

AT THE SUPERIMPOSITION OF THE RHIZOMATIC CURRICULUM AND POSTHUMANISM

Rūta Gajauskaitė

Institute of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University

Universiteto g. 9-407, LT-01513, Vilnius, Lithuania

E-mail address: ruta.gajauskaite@fsf.stud.vu.lt

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0027-1620>

ABSTRACT

Thesis. This paper aims to explore how the concept of the rhizomatic curriculum can be expanded through its superimposition with posthumanism in order to better understand and enable transitions from (and between) humanist to posthuman conceptualisations of the curriculum.

Concept. The exercise is undertaken as a superimposition – a concept and a practice stemming from photography, which generates overlaps, blends, and mergers. Using philosophical concepts drawn from Deleuzeguattarian thought – namely immanence, affirmation, and affect – the paper analyses the rhizomatic curriculum across ontological, epistemological, and ethical dimensions. Posthumanism is approached as a contemporary condition, a research medium, and a philosophical stance, each offering not so distinct entry points into rethinking the curriculum.

Results and conclusion. The analysis reveals that a rhizomatic curriculum, when placed in dialogue with posthumanism, illuminates the role of bodies, relationality, and the non-human in classroom practice, allowing the curriculum to be viewed as both lived and planned, molar and molecular. This framing does not aim to resolve or replace humanism but to affirm its coexistence with posthuman perspectives. The paper concludes that such superimposition offers a generative framework for pluriversalising a curriculum enablement, inviting educators and researchers to pursue creative, situated, and response-able approaches to teaching and learning.

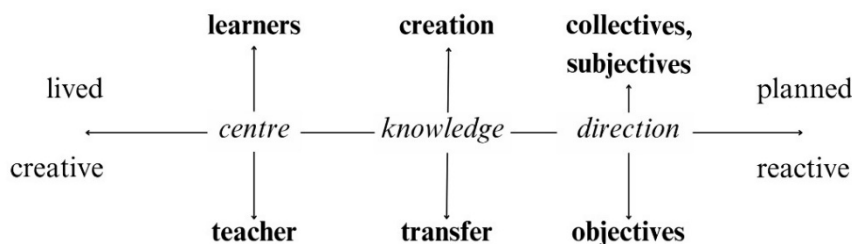
Keywords: rhizomatic curriculum, posthumanism, superimposition, curriculum enablement, relationality

POINT OF ENTRY

This paper is a continuation of thinking about the concept of the rhizomatic curriculum. Having used it to make sense of a practical instance when I put the *Teach-*

ing *Unplugged* movement to work in a middle school classroom (Gajauskaitė, 2024; Gajauskaitė & Marinković, 2024) and later diffracted through the concept itself with postmethod pedagogies, I have concluded two things, which now guide the writing of this text. Firstly, the practice of thinking, and doing, a curriculum differently deserves to be researched in ways that provide teachers the confidence to do so, be those ways quantitative, qualitative, or post qualitative (Gajauskaitė, 2024). Secondly, the rhizomatic curriculum, as a living onto-ethico-epistemology, is a concept and practice in the making, meaning that a perfect, or complete, definition and application of it does not, and could not, exist. On the basis of these ideas, I now take on the rhizomatic curriculum in an attempt to expand its conceptualisation in the context of posthumanism. Scholars of curriculum studies have been continuously working to think of the curriculum differently with posthumanism (Ceder, 2018; Morales & Zarabadi, 2024; Snaza et al., 2014, 2016; Strong-Wilson et al., 2019), some revisiting the notions of curriculum-as-lived (Le Grange & Du Preez, 2023) or curriculum as a complicated conversation (Le Grange et al. 2024) and coining the new *ubuntu-currere* (Du Preez & Le Grange, 2025; Du Preez et al., 2022). What the concept of the rhizomatic curriculum offers to bring to this revisiting is a re-introduction of the *planned* in addition to the *lived*, allowing us to better understand the transition that takes place in the move from a humanist curriculum to a posthuman one.

Since both posthumanism and the rhizomatic curriculum are multifaceted and in-flux, engagement with them sets forth their situated and partial articulations. Thus, the scope of this paper is by no means to establish their juncture in absolutist terms. The goal is to, rather, capture their superimposition. Just as in photography, this superimposition is time and light sensitive: where and how the layers are captured determines how they inter- and intra-act, merging, negotiating visibility, bringing certain elements out and allowing some features to be left unseen. This exercise commands an active and intentional interaction with the object of study, yet at the same time is tied to the author's singular intuition and situation (Gajauskaitė & Marinković, 2024). I build on the tracing of the rhizomatic curriculum produced earlier (Figure 1), in which the actualisation of a curriculum is seen as a process of moving between lived *and* planned, creative *and* reactive and through which pedagogical elements of centre, knowledge, and learning direction come together and I claim that a *careful* look at a rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism may be helpful in seeing through the transition from a humanist towards posthuman curriculum by determining, firstly, whether the concept of the rhizomatic curriculum speaks to either curriculum in a posthumanism or posthuman curriculum (Le Grange & Du Preez, 2023), and, secondly, how their superimposition pluriversalises the task of curriculum enablement (Magaiza & Muchaku, 2023). To this end, I proceed by looking at how the broad understanding of posthumanism can be narrowed down to fit an exploration of a rhizomatic curriculum; interrogate the tracing of a rhizomatic curriculum (Figure 1); and, finally, look closely at their superimposition.

Figure 1*The Training of a Rhizomatic Curriculum**Source.* Own research.

