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Contents

- 5 CLAUDIA BRUNNER
Un/Doing Epistemic Violence while Trying to Change the World
- 30 FARIDA GLOBAL WRITING COLLECTIVE
Undoing Epistemic Violence in Academic Knowledge Production
through Survivors' Participation: Learning from the Experiences of
Yazidi Survivors
- 50 CHRISTINA PAULS
Performing Cracks in Public Memory: Undoing Epistemic Violence
Through Artistic Interventions
- 74 MECHTHILD EXO
Democratic Peace Concepts Beyond the Abyss: Examples from
Afghanistan, Nagaland, and Kurdistan
- 100 MELANIE HUSSAK
Exploring Self-in-Relation: UnDoing Epistemic and Ontological
Violence in the Context of Indigenous Peace
- 122 LENA MERKLE
Epistemological Anarchism Against Epistemic Violence? A
Rereading of Paul Feyerabend towards the Decolonisation of
Academic Knowledge Production

139 SIMONE MÜLLER

Undoing Epistemic Violence in Educational Philosophy: Changing
the Story with Donna Haraway's SF

162 URSULA POSRATSCHNIG

Epistemic Violence and the Carnistic Matrix: Intersecting
Oppressive Hierarchies among Human and Animal Others

185 Editors and Authors of the Special Issue

190 Publication Details

SIMONE MÜLLER

**Undoing Epistemic Violence in Educational Philosophy:
Changing the Story with Donna Haraway's SF**

ABSTRACT *This paper aims at exploring the potentials of a post-dualistic narrative approach to doing theory for facilitating the undoing of epistemic violence with a special focus on educational philosophy. Using 'SF' – an approach developed by Donna Haraway – methodological, epistemological and ontological aspects of epistemic violence are subjected to a critical reflection. One of the main conclusions from this elaboration is that being sensitive to epistemically violent theories, concepts and practices of knowledge production is crucial, but not enough. Rather, it seems to be important for undoing epistemic violence to think about theory and theorising in a radically different, post-anthropocentric way.*

KEYWORDS *Anthropocene, relationality, SF, response-ability, ethico-onto-epistemology*

1. Introduction

What if the human, as a concept with all its premises, was no longer available for thought? Feminist scholar Donna Haraway poses this question in the face of the Anthropocene diagnosis of the time, in which 'man' once again is imagined at the heart of history – now, even on a planetary scale (Haraway 2016a: 5). Yet, so the argument of critical feminist and post-colonial thinkers (see Gramlich 2020; Yusoff 2019) to whom Haraway's thought connects goes, the human (or man or *anthropos*) is no solution to the global problems we face in the Anthropocene. Rather, this epistemically violent concept permeates multiple contemporary crises, because

it represents the “fictitious universality of a privileged kind of human” (Timeto 2021: 316).

Haraway’s question is the starting point of this paper with which to trace the possibilities of post-anthropocentric thinking for undoing epistemic violence. I do so from the perspective of educational research, particularly from educational philosophy. There are at least two reasons why this field is particularly interesting regarding the epistemic violence which is contained in the image of the human. First, many core concepts of educational philosophy contain problematic images of the human, which are normalised as soon as they are tacitly assumed. Second, the pertinent disciplinary discourses are characterised to a significant extent by anthropocentrism. These peculiarities are due to the fact that the entire discipline of pedagogy (and its later and current differentiations in the academic field), which flourished in neo-humanism, is to this day based on humanist thought and thus closely connected to humanist anthropology (see Weiß 2011), whereby the humanist discourse has already been disenchanted by various critiques (for an overview in postcolonial thought see Malreddy 2009). Being dedicated to the endeavour of undoing epistemic violence, I put forward to discussion thoughts on how, methodologically, the humanist framework and its modes of knowledge production in educational philosophy could be altered, so that epistemic violence in the form of images of the human contained in core concepts such as the subject or education [*Bildung*] can be addressed.

