, continuous with Foucault's larger project of articulating power as productive rather than negative, but it also crucially shifts the 'subject' and 'object' of politics since the object is no longer the individual subject so much as the aggregate group of the population, race, or species. The individual subject is, in a certain way, a relay point in the political management of the group. And management here becomes key: the (stated) goal of biopolitics is often the health of the population.[39] Giorgio Agamben's work has provided the most common framework for early-twenty-first-century theories of biopolitics. The concentration camp is, for Agamben, the 'nomos of the modern': the paradigm of biopolitics as such. That is, Agamben builds a global – and often problematically transhistorical – account of politics around the particular site of the Nazi camp, specifically Auschwitz.[40]

Without getting into the myriad critiques of Agamben's project, it is worth noting that if one doesn't focus so narrowly on the Nazi camp, biopolitics can helpfully illuminate a range of other modern violences. Postcolonial critiques, such those by as Ann Laura Stoler and Achille Mbembe, have demonstrated that Foucault and Agamben, while acknowledging race as a crucial vector of biopolitics, really didn't dwell on what this means for thinking about colonialism and its corollary institutions of the slave trade. Summoning much of this history of biopolitical thought, Rothberg charges Agamben with an 'inability to think the colonial encounter as a biopolitical event'.[41] Rather than focusing on *either* the Nazi camps *or* the colonial encounter, Rothberg articulates a praxis of 'multidirectional memory':

> Seeking points of contact between apparently separate histories, I foreground the unevenness of historical processes and the multidirectionality of memory in moments of cultural transla-

> tion, even as I begin from the assumption that such processes and memories are – at some fundamental level – deeply implicated in each other.[42]

For Rothberg, whose work links Holocaust memorialization to the long history of anticolonial and postcolonial memory, there is much to be gained, both politically and intellectually, from moving away from a competition over attention toward sustained attention to how events which are not 'the same' are nevertheless co-implicated. Rothberg's project offers us a crucial way of configuring biopolitics as a theory of political events which can illuminate both the distinctness of specific violences *and* the ways in which those violences are linked, sometimes in unexpected ways. I am going to take this multidirectional memory as an essential component of posthumanist education after Auschwitz, but I also want to follow Julietta Singh's crucial suggestion that 'extending the concept of multidirectional memory to include the kinds of historical and ongoing torture inflicted on animals can enable new conversations between Holocaust, postcolonial and animal studies rather than a competitive hierarchy among them'.[43] That is, while Rothberg's account is conceptually open to allowing all of the various sites which serve as foci for biopolitical theories to interact, his own account remains, for the most part, within the ambit of a particular version of European humanism even if that humanism is called into question within the book.

Analyzing the writings of anticolonial theorist Aimé Césaire, Rothberg notes that Césaire 'underlines the extent to which the European humanist subject has been constituted within conditions of violence to which he has not necessarily had direct and conscious access'.[44] As other postcolonial scholars have shown, European subjects often relied upon imperial and colonial violences abroad to sustain their lives at home, even – or perhaps especially – when they did not need to give that violence any attention in their everyday lives.[45] In the metonymically linked context of US slavery, whites could (and do) go about their everyday lives without having to register how their incomes, food, clothing, etc. were all reliant upon the labour of slaves in conditions of extreme violence. But these critiques can be usefully extended in a multidirectional manner to note how most humans today can go through their daily lives without thinking about the violence done to animals (in factory farms that produce food, clothing, etc.) and ecosystems (in fossil fuel extraction and burning, etc.), which are the conditions of possibility for the particular forms of everyday life most commonly practiced in the global North.

This relates to one of the central questions of Rothberg's book: how to understand the relation between the everyday and the seemingly exceptional violences that emerge in spaces like extermination camps (or plantations, or colonies, or slaughterhouses). He writes: 'The insight that extreme and unprecedented forms of violence can emerge from the normal and the everyday is both epistemologically productive and carries the critical corollary that the elements of totalitarianism might outlast the period of

totalitarianism's eruption and lie dormant, waiting to be reactivated'.[46] That is, there is no clear line or boundary between the everyday and the extreme, even if there are tendencies. While at one level it makes sense to treat the Holocaust, colonial violence, racial slavery, heteronormative biopolitical sexuality, and factory farms as separate, discrete problematics, at a number of levels these are all connected by complex networks of forces, institutions, apparatuses, practices, and ideologies. Drawing on the logic of the included middle, we can see these not as separate or separable things but as tendencies within the forces, institutions, and practices that make up life – and not simply human life.