POSTHUMANISM

“Pedagogies are relational” (Ulmer et al., 2020, p. 4); however, through the years, doing teaching and learning has largely focused on the relationship between humans, shifting between the vision of either a teacher- or a learner-centered classroom. The human aspect remains key in education; nonetheless, post-Anthropocene scholars of education have begun to recognise this aspect as problematic in that it reproduces the narrative of human privilege and exceptionalism, along with the worldview based on opposites and hierarchies (Capaccioli, 2024). Some of the endeavours towards re-envision education for the present include a “no-one-centered education” (Duobliene & Vaitekaitis, 2021, p. 47) or a world-centered education (Biesta, 2021). Environmental challenges the current generation of educators and learners are facing urge scholars and policymakers to seek practices that are not only culturally relevant, but also culturally sustainable, responsible and responsive (Ulmer et al., 2020). These proposed shifts do not work to obliterate the human, but rather to welcome, to include “plants, animals, air, water, and the many other aspects of the vibrant world in which we live” (Ulmer et al., 2020, p. 6). Embracing posthumanism may disclose “means for including non-human actors in the educational and research landscapes and rethinking an ecological approach that does not prioritise the solely human” (Cole, 2020, p. 100).

The call to embrace posthumanism is hardly self-explanatory. Posthumanist philosophy is but one of the few responses revisiting the role of the human in the aftermath of the 20th century, which undermined the prevalence of the human in the construction of the world. Examples of other responses include, but are not limited to, antihumanism, neohumanism and transhumanism (Duobliene & Vaitekaitis, 2021). Posthumanism allows for different relationships with the world as a result of removing humans from the position of hierarchical species primacy: it draws attention to matter, to the non-human and the more-than-human; it does away with representation. Posthumanism has been generally defined as a contemporary condition (e.g. Braidotti, 2010, 2017, 2019a; Le Grange, 2018; Weaver,

2009; Wilmer & Žukauskaitė, 2023), a philosophy (Ferrando, 2020), and a research methodology (e.g. Ferrando, 2012; Taylor & Hughes, 2016; Ulmer, 2017). The posthuman condition, in Le Grange's (2018) explanation, primarily focuses on the dire state of the planet and human decentring. Although he does mention capitalism, he focuses on commodification of body and nature, unlike Rosi Braidotti (2019a) for whom posthumanism converges with post-Anthropocentrism in the setting of advanced capitalism, all marked by speedy and greedy multiplication. Francesca Ferrando and Debashish Banerji (2023) see posthumanism as a matter- and immanence-oriented spirituality, which rejects anthropocentric privilege and lays ground for technological enlightenment. In practice spiritual posthumanism translates into posthuman existentialism—an intellectual enacted commitment to life (Ferrando, 2022). Posthumanism as a philosophy and a research methodology is hard to separate—they continuously drive and inform each other (that is, they are superimposed). The formation of novel ways of noticing relationships between humans and the non-human world requires a re-articulation of epistemological, ontological, and ethical premises.

The inner world of posthumanism is rich, diverse and contains some—seemingly—domestic disagreements. The range of new realisms (including speculative realism, new materialism, and critical realism) at the basis of posthumanism not only borrows from several critical theories and poststructuralism (Le Grange, 2018), but also Indigenous knowledges and Black thought (Rosiek et al., 2024). New materialisms find their place in educational sciences, providing a range of educational aspects to focus on, most of which generally revolve around attempts to rethink human agency in relationship to the environment (Duobliene et al., 2023). Naturally, the many kinds of posthumanism generate a plethora of research approaches, yet the relations between varying strands of posthumanist research in education may “enhance the futurities they make possible” (Rosiek et al., 2024, p. 222). Academic texts, concepts, or stances, produced for or in posthumanism, might appear incompatible or even contradictory; hence scholarly efforts to reconcile them by putting authors' work in creative, response-able conversations. An example of such effort includes diffracting through Karen Barad's and Gilles Deleuze's texts (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019). At the core of these efforts lies the call for research which does away with critique as a tool to negate and which instead enables scholarship that is accountable, response-able, and renders different philosophical viewpoints possible (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019).

I have been trying to show that posthumanism is incredibly generative, all along maintaining its partiality and situatedness (Braidotti, 2019b). Firstly, it is multifaceted and connected; in other words—transdisciplinary. The boundaries between posthumanism as a contemporary condition, a philosophy and a research methodology, as well as the boundaries within what takes place within these segments, are blurred. Secondly, it is conducive to producing new vocabulary, knowledge, fields, and practices. The many-sidedness of posthumanism can be touched upon through readings of the many glossaries aimed at articulating, mapping and sharing the coming-into-being of posthu-

manism (e.g. Åsberg & Braidotti, 2018; Braidotti & Hlavajova, 2018; Braidotti et al., 2022; Gladden, 2016; Hamilton & Lau, 2024; Herbrechter et al., 2022; Murris, 2021; Thomsen & Wamberg, 2020). What is more, posthumanism draws from a variety of authors (Wolfe, 2010), pointing to its diverse roots. This proliferation makes it necessary to define the scope of how many faces of posthumanism can be invited into this chapter.

At its superimposition with the rhizomatic curriculum, posthumanism comes about as a contemporary condition. It is “a state of things” (Deleuze, 1995/1997, p. 5), a lived state in which the rhizomatic curriculum is made. At this superimposition, posthumanism is also a research medium: I seek to put two non-human, the rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism, into a conversation and in this way let them speak (Snaza et al., 2014). I do so from my situated and subjective position, putting to work the texts and experiences that have been coming my way. I therefore make no claim to the universality of the findings; instead, I urge readers to continue to expand the uncovering of this superimposition in an effort to reconcile differing situated and subjective locations in the form of a creative and response-able conversation. Lastly, there is posthumanism as a philosophy. As my point of departure is the Deleuzeguattarian concept of the rhizome, I include those authors whose work aligns with or who draw from Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s philosophy. In the attempt to theorise the superimposition of the rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism, I think their ontology with the concept of *immanence*; their ethics with *affirmation*; and, lastly, their epistemology with *affect*. These are not *the* concepts to make sense of the rhizomatic curriculum, but *some* concepts that make it possible to think the non-human in an otherwise human-centered space of education.