First, I will elaborate on why the notion of the ‘human’ contains epistemically violent aspects, and shapes concepts in educational philosophy in a problematic, namely sexist, racist and speciesist way. Exploring the problematic conceptual premises of educational thought, I will show how epistemic violence is reproduced in knowledge production by referring to presuppositions rendered invisible (see section 2). Subsequently, I present Haraway’s ‘SF’ narrative approach and set out its methodological, epistemological and ethical dimensions, as well as their entanglements. SF means “science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, speculative feminism and science fact” (Haraway 2016a: 2) and designates a methodological orientation for emancipatory theorising and knowledge production. Using SF motifs and corresponding strategies from Haraway’s work, I will show how the human can be decentred in philosophising, so that partial

responses to epistemically violent concepts can be developed (see section 3). In the conclusion, I touch upon the institutional conditions for producing less violent knowledge in academia as a precondition for undoing epistemic violence.

2. The human – a failed promise of modernity

Feminist and postcolonial authors have shown that the predominant notion of the human, which is closely connected to promises of the Enlightenment, such as reason and autonomy, is a specifically western self-image and a product of epistemically violent practices based on thinking in allegedly universal categories and dualisms (see Anzaldúa 2012[1987]; Ahmed 1996; Said 2003[1978]). These normalised thinking practices establish powerful hierarchisations, which shape commonly shared images of the self in contrast to the other. The self and its manifestation, ‘the human’, render invisible the mechanism enabling the constitution of an ostensibly stable self-identity, namely “the domination of women, people of color, nature, workers, animals – in short, domination of all constituted as others, whose task is to mirror the self” (Haraway 2016b: 59). Even though the other is embodied and materialised by quite different human and non-human actors, this thinking in terms of an identity logic reduces the other to one specific function, which is to serve as a constitutional condition of the male western identity – the unmarked norm (Haraway 1995: 87) behind the universalised concept of the human. Thus, a very specific human is declared the standard and its powerful position, for instance in a historically situated apparatus of knowing, is secured (Haraway/Wolfe 2016: 205). The human at the heart of core concepts in educational philosophy perpetuates this powerful western self-image of “the one who is not animal, barbarian, or woman; man, that is, the author of a cosmos called history” (Haraway 2016b: 19).

2.1 Uncanny entanglements of educational philosophy

The story of the western self establishes the discipline of pedagogy and the academic debate on education. The founding myth of the discipline could be summarised as follows: education leads to humanisation and

brings out the ideal human being in his [sic!] full potentiality (see Kant 1977[1783]; Humboldt 1995[1793]). The other is there for his making and is thus devalued as mere resource for his self-expansion or self-completion (Le Guin 2019[1986]: 29; Timeto 2021: 317). This story is part of the bourgeois ideal of education, which refers to a powerful ontological position of the subject of education, which corresponds to global relations of, among other forms of violence, epistemic violence under (post-)colonial conditions: while the western human is stylised as the only actor in history, all those on whose backs modernity was built remain invisible and are therefore not understood as participants in the project called history (Schrading 2022: 197).

Today, the bourgeois ideal of education and its story of the human are hardly ever represented in such an explicit form. However, educational institutions such as the school are fully in their grip (see Czejkowska/Müller forthcoming; SCHOG 2023 1/§2). Albeit implicitly, the humanistic image of education and its subject are prolonged in competence-oriented educational concepts dominating the discursive-material reality in education for many years now (for a critical genealogy of the discourse on competence see: Gelhard 2011). Moreover, the way education is negotiated in policy-contexts, such as the discussion on Lifelong Learning, is very much based on the story of the self in the bourgeois ideal of education, and even radicalises it by amalgamating it with neoliberal governmentality (Borg/Mayo 2005; see also: Pongratz 2010). Critical approaches draw attention to these problems and shed light on the entanglement of the bourgeois subject and its education with capitalist logics of exploitation (see e.g: Ribolits 2009; Erler/Holzer/Kloyber/Schuster/Vater 2014).

Throughout the reception of poststructuralist approaches in educational philosophy, the pedagogical core category of the subject has been questioned ever more extensively (see Schäfer 1993). Before that period, authors followed critical materialist theory and connected thoughts on the contradictory entanglements of the subject in capitalist society with a critical analysis of education and educational institutions (see Koneffke 1969; Heydorn 1969). These problematisations have prompted diverse reflections that seek to think of education despite the heralded 'death' of the central pedagogical category of the subject (Büniger 2011; for an overview, see Froebus 2019). One strand of these attempts is characterised by no longer trying to imagine the subject as autonomous, but as decentred in the sense

of being inextricably entangled in social power relations. Thus, anthropological premises connected to educational teloi such as autonomy or reason became questionable, at least (see Bünger 2015: 17). Despite the indispensable critique of these approaches, it is worth noting that they also have some blind spots. For example, they frequently do not involve feminist or postcolonial considerations in their debates (Baumann/Burkhardt 2014). Additionally, they do not question the centrality of the human. That is why they tend to invoke the problematic constellation at the heart of the bourgeois ideal of education: the human as a universalised and naturalised category.