This is precisely where multidirectional memory, biopolitics, and posthumanism come into the most interesting relation, for what is ultimately at issue here is the historical and educational production of 'human' persons. The production of humans through educational assemblages is indissociably linked to processes of dehumanization. As the human is produced as a particular, contingent subject of politics and history, it is articulated over and against the nonhuman, the inhuman, and the not-quite-human.[47] This production of the human, within imperialist modernity, works through dialectical negation: the human is distinguished from the animal, the machine, the savage, the slave, the object. In this dialectical production of the human, the human reserves for itself the domain of politics (they are subjects) while all those rendered nonhuman – including those humans who are dehumanized by the 'fully human' humans – are cast into the realm of *objects* of political action. As Adorno puts it, 'The constantly encountered assertion that savages, blacks, Japanese are like animals, monkeys for example, is the key to the pogroms'.[48] What this means is that the most crucial site at which the various streams of biopolitical analysis meet is in challenging the dominance of a very particular *version* or 'genre' of being human, the one that Wynter helpfully calls 'Man' (as opposed to 'the human as such').[49]

Wynter's work offers us a profoundly multidirectional way of linking various modern violences while remaining attentive to their particularities. I want to quote her here at length:

> The argument proposes that the struggle of our new millennium will be one between the ongoing imperative of securing the well-being of our present ethnoclass (i.e., Western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which overrepresents 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. […] The correlated hypothesis here is that all our present struggles with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, struggles over environment, global warming, severe climate change, the sharply unequal distribution of the earth's resources […] – these are all differing facets of the central ethnoclass Man vs. Human struggle.[50]

For Wynter, while there are important distinctions among the violences of colonialism, slavery, ecological devastation, capitalist exploitation, and heteronormative subjectivization, the political projects that seek to redress these violences all share in having to critique the dominant version of the human she calls 'Man'. Put somewhat differently, the struggle today against all the forms of modern violence which structure our everyday lives and which explode into extreme violence at disturbingly regular intervals requires us to critique or move away from a particular conception of what it means to be human. Any attempt to make sure that Auschwitz – and the modern violences to which it is metonymically linked – does 'not happen again', has to include a struggle against Man and the systemic violences that attend its emergence.

Posthumanist Education after Auschwitz

There seem to be two ways in which a posthumanist education after Auschwitz must revise and extend the suggestions Adorno made in 1966. The first is that Auschwitz, as a particular form of modern violence, has to be linked multidirectionally to other forms of modern violence without flattening them into a bland abstraction. The second is that it has to attend to how distinguishing subjective from objective conditions is not tenable. Both of these tenets require us to attend to how borders can appear at one level to be semi-static (or durable) while at other levels they are open, porous, blurry.

We can say, summoning affect theory, that every subject is constantly being acted upon by a range of objects in its milieu.[51] Spaces, smells, minerals, particles in the air and water, sounds, pheromones, light, and many other things are always affecting the human subject. Most of this happens before, underneath, or alongside the level of conscious awareness. In schools, and in the myriad sites of non-school education dispersed throughout various cultures, young people have their attentions trained. Thus, schooling is a site of the political struggle over attention. Anthropocentric education teaches, without always doing so explicitly at the level of curriculum and specific lessons, that nonhuman objects (including animals, matter, etc.) have no agency and exist only as 'objects' to be acted upon by human subjects. Students are trained into a kind of inattention. But this doesn't in any way mean that these objects cease to affect the human 'subject'. The operations of a school in, to use one example, a well-funded school district in a suburb of a major city in the United States cannot possibly unfold without the following: a) the killing of animals for food and other materials (such as sports equipment), b) the ecological devastation required for a petroleumized economy, and c) the enormous disparities of funding that are shaped by race, class, and geographical segregation. Even if these 'subjects' never have to consider it directly, they could not become who they are without the direct, material participation in a range of violences that, for other subjects, are rather extreme.