RHIZOMATIC CURRICULUM

The three parts in this section will open the concept of the rhizomatic curriculum for a further conversation around posthumanism. The earlier formulated features of the rhizomatic curriculum (Figure 1) will be split into planes of ontology (in the discussion of a learner- and a teacher-centered classroom), epistemology (talking about knowledge creation and transfer), and ethics (to think about learning direction as oriented towards collectives, subjectives, and objectives). I think through immanence with Elizabeth St. Pierre, affirmation—with Braidotti, and affects—with Brian Massumi.

Immanence

A radical shift towards a learner-centered classroom with an almost absolute removal of the teacher-centre may limit the very possibility of generative, affirmative negotiation and inclusion among the participants of the lesson. The centre must,

therefore, be claimed; however, unlike a strictly regimented learner- or teacher-centered lesson, a rhizomatic curriculum allows for the centre to shift. In other words, the centre moves. The concept of immanence is helpful in trying to grasp where the centre may be found.

The ontological term immanence is commonly talked about together with transcendence. St. Pierre (2019) sees them not as complementary, but referring to different ontologies altogether: to her, immanence entails a one-world and transcendence—a two-world ontology. The two worlds of the latter presume reality as a direct experience as well as a world beyond that reality. Transcendence, often understood as something to aspire to, to grow into, to achieve, belongs to the higher domain of existence, rendering the very idea of transcendence hierarchical. Deleuze does not pick immanence over transcendence but rather philosophises an ontology of transcendental empiricism—a one-world ontology, comprised of the actual and the virtual (St. Pierre, 2019). Doing so, he undoes the hierarchical relationship between the two and frees it from the limits of experience: “Absolute immanence is in itself: it is not in something, not *to* something; it does not depend on an object and does not belong to a subject” (Deleuze, 1995/1997, p. 4). According to Deleuze (1995/1997), experience is tied to either an object or a subject and might involve sensation, yet the transcendental field is not defined through objects or subjects, nor is it contained in them.

In Deleuze’s one-world ontology of transcendental empiricism, the subjective experience through and in relation to objects and subjects is important for it brings about immanent events. Immanence is not what one experiences but what comes about in the process of actualisation. To Deleuze, a “life contains only virtuals” (1995/1997, p. 5), and virtuality “is not something that lacks reality” (Deleuze, 1995/1997, p. 5), but something that has power to come into reality. For a virtual event to become actual it needs to be put in a state of things (Deleuze, 1995/1997). In classroom space, this lived state of things may include human and non-human lesson participants, such as the presence of technology and nature, furniture and space arrangements or noises and sounds, as well as their interrelations and the space between them. The planned curriculum is actualised not because it is experienced by the teacher and the learners, but because it takes its lived shape in the complexity of the classroom space. The lived curriculum, then, is contingent on the fabric of a particular lesson. “The actualization or differentiation of the virtual is a process of genuine creation, and the actual is always new and different” (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 6).

The edges of the rhizomatic curriculum—the planned and the lived—do not represent the virtual and the actual. (Actually, doing so would mark a slip back into a two-world ontology.) I propose seeing the virtual in the space between the planned and the lived, which, when actualised, creates a possibility for a centre to come about. The virtual is. The rhizomatic curriculum is. ‘Absolute immanence is in itself’ (Deleuze, 1995/1997, p. 4). Now, the centre may be; and the question of who or what claims the centre and to what ends prompts a segue into ethics.

Affirmation

One of the building blocks in the tracing of rhizomatic curriculum (Figure 1) is direction, which at the end of the planned curriculum may take the shape of a learning objective, and on the end of the lived curriculum may appear as a subjective or a collective. I see these three as actualisations of the centre during the unfolding of a lesson. Both objectives and subjectives relate to individual learning; however, while the former is ruled by and goes back to the regulated, disciplined curriculum, the latter is informed by an individual learner's knowledge of themselves and indicates how they wish to be shaped by the learning or what they see themselves gaining from it. Sticking to the subjectives alone grants learning multidirectionality, but also dispersion, and in this way contributes to a decentring of learning. For this reason, I propose considering a collective as a learning outcome. Doing so raises the question of, to paraphrase Braidotti (2020), what can *we* learn in *this* classroom knowing we are not one and the same? I maintain that between the three forms of direction—objectives, subjectives and collectives—one is not better than others; instead, affirmatively, I challenge myself to see(k) ways how teachers might be aware of them and work with them within the spacetime of a lesson.

To Braidotti (2013), affirmative ethics (or affirmation, as I call it in this paper) works against the oppositional logic of negation found in the practice of negative critique. Braidotti revisits Deleuze and Guattari's thinking about the relationship between creation and critique: 'It is however a problem that has confronted all activists and critical theorists: how to balance the creative potential of critical thought with the dose of negative criticism and oppositional consciousness that such a stance necessarily entails' (2013, p. 30). Critique negates and holds that change is driven by elimination of that which is undesired or unwelcome. As ethics is power and power relations actualised, affirmative action has potential to include, unlike critique which essentially is a vehicle for exclusion. Braidotti writes that "[w]hat is positive in the ethics of affirmation is the fact that it activates the relational powers of the subject and indexes them to the transformation of negative into affirmative affects" (2013, p. 34). Thus, in the space of the rhizomatic curriculum, the act of claiming the centre discloses an actualisation of power relations. By choosing to direct learning towards curriculum-informed objectives and away from subjectives and collectives, it must be asked what collective learning takes place and whether, and if so – how much, it is accessible to all participants in the lesson.