In summary, the following can be stated: regardless of a partial awareness of problematic preconditions of educational concepts such as the subject, the concept of the modern human and its manifestations are still powerful in at least three ways. First, the awareness of the problem in some parts of educational philosophy seems quite disconnected from the educational reality (that is comprising educational policy, public perception of education, educational organisation, etc.) in 21st century western society. Second, even approaches in educational philosophy which are critical of humanism struggle to adopt a perspective sensitive to difference as inspired by feminist and postcolonial thought. Also, anthropocentrism is perpetuated, reflecting a typically western self-location in the world. Consequently, problematic concepts and images of the self are performatively reproduced in large parts of the field (Thompson 2019: 211f). That is, third, not only because of ignorance, but in particular because of an “inner-disciplinary systematic deficit” (Wimmer 2019: 334; translation by S.M.). This deficit has its roots in the humanist heritage of the discipline and its core concepts, which revolve around the western self at the centre. The concepts of educational philosophy must therefore be fundamentally questioned and deconstructed (ibid: 46; see also Herbrechter 2016) in order to undo epistemic violence.

2.2 Why think about the other in education?

Before I turn to a specific strategy for undoing epistemic violence connected to the centrality of the human in educational thought, it is still necessary to clarify the larger conceptual framework within which

these considerations will operate. Thus, I embed my following thoughts in a relational “ethico-onto-epistemology” (Barad 2007: 90) that allows for the decentring and deconstruction of the (humanist) human. Within this framework, human and non-human agents are considered situated entities in a specific socio-historic constellation and continuously emerging in multispecies relational processes. The point of departure for thinking is thus not the self in distinction to the other, but the entangled practices of relationally emergent actors such as (not only) humans, but also animals, bacteria, environments and chemical processes. Being human is thus imagined to be constantly reconfigured through a multiplicity of biological, chemical, social, pedagogical, and interspecies “intra-actions” (Barad 2015: 42). Individuality, beyond self-identity, can now be understood as a specifically situated yet heterogeneous collective becoming (Czejkowska/Müller forthcoming). This radical decentralisation of the human challenges bounded individualism, anthropocentrism, human exceptionalism and thinking in hierarchised dualisms – all of which are the preconditions of the western self which I, among many others, have problematised (see Braidotti 2019; Castro 2019; Barad 2007).

It is important to emphasise that such a flattening at the onto-epistemological level does not imply that all the actors evolving through relational configurations are the same or that they share social or political equality in a state of harmonious unity. Rather, relations are constituted through “significant otherness” (Haraway 2008: 90), inequalities, differently distributed agency, responsibility, precarity, and vulnerability. While there is scope for recomposing these relations in a less violent way, still, any rearrangement of relations merely reconfigures differences and does not resolve them (Hoppe 2019: 134). Thus, to clarify in order to avoid any suspicion of relativism: the relational perspective does not refer to merely formal relations that denote a connection between different actors on a descriptive level (see critical of flat ontologies Mersch 2022; Lettow 2016). Rather, these relations are considered to be inherently ethical, because “worlding” (Haraway 2016a: 13), as a generative practice, is possible through them and their re-configurations.

Despite this theoretical effort to decentre the human, paradoxically, a hyper-centration of the human is simultaneously evident in the current discourse surrounding the Anthropocene (see Hoppe 2022). This corre-

sponds to understandings of education (such as Education for Sustainable Development) that invoke the autonomous subject of reason, truncate education as formal competence development, and make it part of a technological promise of salvation (Stimm/Müller 2023). Also, equal subjects are presupposed in a world in which scopes of action, vulnerabilities, and precariousness, but also privileges and responsibilities are highly differentiated (Danielzik 2013: 27). The consequence of that is that western self-images are normalised and the corresponding lifestyles are systematically secured (Blühdorn 2020: 306). It is evident that hereby a destructive pattern is perpetuated and continues to be so at the expense of the human and non-human othered.