Within our political milieu, if something is not human, it does not necessarily have to figure into conscious, ethical attention. When one can kill animals, destroy ecosystems, and enjoy the spoils of a radically unequal social formation without having to worry about it, the conditions for another Auschwitz are obviously operative. Thus, the work of dehumanization – never separable from the work of humanization in modernity – is what allows for some humans (those Wynter calls Man) to believe *both* in the abstract equality of humans within a global framework of human rights law, *and* that some other humans (re-coded as less than fully human) don't really matter. If Jews – or colonized natives, or slaves, or animals, or ecological systems – are not fully human persons, they are excluded from ethical and political considerations, banished from conscious attention.

Education must attend to the material and affective conditions of subject formation since those conditions form a kind of 'hidden curriculum' that disables conscious attention to the everyday violence that makes being Man possible. Indeed, we have to find curricula and pedagogies that allow students to pay attention to their implications in and reliance upon violence, spurring them to draw out how similar complicities function in the most extreme violences they may study. This also means that we have to allow students to study those extreme violences – the Shoah, colonialism, slavery, ecological devastation, the institutionalized slaughter of animals – as distinct but linked phenomena. This might mean, for example, finding ways to pose the questions raised by affect theory (about how 'subjects' are affected by 'objects') as implicated in the epistemo-ontological concerns appearing in indigenous thought about land or in cultures of the black Atlantic that focus on haunting.[52,53] While the contexts and vocabularies are distinct, there are crucial constellations to be discerned.

This will not be a pedagogy driven by standards and pre-decided learning outcomes, nor will it be one where teachers tell students what and how to think about the events and their relations. Instead, we have to begin with Rothberg's call for ways to 'juxtapose…two or more disturbing memories and disrupt […] everyday settings'.[54] This is an education driven by questions, not answers. It is disruptive. Instead of pre-positing 'Man' as the desired outcome toward which education proceeds, it takes the human as a question, or set of questions, and allows students to critically examine themselves and their implications in the world in order to exert their attention toward the violences which make our world possible. This movement out of or away from Man – and let us recall that education means 'leading out of or way from': *ex* + *ducere* – is what we have to find, today, in order to ensure that Auschwitz does 'not happen again'.

We need to organize educational encounters that may enable a moving away from forced identification with a particular version of being 'human' (Man) which is, in a crucial way, the motor of genocidal violence. There can be no a priori determination of particular curricular contents; pedagogical engagements must be radically contextual. As Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* demonstrated, any pedagogy that poses the teacher as knowing, acting sub-

ject in relation to students as passive recipients of knowledge (i.e., objects) is *formally* oppressive no matter the political content of the lesson.[55] When a teacher (or administration) determines the desired goals of the lessons (learning outcomes, or the formation of a particular kind of 'human' person), pedagogy veers from education toward induction into the kind of subjectivity Horkheimer and Adorno trace in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: 'What human beings learn from nature is how to use it to dominate wholly both it and human beings'.[56] Instead of in-ducing students to become fully human persons with humanist ethics (ethics structured by domination), we have to engage in collective forms of inquiry that pose the Western human (*homo oeconomicus*) as a question, not as a presupposed *telos*.[57] Instead of deciding in advance what the students must come to understand as they think through texts and histories, we have to allow for unanticipatable outcomes. This requires forms of collective attention and close reading that foreground the blurriness of borders, not their solidity, and epistemologies of multidirectional, not competitive, memory.

In a high school classroom, we could juxtapose three learning events: reading Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, reading Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, and visiting a zoo. While these are three common enough events in schools in the United States, juxtaposing them explicitly may already violate norms of disciplinarity in schools, pressuring students and teachers to inquire into the ways that disciplinary borders segregate knowledges. By traversing different kinds of aesthetic experiences – the postmodern novel, the graphic novel, corporeal movement through semi-public space structured by logics of colonial conquest and human mastery – students could, without the pre-determined humanist border work usually done in schools to segregate these experiences, begin to pose questions about their relations. While there would be no possibility of taking these three events as 'the same', discussion could attune to resonances, rhizomatic connections, points of convergence and divergence. This sort of pedagogy would build on the approach to analyzing representations of traumatic violence articulated in Rothberg's work on traumatic realisms and multidirectional memory, but also extend it both toward engagements with nonhuman beings and toward analyses of lived experience, not just literary (or other representational) texts.