Lastly, it is not only that the teacher and the learners are embedded within the space of the classroom, but learning directions are equally embedded, be it virtually or in actuality. One of the tasks that Braidotti (2019b) sets for affirmative ethics is an intentional inclusion of the *missing*. Following this, I ask what is missing on the edges of either planned or lived rhizomatic curriculum and what requires to be included to allow for affirmative relations in the classroom. "We are positioned in embodied and embedded

in differential but material locations, which generate different perspectives about knowledge, subjectivity and the posthuman convergence”, says Braidotti (2019b, p. 102). The materiality of bodies leaks into the materiality of space and the objects that inhabit it. While the space of the classroom is shared between lesson participants, its embodiment is different. What each body does as it positions itself around the chair and the desk, makes a visual connection with the board and the view outside the window, registers sounds and the arrival of smells, receives or provides touch, stores traces of the lesson before or recess time, replays conversations, fights the temptation to check the smart phone—all this and more participates in the making of the lesson. Moreover, it contributes to the ongoing production of subjectivity. Since learners are multiple, subjectivities are heterogeneous. Tapping into the embodied subjectivities and the embeddedness of the lesson is already affirmative. However, affirmation does not remove power relations. Thus, questions related to whose embodiment is affirmed and who and how is allowed to claim the centre must be continuously addressed.

Affect

I have so far written about the rhizomatic curriculum and immanence as well as affirmation, connecting the former to ontology and the latter to ethics. The goal here is to address epistemology, i.e. how we know or come to know through the concept of affect. Massumi (2015, 2021) explains what affect is through what affect is not. Minding the purpose and the scope of this paper, I have chosen to engage with three of the ideas. They, I hope, will be helpful in elucidating how peer concepts of immanence and affirmation come into play in discussion of a rhizomatic curriculum.

To start with, affect may be known through bodies, but is not to be confused with emotion, Massumi says (2021). While affect is transindividual (Massumi, 2015), emotion is semantically and semiotically categorised, recognisable in “narrativizable action-reaction circuits”, translatable into “function and meaning” (Massumi, 2021, p. 30). Being able to label the emotion renders the experience both subjective and collective: it is recognised not only by the person labelling it but also allows their experience to be recognised by others, connecting them to the sum of individual, even if shared experiences. Affect, in turn, is not fragmentable: it is not captured by an individual; it is not transferrable or quantifiable. It is in the fabric of immanence, virtual and actual, “resistant to critique” (Massumi, 2021, p. 30).

Secondly, writing about affect, Massumi goes back to Baruch Spinoza:

It is crucial to remember that when Spinoza talks about affect, he is talking about the body. What a body is, he says, is what it can do as it goes along. This is a totally pragmatic definition. A body is defined by what capacities it carries from step to step. What these are exactly is changing constantly. A body’s ability to affect or be affected—its charge of affect or power of existence—isn’t something fixed. Depending on the circumstances, it goes up and down

gently, like a tide, or maybe storms and crests like a wave, or at times simply bottoms out. (Massumi, 2021, p. xxxiii)

Thus, affect does not reside strictly within the limits of the body; it is not tied to a specific organ or the sum of organs and cannot be pinpointed to a concrete physical location. Affect is immanent.

Lastly, a body comprises of its physicality and mentality (Massumi, 2015). The latter is not synonymous with the mind and should not be thought exclusively in relation to reasoning and brain functions. The mentality of the body speaks to its ability to adapt to changing conditions (Massumi, 2015). The physicality of the body conforms to and enacts that which is known; however, the mentality has the power to invent novelty (Massumi, 2015). Both the body's physicality and mentality speak to how a body knows. What gets reasoned, verbalised, and quantified is only a portion of this bodily knowledge. Bodily capacity to affect and be affected "are not two different capacities—they always go together. When you affect something, you are opening yourself up to being affected in turn and in a slightly different way than you might have been the moment before." (Massumi, 2021, p. xxxiii) Hence body and relationality are instrumental to knowing.

Returning to the tracing of the rhizomatic curriculum and more specifically to its element of knowledge (Figure 1), affect lies in-between transfer and production and is tied to immanence (the centre) and affirmation (direction). Within the limits of this paper, affect is viewed as a vehicle for knowledge transfer and production, not a replacement of either. Dianne Mulcahy (2022) illustrates how affect and affirmation come immanently together to produce a creative, lived, curriculum from the planned. A conceptualisation of rhizomatic curriculum through immanence, affirmation, and affect de-centres the human in the classroom and offers a curriculum as embedded and embodied. Two keywords – body and relationality – have transpired through the opening up of the rhizomatic curriculum. They both permeate all three planes of a rhizomatic curriculum, i.e. its ontology, ethics and epistemology, and offer a transition into the superimposition of rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism.

RHIZOMATIC CURRICULUM X POSTHUMANISM

Now that the concept of posthumanism has been somewhat narrowed down, whereas the tracing of the rhizomatic curriculum has been opened up, I propose to enter their superimposition. The section above has suggested two keywords that connect the ontology, ethics and epistemology of the rhizomatic curriculum: the body and relationality. The non-human meets the human in relation to the body, which posthumanists see as porous, forming networked, enfolded, or influential encounters (Downey, 2024). The porosity of the body, as well as the relations it comes into and their impact on the body, is political:

Some bodies are affected more harshly by the conditions of advanced capitalism than others. [...] Other bodies benefit from these systems. An emphasis on human materiality cannot erase the ways bodies are affected differently—thus the need to maintain the subject. (Downey, 2024, p. 57).

The rhizome, however, is non-normative (Gregoriou, 2004). A rhizomatic curriculum, similarly, does not concern itself with meaning or morals; it has to do with *doings*. In a similar vein, the body, the non-human and relationality are *doers*, or producers of reality. Observed in the classroom, the rhizomatic curriculum enables one to spot the lines of institutional and social hierarchies, as well as to do and undo understandings of who, or what, is in the centre of the lesson, how and what knowledge moves and what it produces. When I say rhizomatic curriculum enables one to do so, I have in mind the virtuality of those doings and undoings. The decision to act them out, as well as what the doings and undoings produce in their actualisation, I claim, may work to affirm both humanism and posthumanism. In other words, the rhizomatic curriculum is not inherently post-human; neither is immanence, affirmation or affect; the rhizomatic curriculum is not synonymous with lived or creative curriculum. Thus, to pay a careful look at what gets actualised in the spacetime of a lesson, at what is missing and what is affirmed, and at who, what and how affects and is affected, is to watch the entanglement of humanism and post-humanism actualise itself.