Against the backdrop of the severe socio-ecological disasters we are facing, which unmask some narratives of modernity (non-violence, Enlightenment, reason, democracy and emancipation) as failed promises, relational and post-anthropocentric thinking appears all the more important in order to redesign the current worldly relations. This paper contributes to this endeavour by proposing strategies for philosophising that facilitate re-articulating, reworking or remodelling basic preconditions of thought condensed in theoretical concepts of educational philosophy, in order to avoid adopting pedagogical concepts such as ‘education’ and its implications unquestioningly and thus perpetuating epistemic violence, even if unintentionally. This is especially important, as it is noticeable that when approaches critical of humanism or approaches at least critical of previous self-understandings that led to the disastrous Anthropocene talk about education, familiar concepts and presumed self-evidences are again invoked. These perspectives often call for a certain content in education for dealing with ecological crises. Examples mentioned are more technological literacy (Wulf 2022: 240) or more animal-studies. They also suggest raising ecological awareness (Herbrechter 2014) or implementing gardening as a school subject (Breil 2022). The problem is that central questions, such as how to conceptualise the human as questionable, precarious and collectively becoming instead of merely in need of more competencies, are not touched by these suggestions. And a further unresolved question is how to detach education from this modernist narrative of progress and from the myth that more knowledge leads to more sustainable or less violent actions in academic knowledge production or in everyday life (Kleinschmidt 2022).

3. SF as philosophical story-telling-practice

A potent strategy for reconfiguring and deconstructing concepts is offered by Donna Haraway. She calls this strategy “SF” (Haraway 2016a: 3). The letters SF stand for: “science fiction, speculative fabulation, string figures, speculative feminism, science fact, so far” (Haraway 2016a: 2). SF presupposes an ethico-onto-epistemology of companion species (see section 2.2) that conceptualises being as cross-species, heterogeneous, also technologically mediated relationality (see also: Haraway 2016c). While referring to a rather abstract framework, SF at the same time is praxeological and points to concrete, situated and contextualised “patterns” (Haraway 2016a: 3) of relational configurations and how these affect the actors involved. SF thus questions relations regarding their unequally distributed power, agency and vulnerability (Haraway 2016a: 2), and is concerned with the detailed examination of specific relational constellations and with politicising these connections by pointing to problematic or overlooked entanglements. Hence, SF also stands for a method of following troubling threads of stories for “staying with the trouble” (Haraway 2016a) in contrast to accepting dominant narratives (Haraway 2016a: 3; see also: Sonderegger 2021). In this described sense, SF is reconstructive. At the same time, it is potentially transformative, as it is “committed to the proposition that the established disorder is not necessary” (Haraway 2011: 6), and thus looks for ways of reshaping relations. The methodology of SF therefore entails the possibility of speculatively redesigning material and discursive relations by telling stories dedicated to a gradual transformation, starting with concrete, located and situated multispecies interdependencies (Hoppe 2022: 9f; Haraway 2011: 5). Telling stories as an SF-practice can mean several things, such as making relations usually overlooked visible, framing relations differently as done within the hegemonic narratives, connecting different bodies of knowledge and perspectives and thereby rearticulating worlds or, in Haraway’s idiom, practising “worlding” (Haraway 2016a: 13; 3).

To make SF vivid, Haraway uses the figure of string games (one of the meanings of SF), where one player uses a thread to create a pattern, which is then passed on to another player who takes on and then changes the pattern received, and so on. String figure games are well known in

western and indigenous societies – although under different names. The image of string figure games helps Haraway to, for example, connect the Navajo thought of collectiveness and relatedness with a familiar western body of knowledge (Haraway 2016a: 13ff). It is important to note that these attempts of connecting stories are a tricky methodology, “a risky proposition” (Haraway 2013), one which is always in dangerous proximity to appropriation, paternalism and representationalism (see also: De Line 2018). However, in a post-anthropocentric reading inspired by this connection of situated knowledges (Haraway 2001[1988]), Haraway’s string figures stand for semiotic-material patterns co-created by multiple human and non-human actors, who are, as patterns themselves and as those who pattern, constantly changing in the process of passing along and receiving strings from others (Haraway 2016a: 9ff; Haraway 2011). This decentration of the human does not mean that concrete human beings no longer play a role or that they are simply equated with non-human actors. Rather, humans are thought of within their nature-cultural dependencies – not from the starting point of autonomy, but as emergent from constitutive relations with human and non-human others (Hoppe 2022: 11). SF thus denotes a decentralised mode of being-in-the-world, a decentralising methodological orientation, and an approach to story-telling as a critical practice that allows for speculative and collective re-patterning (Hoppe 2021: 354f). “These string figures are *thinking* as well as *making* practices, pedagogical practices and cosmological performances” (Haraway 2016a: 14; emphasis in the original).