I think there is more than a grain of truth in Jane Bennett's claim that new materialist and posthumanist ontologies appearing in political theory are best understood as 'tak[ing] shape again, for a version of this idea already found expression in childhood experiences of a world populated by animate things rather than passive objects'.[58] In his perceptive reading of the politics of zoos, Massumi has also recently called attention to how children, who tend to be less indoctrinated by the pedagogics of inattention, are more affected by the sadness of animals and the horror of zoos.[59] While there is a great effort at most zoos to distract from the politics of confinement, displacement, and enforced display of living, sentient creatures, many children cannot *not* be attentive to this. This attention is, most of the time, expressly muted by adults who seek to downplay this in pedagogies driven by foregrounding a

presumably radical rupture between human and nonhuman animality. That is, adults teach children that their sympathetic relations with nonhuman animals and 'inanimate' things are inappropriate. The authoritative structures of dominant humanist educational regimes teach students that the adults are *correct*, which means their own affective impulses are in need of adjustment if they are to become properly human.

If humans have *learned* to think of themselves as autonomous subjects who dominate the rest of the planet's inhabitants, then we cannot only seek to disenable this by having students learn to think about themselves and their relations otherwise after they have been educated to be Man (at least, that is the desired *telos*… thankfully this often fails, allowing us to imagine an education that would enable us to *fail* to become 'properly' human![60]). We have to take seriously education at much earlier stages, too. That is, we cannot remain content with analysis of complex literary, filmic, and artistic texts that presuppose many years of previous education. We might begin with an education built on working against commodity fetishism and extending this common Marxist form of critique toward posthumanist concerns with nonhuman entities and agencies. In any classroom – and in any non-school scene of study – one can ask of an object: whence does this appear?[61] This simple question can crystalize both a human's *vulnerability* to an immense network of human and nonhuman matters and agencies, and the ways that this network implicates that same human in extreme violence. If one asks 'whence does this appear?' of a McDonald's hamburger or an iPhone, one can immediately begin to trace the technological and labour-intensive processes of extracting raw 'resources' from the earth, processing them in diverse ways, introducing them into complex economies that differentially distribute suffering across human and nonhuman entities, and situating them (often via advertising) in cultural fantasies and ideologies. By starting with objects present at hand in the classroom, it forces attention to how the very possibility of the educational encounter relies on often hidden networks of violence (but also agencies, many of them not human). Returning to Adorno's distinction between the subjective and objective conditions for Auschwitz, we might reply, with Coole and Frost, that 'it is ideological naïveté to believe that significant social change can be engendered solely by reconstructing subjectivities, discourses, ethics, and identities – that is, without also altering their socioeconomic conditions or tracing crucial aspects of their reproduction to the economic interests they unwittingly serve'.[62] While this can happen in more complex ways in middle, high school, and university settings, a simplified version of this could happen in any Kindergarten classroom.[63]

One of the sticking points for some will be that this precludes shielding children from violence. Shouldn't we protect their innocence?[64] This is just my point though: if you enact an education where young humans are materially implicated in violences (against other humans, animals, and ecosystems, for example) while being trained *not* to attune to this violence, then the conditions for Auschwitz idle, waiting to be thrown into gear. The world is violent, and nonviolence is a dangerous fantasy.[65] The task of posthumanist

education after Auschwitz will be to let children focus their attentions on the banal violences that sustain everyday life (especially in the global North) so that they may become the kinds of subjects – clearly no longer the *homines oeconomici* of imperialist humanism – who can *live with* the violences in which they are implicated, who can act, not autonomously (as Adorno would have put it) but vulnerably, without being sutured to the humanist disavowals that make 'civilization' and Man possible.[66]