Since both rhizome and posthumanism are heterogenous and generative, I feel that to proceed with this paper constructively, I need to find the right question that could simultaneously problematise and structure my inquiry. After a period of intense putting questions together and pulling them apart, I have settled with this: *what does a rhizomatic curriculum do in relation to posthumanism?* I think the superimposition in enmeshed cuts: posthumanism as a contemporary condition, posthumanism as research medium, and posthumanism as a philosophy.

Rhizomatic Curriculum x Posthumanism as a Contemporary Condition

Posthumanism, to use Deleuze's words, is "a state of things" (Deleuze, 1995/1997, p. 5), a lived state in which a rhizomatic curriculum is made visible. The two elements of the earlier analysis—the body and relationality—are already present in a human-centered classroom. A decentring of the human in education is not about erasing the child (Murris & Osgood, 2022); it has more to do with tapping into how the human is figured by acknowledging and accentuating its connectedness to the world through the body and the non-human, which includes the natural and material environment, such as animals or technology. Placing the learner or the teacher in the centre of a lesson reproduces humanist conditioning, in which the human is individual, self-standing, discon-

nected. It also establishes a dependency on the curriculum, which, in a human-centered classroom, regulates the relationship between the teacher and the learner. In turn, it defines the role of knowledge by placing it on a separate plane—that of transcendence. Knowledge is then viewed as something that exists outside the classroom; it is finite, unquestionable, right. Tapping into the virtuality of posthumanism in a classroom not only connects the teacher and the learner with the body or the non-human but also amplifies the relationality between the human allowing it to become a collective that, to para-quote Braidotti (2019a), is more than the sum of its parts.

Through Deleuzian immanence we realise that humanism sets us on the path of transcendence (Daigle & McDonald, 2022). Transcendental immanence allows for a move from a two-world to a one-world ontology (St. Pierre, 2019), from a humanist to a posthumanist classroom. Briefly put, ontologically, the rhizome, in contrast to the human-centered model of education, privileges collective and relational knowledge and action, and in this way shifts the perception of a pedagogical connection: it is no longer exclusive to a singular teacher–pupil relationship but rather has potential to incorporate *everyone* and *everything* present, virtually and actually, in the classroom. As a result, the non-human participants in education, such as pieces of technology and nature, furniture and space arrangements or noises and sounds, hint at how the centre in the classroom may shift between the teacher, the learner and the world. The decentring of the human can be conceptualised through bodies—*learnerbodies* and *teacherbodies*, affecting and affected, relational and collective. A *teacherbody* can be hosted by a pupil or a group of pupils, a smartboard or a board game; a *learnerbody*, similarly, is not exclusive to pupils. Consequently, curriculum ceases to be a regulating, standardising force that effects how knowledge is reproduced and distributed. Instead, it is made in the relational collectivity of *learner* and *teacher* bodies: the curriculum moves from a humanist two-world (transcendental) lesson to actualise a posthumanist one-world immanence.

The rhizomatic curriculum can be meaningfully put to work to bring about posthumanism as a contemporary condition. The concept of immanence compels the human to care for all types of relationships (Carstens, 2020). In the context of the classroom that includes pedagogical relationships with and between the non-human. The rhizomatic curriculum creates spaces in which connections and unions can be made visible and affirmed, commanding, as Delphi Carstens (2020) sees, to take accountability for the roles one plays in world-making. In addition to disturbing the exclusivity and disconnectedness of the human, the rhizomatic curriculum may work to complicate subject boundaries. Carstens (2020) convincingly illustrates how a posthuman immanent space is interdisciplinary, involving biology, ecology, history, and economics, among other disciplines, all of which are necessary to better relate to and care for the non-human. As it was stated earlier, posthumanism as a contemporary condition is marked by a desire to work from and against planet destruction, forms of advanced capitalism, commodification of body and nature and the general idea of hu-

man exceptionalism. These signature features of Anthropocene are interconnected and can hardly be solved by tackling climate or the economy alone. Classrooms then can be seen as potential spaces for creative production of inter- and trans-disciplinarity. All in all, the rhizomatic curriculum affords to affirm posthumanism by taking it out of its virtuality into actuality.

Rhizomatic Curriculum x Posthumanism as Research Medium

Posthumanism as a research medium affords a decentring of the human as the knowing subject (Snaza et al., 2014). As social sciences research is still a human endeavour, the human aspect remains, even in posthuman inquiry. What posthumanism challenges researchers to seek is ways to allow different foci to come in or to look for a way to let the object become the speaker, in other words—the subject of inquiry, disturbing the binary between the knower and the known (Snaza et al., 2014). This task requires researchers to consider the materiality of research-making, to make use of its multimodality and to defy ready-made human-centered methodologies. Some of the ways to go about posthuman inquiry include welcoming non-representation, processuality and relationality (Ulmer, 2017). These are aimed, per Ulmer's (2017) account, at experimenting with and developing a capacity to think without, think with, and think differently.

This stance moves away from the qualitative or quantitative inquiry in which the human knowing subject's capacity to not only reason but also rationalise is deemed critical in producing representational accounts of reality. Claims towards universal validity and credibility of qualitative research have been defied and reworked through critical theory, contributing to more socially-just worlds. Jasmine B. Ulmer (2017) acknowledges the impact of critical theory in shaping qualitative research and at the same time calls for more-than-critical inquiry. Experimenting and learning to think and research in more-than-human ways is essential to practising more-than-human justice:

Rather, justice is also material, ecological, geographical, geological, geopolitical, and geophilosophical. Justice is a more-than-human endeavor. Their aim is not to remove humans from research, but to deemphasize the focus on humans and recognize that non-human elements are always already present. (Ulmer, 2017, p. 833)

Cultivating a sensibility towards the non-human has a direct effect on what is considered knowledge, how it is produced, and used. The affordances of posthumanism as a research medium bear embodied and embedded inquiry, which accounts not only for how researchers *do* research, but also how research *does* them.