SF is based on Haraway’s understanding of science as a story-telling practice, a notion which she first proposed prominently in *Primate Visions* (Haraway 1989: 4), and continued to develop throughout her work. She conceptualises academic knowledge production and especially academic writing as part of SF-worlding, their products being narratives to which she ascribes (transformative) power (Hoppe 2021: 22): “Writing and research are coupled – both require the factual, fictional and fabulated – all a part of string figures waiting to be repatterned” (Haraway 2013). This conception of SF-scholarship stems, among other things, from Haraway’s reception of feminist science fiction literature and is strongly inspired by *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (2019[1986]) by science fiction author and theorist Ursula Le Guin. The latter suggests imagining stories (such as scholarly produced

knowledge) as a “cultural carrier bag rather than weapon of domination” (Le Guin 2019: 36). She shows the transformative power of story-telling by deconstructing the hero story of men making history by war, violence and weapons, which is prominent in science fiction literature and also part of the canon of humanities and sciences. By telling another story, Le Guin makes use of the “negative space” present in every carrier bag. It’s a space of untold stories that allows for other meanings, makes different images possible, and thus thickens articulations beyond a modernist story of linear progress with men at the centre of the world: “We’ve heard it, we’ve all heard all about all the sticks and spears and swords, the things to bash and poke and hit with, the long, hard things, but we have not heard about the thing to put things in, the container for the thing contained. That is a new story” (Le Guin 2019: 29). This new story acknowledges women and feminised labour as central parts of humanity and opens up different ways of interpreting and articulating pasts, presents and futures:

“It is the story that makes the difference. It is the story that hid my humanity from me, the story the mammoth hunters told about bashing, thrusting, raping, killing, about the Hero. [...] If it is a human thing to do to put something you want, because it’s useful, edible, or beautiful, into a bag, or a basket, or a bit of rolled bark or leaf, or a net woven of your own hair, or what have you, and then take it home with you, home being another, larger kind of pouch or bag, a container for people, and then later on you take it out and eat it or share it or store it up for winter in a solid container or put it in the medicine bundle or the shrine or the museum, the holy place, the area that contains what is sacred, and then next day you probably do much the same again – if to do that is human, if that’s what it takes, then I am a human being after all.” (Le Guin 2019: 32f).

Haraway’s SF is part of the endeavour to tell such “life stories” (Haraway 2019: 10). These stories neither aim to romanticise or be overly optimistic about the future, nor cynically declare ‘game over’. Instead, Haraway insists that we need stories that help to develop actual alternatives of how to keep going on together on a damaged planet. Hence, SF-scholarship looks for multiple life stories that fit a “thick presence” instead of aiming for monocausal or universalist world explanations (Haraway 2016a: 55f; Haraway 2013; see for an example of such a ‘life story’: Tsing 2021). Being

the latter, the story of the human, the *anthropos* condensed in the narrative of the Anthropocene is just too big and thus “saps our capacity for imagining and caring for other worlds” (Haraway 2016a: 50). It is also too homogenising, as it equates humanity with fossil-burning modernity and thus normalises a western lifestyle and self-perception. Concrete responsibilities for the destruction of nature are not mentioned, and those who suffer are also made invisible (Hoppe 2022: 10f). Instead of continuing with another section of this “phallic phantasy” (Haraway 2016a: 47) of the Anthropocene, SF-scholarship calls for “another figure, a thousand names of something else, to erupt out of the Anthropocene into another, big-enough story” (Haraway 2016a: S. 52).

But how to tell another story other than that of the epistemically violent human in educational philosophy? In the following two sections I look for potential usages of the SF-approach for undoing epistemic violence by decentring the human in theorising and knowledge production in the field of education. This endeavour can, for example, be mastered with a rearticulation and rewriting of the concept of the human with the help of tropes (3.1). Correspondingly, I will look for decentred research constellations of multispecies worldly relations as a starting point for academic inquiry (3.2).