Notes

[1] Adorno, *Critical Models*, 191.
[2] Mintz, *Popular Culture*.
[3] Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism*, 25–58.
[4] Seshadri, *HumAnimal*, 11.
[5] Wynter, "Unsettling."
[6] Adorno, *Critical Models*, 192.
[7] Rothberg, *Multidirectional*, 202.
[8] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*; Preciado, *Testo Junkie*.
[9] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; *Remnants*; Esposito, *Bíos*.
[10] Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*.
[11] Stoler, *Race*; Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*.
[12] Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*.
[13] Shukin, *Animal Capital*; Wolfe, *Before the Law*.
[14] Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 3.
[15] Adorno, *Critical Models*, 191.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 192.
[19] Ibid., 192–93.
[20] Ibid., 193.
[21] Horkeimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.
[22] Adorno, *Critical Models*, 197.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 198.
[25] Rothberg, *Traumatic Memory*, 45.
[26] Ibid., 49.
[27] Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us*, 6.
[28] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 13–17.
[29] Adorno, *Critical Models*, 245.
[30] Ibid., 246.
[31] This rhymes with Mel Y. Chen's concept of the 'animacy scale' in *Animacies*.
[32] This concept of affect is taken from Spinoza's *Ethics*.
[33] See especially the "Queer Inhumanisms" special issue of *GLQ* edited by Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen.
[34] Grosz, "Feminism," 151.
[35] Barad, *Meeting*, 74.
[36] Ibid.; Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*.
[37] Campbell and Sitze, *Biopolitics*, 3.
[38] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 137.
[39] Hence Esposito's focus in *Bíos* on immunity which allows him to think of Nazi politics, his major focus, as a kind of autoimmune disorder in the body politic.
[40] Agamben, *Remnants*.
[41] Rothberg, *Multidirectional*, 62.
[42] Ibid., 115.
[43] Singh, *Unthinking Mastery*, 145.
[44] Rothberg, *Multidirectional*, 81.
[45] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*.
[46] Rothberg, *Multidirectional*, 49.
[47] Butler, *Bodies*; Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*.
[48] Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, 105.
[49] Wynter, "Unsettling."
[50] Ibid., 260–61.
[51] I am referring here to the affect theory of Spinoza as developed in Massumi's *Parables for the Virtual*, and to Brennan's *Transmission of Affect*.
[52] Coulthard, *Red Skin White Masks*, 13.
[53] Young, *Haunting Capital*.
[54] Rothberg, *Multidirectional*, 14.
[55] Freire, *Pedagogy*, 75.
[56] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 2.
[57] See Snaza, "Bewildering Education."
[58] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, vii.
[59] Massumi, *What Animals Teach Us*, 76.
[60] See Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure*.
[61] I am inspired here by Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, and her asking after the 'conditions of arrival' of both humans and nonhuman objects.
[62] Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 25.
[63] Indeed, I have versions of this conversation with my four-year-old regularly.
[64] On the problem with innocence, see Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto."
[65] Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 81.
[66] This last sentence is highly informed by Singh's *Unthinking Mastery*.

Bibliography

Adorno, Theodor. *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. Translated by Henry W. Pickford. New York: Columbia University Press.

Adorno, Theodor. *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. London: Verso.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Agamben, Giorgio. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Brennan, Teresa. *The Transmission of Affect*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York: Routledge, 1993.

Campbell, Timothy and Adam Sitze, eds. *Biopolitics: A Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

Chen, Mel Y. *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

Coole, Diana and Samantha Frost, eds. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Esposito, Roberto. *Bíos: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. Translated by Timothy Campbell. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage, 1978.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Ramos. New York: Continuum, 2000.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Grosz, Elizabeth. "Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom." In Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 139–57.

Halberstam, Judith. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto." In *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, 149–81. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Haraway, Donna. *When Species Meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.

Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

Luciano, Dana and Mel Y. Chen, eds. "Queer Inhumanisms." Special issue of *GLQ* 21, 2–3 (2015).

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Massumi, Brian. *What Animals Teach Us About Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Mintz, Alan. *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001.

Preciado, Beatriz. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: Feminist Press, 2013.

Rothberg, Michael. *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Rothberg, Michael. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1993.

Seshadri, Kalpana Rahita. *HumAnimal: Race, Law, Language*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
Shukin, Nicole. *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
Singh, Julietta. *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2018.
Smith, Mick. *Against Ecological Sovereignty: Ethics, Biopolitics, and Saving the Natural World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
Snaza, Nathan. "Bewildering Education." *Journal of Curriculum and Pedadgogy* 10, no. 1 (2013): 38–54.
Spinoza, Benedict de. *On the Improvement of the Understanding, The Ethics, Correspondence*. Translated by R.H.M. Elwes. New York: Dover, 1955.
Stoler, Ann Laura. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
Weheliye, Alexander. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.
Wolfe, Cary. *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.
Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsetting the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation – An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review 3*, 3 (2003): 257–337.
Young, Hershini Bhana. *Haunting Capital: Memory, Text and the Black Diasporic Body*. Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2006.

Nathan Snaza teaches English literature and contemporary theory at the University of Richmond. E-mail: nsnaza@richmond.edu.