Social scientists “do not just seek to understand the world”; they “want to have an effect on it: (Rosiek et al., 2024, p. 220) and to do so differently than quantitative and qualitative research allows. Qualitative and quantitative research practices have lit-

eral (in terms of produced data) and derivative (regarding epistemological, ontological and axiological premises underlying the research method) differences: while a quantitative researcher claims the position of objectivity and position themselves on the outside of the studied object or phenomena, a qualitative researcher aims to become an objective insider by taking “an intentional stance” (Le Grange, 2018, p. 2) that is required to understand human actions. The arrival of critical theories and poststructuralism gave rise to another kind of research—postqualitative inquiry, aligned with the need to find a new way to address, think and act in the posthuman condition. This type of research, among other things, is mostly interdisciplinary and demands that scholars account for their entanglement with the world, acknowledge their situatedness and subjectivity in the making of research. Posthumanism as a research medium holds the power to affirm a rhizomatic curriculum. Yet by attuning to its immanence, affirmation and affect, by seeking ways to let the rhizomatic curriculum speak, the researcher must be *careful* and response-able in their own being, thinking, and acting.

Researcher’s body is also relational. Although I am trying to put two non-humans into a conversation here, I am the *doer* of this trying. A paper without an empirical study should qualify as theoretical, but theory is, too, *done*. Researching the rhizomatic curriculum with the help of posthumanism, inquiry might de-centre the human but will never be human-free. Rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism, by extension, carry the embeddedness of the human within them.

Rhizomatic Curriculum x Posthumanism as a Philosophy

To accentuate the shift from, or response to, humanism, the section will focus on the *post*-ness. The post of posthumanism, hinting that perhaps the days of the human are close to over, causes terror and excitement (Hayles, 1999). The turn away from human exceptionalism and towards relationality and inclusion of the non-human can be taken as a rejection of humanism. Yet to avoid “forgetting the many struggles over knowledge and (mis) (re)presentations that have come before it, and which also have attempted to address issues of multiplicity, uncertainty, affect, ontology, and materiality” (Gerrard et al., 2017, p. 389), posthumanism could do with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s (2024) provocation for graceful accountability: do not accuse, but do not excuse either. Thus, posthumanism requires a commitment to experiment “with new, unpredictable, perhaps even seemingly impossible forms of relation among animals, plants, objects, machines” (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 10) without denouncing or eliminating the human involvement and role in it, including “using posthumanist reconceptualisations of human/animal/machine/thing relations to diagnose how humanism ignores, obscures, and disavows the real relations among beings and things that make up the stuff of the world” (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 1).

In the context of curriculum, the concept of the rhizome allows us to navigate the call to not accuse and not excuse. It pushes educational thinkers and researchers

to, firstly, recognise and acknowledge the molarity of the human in learning and teaching and, secondly, seek sustainable ways of undoing and disrupting that molarity. Following the earlier opening-up of the rhizomatic curriculum using Deleuzeguetarian concepts of immanence, affirmation, and affect, the next paragraph will bring together the three planes of ontology, ethics, and epistemology at the superimposition of the rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism as a philosophy. Ontologically, the rhizome, in contrast to the human-centered model of education, privileges collective knowledge and action, and in this way shifts the perception of a pedagogical connection: it is no longer exclusive to a singular teacher–pupil relationship but rather incorporates everyone and everything (that is, *teacher-* and *learner* bodies) present in the classroom. As a result, the non-human participants in education, such as the presence of technology and nature, furniture and space arrangements or noises and sounds, hint at how the centre in the classroom may shift from teacher and learner to the world. Epistemologically, applying the concept of the rhizome in educational K-12 settings challenges teachers and policy makers to reconsider the embedded classroom concepts and hierarchies, or power relations, situated and partial, that determine why and how knowledge is transferred or produced. It also challenges to intentionally include material bodies in the classroom as knowing. An exploration of knowledge production practices, as well as consideration of what counts as knowledge at all, helps constructively question the educational tenets of truth, progress and assessment as evidence of learning. Lastly, from the position of ethics, posthumanism aids in re-thinking the purpose, implementation and end-goal of education: what and how needs to be taught and learnt? is education directed towards maintaining or changing existing knowledge, social and political systems? is it designed to help learners shape and reach their individual goals? what about the collective posthumanist ‘we’? The latter concerns not only every living being on the planet, but also their interconnectedness and differences (Braidotti, 2020). Overall, what posthumanism offers to the discussion of the rhizomatic curriculum is both the task and the power to affirm and to include what has been missing.

POINT OF DEPARTURE

The superimposition of a rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism has disclosed an affordance to pay attention to bodies and relationality in the classroom and in doing so deepen posthuman sensibilities as researchers, teachers, and learners. Posthumanism as a contemporary condition affords to be affirmed through rhizomatic curricula, whereas a rhizomatic curriculum affords to be affirmed through posthumanism as a research medium. While posthumanism as a contemporary condition and a research medium in relation to the rhizomatic curriculum can be engaged with sporadically or locally, as a philosophy it demands a larger commitment on all three philosophical planes.

As a philosophy, posthumanism offers a new vision and alignment in approaching and explaining reality, knowledge and ethics that is no longer human-centred. Yet posthumanism has not been philosophised to completion and its novel articulations in education remain to be discovered.

What is evident, though, is the presence of the human in both the rhizomatic curriculum and posthumanism. The concept of the rhizome makes it possible to not only reconcile but also see the molar and molecular as co-existing due to their belonging to the plane of immanence. If humanism, or its traces and articulations, is perceived as a system of the molar, which dominates education policy, curriculum-teacher-learner relations, classroom environments and life outside them, posthumanism may take on a molecular quality, which is indeterminate, fluid and contingent. In a two-world ontology the curriculum is either lived or planned, reactive or creative; in a one-world, it is virtually both. Would that mean that, similarly, posthumanism and humanism are both virtually there? The answer to this speculative dilemma might be sought in a familiar question. In her Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Toni Morrison (1993) narrates a story about a group of kids who bring an old woman a bird in one of their hands, asking her to tell them if the bird is alive or dead (Carlson, 2021). The woman, in turn, says that it does not matter; what matters is that if the bird is dead, it means they either found it so or killed it; and if the bird is alive, they might kill it (Carlson, 2021). To Carlson (2021), the anecdote speaks to the power of language, whereas I, even rereading this excerpt, immediately think about Schrodinger's cat: it is not actually important if the cat is alive or dead – what is important is that our curiosity – or desire to know for certain, to see with our own eyes and to diffuse uncertainty – has the power to kill the cat.