3.1 Humus for survival?

One SF-strategy dealing with the decentring of the human is working with tropes in philosophical writing in order to disturb accustomed manners of thinking (Haraway 2016c: 112). Tropes, according to Haraway’s definition, do not transport direct meaning, but remodel meanings by making “us want to look and need to listen for surprises that get us out of inherited boxes” (Haraway 2016c: 124). Imaginations and material reality amalgamate in tropes, can become factual and are thus potentially world changing fictions (Haraway 2016b: 6). As fact and fiction are made and narrated, tropes have the power to remodel both. “The more potent the tropes, the truer the story” (Haraway 2016c: 109). Like all SF-strategies, working with tropes in order to decentre the human is situated, context-specific and not innocent. One trope does not work for everyone and everywhere – it is not a universal solution for epistemic violence, but it can be a tool for undoing epistemic violence in certain contexts. However, in order to achieve that, it is important to be attentive when a decentring

trope is used to deconstruct powerful concepts: for whom is it effective, when is it productive? In which constellation is it altogether useless? When is it even harmful or counteracting the intention of decentring? For whom is the decentring even desirable? Which position is normalised, which one is marginalised or made even more precarious (for a critical consideration of deconstructing the human see: Boger 2021: 55)?

One trope I consider to be potent for the decentring of the human in western academic discourse is the *humus* Haraway suggests in her work. She refers to the similar roots *humus* shares with the Latin word *homo*, the designation of the human species. *Humus* likewise shares etymological roots with the word *guman*, an Indo-European word for “workers of the soil” (Haraway 2011). With the trope of the *humus*, Haraway wants to relocate the human, away from “the phallic ‘man’” (Haraway/Wolfe: 261), the “self-image of the same” (Haraway 2016a: 11), towards earthbound, worldly, and interconnected workers of and from the soil in a fruitful entanglement for worlding. “Human as *humus* has potential, if we could chop and shred human as *Homo*, the detumescent project of a self-making and planet-destroying CEO” (Haraway 2016a: 32). Haraway imagines the *humus* as composed of diverse entangled human and non-human “beings of the mud” (Haraway 2016: 11) who are composting and composing worlds in multi-species compost piles. Workers of the soil are constantly “layering like a mad gardener, mak[ing] a much hotter compost pile for still possible pasts, presents, and futures” (Haraway 2016a: 57). In doing so, they compost the Anthropocene step by step, much like its central actor the *anthropos*. With this image, that also represents a narrative SF-strategy, Haraway turns against “techno-fixes” (Hoppe 2022: 4) for the severe socio-ecological crises we are facing, but also against apocalyptic fantasies. Rather, she looks for practices and stories of going on together “on a vulnerable und wounded earth” (Haraway 2016a: 10). With the *humus* as a trope and through this story-telling practice, she illustrates her ethico-onto-epistemology of companion species (Haraway 2016c), wherein the modus of being is a “relentlessly becoming-with” (Haraway 2016a: 13) in “historical relational contingency” (Haraway 2013) and in the face of significant otherness.

What can be learnt from the *humus* for engendering less epistemically violent philosophising in educational philosophy? The trope challenges the

anthropocentric framework of self-identity and ontological purity that is perpetuated in the bourgeois ideal of education. It also allows to shift the anthropocentric focus of critical approaches towards the subject in educational philosophy (see section 2). The humus points towards the “loss of bounded self” (Wilk 2018) and thus to an implosion of dualisms such as the self vs. the other. It locates the human in multispecies relations, and thus provides a radically different starting point for conceptualising education and its subject as embodied, embedded, and affective. But the image of the humus also has its problems. It struggles to make visible differences within the compost pile, for example. Thus, there is a danger that all those involved are dissolved into a homogeneous mass and that “irreducible differences” (Haraway 2008: 90), which are there despite all ontological flattening, are overlooked.