Concluding this paper, I, too, think it is not important which is worthier, more real or relevant – posthumanism or humanism. In fact, I am not certain that posthumanism can exist without humanism, or a rhizomatic curriculum without a curriculum. It is our actions, what we *do*, in the face of this dilemma that are of essence. It is my hope that the superimposition has readied readers for an answer to the question phrased in the opening of the paper: the rhizomatic curriculum is both curriculum in posthumanism and posthuman curriculum, precisely because it is simultaneously virtually molar and molecular. This intentional stance to include (*and... and... and...*), to see posthumanism in conversation with humanism as opposed to seeing it as the coming dominant reality, aids in pluriversalising the task of curriculum enablement. The body, the relationality, and the non-human are already in the classroom; even more, they can be included.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks prof. dr. Lilija Duoblienė (Vilnius University, Lithuania) and prof. dr. Mirka Koro (Arizona State University, USA) for their thoughtful and generous feedback while writing the article.

REFERENCES

- Åsberg, C., & Braidotti, R. (Eds.). (2018). *A feminist companion to the posthumanities*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62140-1>
- Biesta, G. (2021). *World-centred education: A view for the present*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003098331>
- Braidotti, R. (2010). The posthuman predicament. In A. Smelik (Ed.), *The Scientific Imaginary in Visual Culture* (pp. 69-88). V&R unipress GmbH. <https://doi.org/10.14220/9783862347568.69>
- Braidotti, R. (2013). Posthuman relational subjectivity and the politics of affirmation. In P. Rawes (Ed.), *Relational architectural ecologies* (pp. 21-39). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203770283>
- Braidotti, R. (2017). Critical posthuman knowledges. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116(1), 83-96. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-3749337>
- Braidotti, R. (2019a). A theoretical framework for the critical posthumanities. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 36(6), 31-61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486>
- Braidotti, R. (2019b). *Posthuman knowledge*. Polity Press.
- Braidotti, R. (2020). "We" are in this together, but we are not one and the same. *Journal of Bioethical Inquiry*, 17, 465-469. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11673-020-10017-8>
- Braidotti, R., & Hlavajova, M. (Eds.). (2018). *Posthuman glossary*. Bloomsbury Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350030275>
- Braidotti, R., Jones, E., & Klumbyte, G. (Eds.). (2022). *More posthuman glossary*. Bloomsbury Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350231467>
- Capaccioli, M. (2024). Are we human? Some examples for mapping non-linear educational practices. *Educational Reflective Practices*, 1, 258-273. <https://doi.org/10.3280/erp1-2024oa18452>
- Carlson, D. L. (2021). The (un)certainly of post-qualitative research: Textures of life-in-motion as articulation. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 27(2), 158-162. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420917405>
- Carstens, D. (2020). An ethics of immanence: Posthumanism and the politics of care. In V. Bozalek, M. Zembylas, & J. Tronto (Eds.), *Posthuman and political care ethics for reconfiguring higher education pedagogies* (pp. 79-90). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003028468-7>
- Ceder, S. (2018). *Towards a posthuman theory of educational relationality*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351044196>
- Cole, D. R. (2020). A new science of contemporary educational theory, practice and research. In K. Murris (Ed.), *Navigating the postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist terrain across disciplines* (pp. 99-116). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003041177-6>
- Daigle, C., & McDonald, T. H. (2022). Introduction: Posthumanisms through Deleuze. In C. Daigle, & T. H. McDonald (Eds.), *From Deleuze and Guattari to posthumanism: Philosophies of immanence* (pp. 7-42). Bloomsbury Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350262256.0005>
- Deleuze, G. (1997). Immanence: A Life. *Theory, Culture and Society* (N. Millett, Trans.), 14(2), 3-7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327697014002002> (Original work published 1995).
- Downey, A. M. (2024). Autobiography without an "I": Currere for the era of a porous self. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 39(4), 53-66. <https://doi.org/10.63997/jct.v39i4.1127>
- Du Preez, P., & Le Grange, L. (2025). The regenerative power of curriculum theorising: feminine wonderings/ wanderings without. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 45, 57-66. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-024-00252-z>
- Du Preez, P., Simmonds, S., & Le Grange, L. (2022). Re/thinking curriculum inquiry in the posthuman condition: A critical posthumanist stance. *Education as Change*, 26, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/11460>
- Duobliene, L., & Vaitekaitis, J. (2021). Posthumanist approach to human/child-centred education. *Journal of Futures Studies*, 26(2), 37-50.
- Duoblienė, L., Kaire, S., & Vaitekaitis, J. (2023). Education for the future: Applying concepts from the new materialist discourse to UNESCO and OECD publications. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 54(3), 213-224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2023.2188576>
- Ferrando, F. (2012). Towards a posthumanist methodology. A statement. *Frame Journal For Literary Studies*, 25(1), 9-18.
- Ferrando, F. (2020). *Philosophical posthumanism*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Ferrando, F. (2022). Existential posthumanism: A manifesto. In R. Braidotti, E. Jones, & G. Klumbyte (Eds.), *More posthuman glossary* (pp. 47-49). Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Ferrando, F., & Banerji, D. (2023). Posthuman spirituality. In G. Hamilton & C. Lau (Eds.), *Mapping the Posthuman* (pp. 253-257). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003322603-31>
- Gajauskaitė, R. & Marinković, N. M. (2024). Kingdoms of ruin: Intuition as a Method at the superimposition of education, time and the Pandemic. In D. R. Cole, M. Mirzaei Rafe, & G. Y. A. Yang-Heim (Eds.), *Educational Research and the Question(s) of Time* (pp. 401-418). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-3418-4_22
- Gajauskaitė, R. (2024). Thinking teaching unplugged with rhizomatic curriculum. *Changing English*, 32(2), 167-178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684x.2024.2418397>
- Gerrard, J., Rudolph, S., & Sriprakash, A. (2017). The politics of post-qualitative inquiry: History and power. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(5), 384-394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800416672694>
- Gladden, M. E. (2016). A typology of posthumanism: A framework for differentiating analytic, synthetic, theoretical, and practical posthumanisms. In M. E. Gladden (Ed.), *Sapient circuits and digitalized flesh: The Organization as locus of technological posthumanization* (pp. 31-91). Defragmenter Media.
- Gregoriou, Z. (2004). Commencing the rhizome: Towards a minor philosophy of education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 36(3), 233-251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2004.00065.x>
- Hamilton, G., & Lau, C. (2023). *Mapping the Posthuman*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003322603>
- Hayles, N. K. (1999). *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics*. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226321394.001.0001>
- Herbrechter, S., Callus, I., Rossini, M., Grech, M., de Bruin-Mole, M., & Muller, C. J. (2022). *Palgrave handbook of critical posthumanism*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-42681-1>
- Le Grange, L. (2018). What is post qualitative research? *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 32(5), 1-14.
- Le Grange, L., & Du Preez, P. (2023). Curriculum studies in the posthuman condition/posthuman curriculum studies. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 37(5), 60-77. <https://doi.org/10.20853/37-5-5985>
- Le Grange, L., Du Preez, P., Moonsamy Maistry, S., Simmonds, S., Blignaut, S., Ramrathan, L., & Reddy, C. (2024). The becoming of a curriculum studies special interest group: Reactive, interactive and intra-active complicated conversations. *Journal of Education*, (94), 28-49.
- Magaiza, G., & Muchaku, S. (2023). Curriculum enablement and posthumanism: Pathways for creating and implementing a community development curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, 5(1), 159-170. <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcsr.2023.12>
- Massumi, B. (2015). *Politics of affect*. Polity.
- Massumi, B. (2021). *Parables for the virtual: Movement, affect, sensation* (2nd ed.). Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822383574>
- Morales, J. B., & Zarabadi, S. (Eds.) (2024). *Towards posthumanism in education: Theoretical entanglements and pedagogical mappings*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365693>
- Morrison, T. (1993). *Nobel speech*. NobelPrize. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/lecture/>
- Mulcahy, D. (2022). Enacting affirmative ethics in education: A materialist/posthumanist framing. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(7), 1003-1013. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.1907744>
- Murris, K. (Ed.) (2021). *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003041153>
- Murris, K., & Bozalek, V. (2019). Diffraction and response-able reading of texts: The relational ontologies of Barad and Deleuze. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 32(7), 872-886. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1609122>
- Murris, K., & Osgood, J. (2022). Risking erasure? Posthumanist research practices and figurations of the child. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 23(3), 208-219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14639491221117761>
- Richardson, L. R. (2009). Singing at the Burrard inlet. In T. Strong-Wilson, C. Ehret, D. Lewkowich, & S. Chang-Kredl (Eds.), *Provoking curriculum encounters across educational experience: New engagements with the curriculum theory archive* (pp.77-89). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429058110>
- Rosiek, J., Adkins-Cartee, M. J., Donley, K. & Pratt, B. (2024). A review of posthumanist education research: Expanded conceptions of research possibility and responsibility. *Review of Research in Education*, 48(1), 220-247. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x241265332>
- Snaza, N., & Weaver, J. (2014). Introduction: Education and the posthumanist turn. In N. Snaza, & J. Weaver (Eds.), *Posthumanism and educational research* (pp. 1-14). Routledge.

- Snaza, N., Appelbaum, P., Bayne, S., Carlson, D., Morris, M., Rotas, N., Sandlin, J., Wallin, J. & Weaver, J. A. (2014). Toward a posthumanist Education. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 30(2), 39-55. <https://doi.org/10.63997/jct.v30i2.501>
- Snaza, N., Sonu, D., Truman, S. E., & Zaliwska, Z. (2016). *Pedagogical matters: New materialisms and curriculum studies*. Peter Lang. <https://doi.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-1648-3>
- Spivak, G. C. (2024). Teaching for a broken world. *ANGLICA-An International Journal of English Studies*, 33(3), 11-26. <https://doi.org/10.7311/0860-5734.33.3.02>
- St. Pierre, E. A. (2019). Post qualitative inquiry in an ontology of immanence. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(1), 3-16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418772634>
- Taylor, C. A., & Hughes, C. (Eds.) (2016). *Posthuman research practices in education*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137453082>
- Thomsen, M. R., & Wamberg, J. (Eds.). (2020). *The Bloomsbury handbook of posthumanism*. Bloomsbury Academic. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350090507>
- Ulmer, J. B. (2017). Posthumanism as research methodology: Inquiry in the Anthropocene. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 30(9), 832-848. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1336806>
- Ulmer, J. B., Kuby, C. R., & Christ, R. C. (2020). What do pedagogies produce? Thinking/teaching qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 26(1), 3-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800419869961>
- Weaver, J. A. (2009). The posthuman condition: A complicated conversation. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook – the next moment* (pp. 190-200). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203877791-17>
- Wolfe, C. (2010). *What is posthumanism?* University of Minnesota Press.
- Žukauskaitė, A., & Wilmer, S. E. (2023). Forms of life in the posthuman condition: An introduction. In S. E. Wilmer & A. Žukauskaitė (Eds.), *Life in the posthuman condition: Critical responses to the anthropocene* (pp. 1-12). Edinburgh University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781399505291>