However, as a strong and passionate image, the humus teaches about the importance of the affective dimension of doing philosophy – or, as Hannah Arendt points out in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (2011[1963]): the affective dimension of thinking. As part of an SF-strategy of worlding, narrating the humus and thereby composting the human is transformative story-telling and thus a responsive involvement and intervention in practices of cognition, knowledge and action (Barla/Hubatschke 2017: 4). This includes practising alternative concepts as critical interventions in bodies of knowledge, in the reworking of relations, and in the transformation of ways of being and living (Thiele 2015). “Thinking about methodology as a way of creating worlds implies a breakdown of the dividing lines between theory and practice, knowing and being” (Sauzet 2015: 38). Such a decentring and interventional philosophical practice is very much in contrast to the dominating approaches in educational philosophy, which often focus on the abstract systematisation and legitimisation of concepts, the inquiry for adequate definitions, and the reflection or description of pedagogical practice. These approaches share the problem that they often already presuppose epistemically violent concepts and problematic basic assumptions concerning the human. In alliance with critical approaches that also question the theory/practice-divide (see Adorno 1973), the humus, and of course also other tropes, can be a vehicle for unlearning habitualised, institutionalised (Sonderegger 2019) and often epistemically violent ways of doing educational philosophy.

3.2. Making kin beyond anthropocentrism

Re-narrating or composting with tropes has already revealed one important aspect of SF-practices in knowledge production: they are part of a continuous educational process [*Bildungsprozess*] of learning to approach philosophising and theorising differently than that normalised in western academia. Thus, SF-practices also contain instances of unlearning and relearning. This educational process is not only a cognitive one limited to the apparatuses of knowledge in scholarly production, but also concerns the affective, aesthetic and social dimension of being in the world. It consists of transformative practices of thinking, feeling, living and being that aim at a collective reworking of material-semiotic relations (Hoppe 2022: 11). The preconditions of this understanding of education via SF-practices clearly differ from those of the bourgeois ideal of education: by re- and unlearning known concepts and practices over the course of practicing philosophy in an SF-manner, the (scholarly) self is not stable, not clearly distinct from the object of education/research, and not on a steady way towards autonomy, certainty and knowledge. Rather, it is conceivable and can be experienced as prone to being undone and redone in relational configurations – a self which is never completed, always precarious and in need of others.

The precarious subject or the irritated identity are topoi in educational philosophy and usually associated with some kind of self-alienation in the face of the other (see Koller/Marotzki/Sanders 2007). But, all too often, the sovereign subject of education is again reinstated by conceptualising the encounter with the other as a learning opportunity (see Schäffter 1997) or as a means of transforming the self via educational processes initiated by the other. The development of the self in this narrative goes from one stable identity to another (see Koller 2018; see critically Ahrens 2017). Implicit in this model is the notion that the other is reified as a resource for the learning subject. At the same time, the dualistic separation between self and other and the hierarchised positions that accompany it are perpetuated. This conception of the (temporarily) precarious subject keeps the other voice-, context- and story-less, and incapable of acting outside the assigned role of irritating and thus (re-)creating the self (for a fundamental critique of these practices see Mohanty 1984; Spivak 2008). The other is conceived as being looked at, but not looking back and thus demanding an ethical response (Haraway 2008: 19ff).

In contrast, SF-practices of education and philosophy do not aim towards self-creation through the appropriation of others as research or educational objects. Instead, they consist of a dedicated and experimental way of looking for answers to and with the other. The latter is a collective endeavour Haraway terms “making kin” (Haraway 2016a: 99ff). She understands kinship as politicised relationality and not bound to biological boundaries. Rather, the concept attempts to question these boundaries associated with genetic, legal, or socialised kinship, to shift them, and to render them obsolete regarding their central importance for affective and caring relatedness. Accordingly, Haraway conceives of making kin as a political and politicising practice of responding and so making relations a matter of care (Czejkowska/Müller forthcoming). For this SF provides the means: Tracing and analysing relations, thereby making visible those involved and (re-)telling stories is a way of making kin and learning to think, feel, wish, desire and act “more adequately” (Haraway 2008: 90, see also: Spivak 2012) in the process. Again, situated and embodied kinships are of concern – not a romanticised or universalising idea that ‘everything is connected’: “Who lives and who dies, and how in this kinship rather than that one? What shape is this kinship, where and whom do its lines connect and disconnect, and so what? What must be cut and what must be tied if multispecies flourishing on earth, including human and other-than-human beings in kinship, are to have a chance?” (Haraway 2016a: 2)

A concrete starting point for making kin via philosophical SF-practices is to thematise one’s own thinking and being as location-bound, embodied, dependent on socio-economic preconditions, and only possible, in the first place, in relation to others and in multispecies webs. Tracing enabling conditions could further lead to stories and histories of privilege, exclusion, power, domination and exploitation – hard “for everybody, but not equally and not in the same way” (Haraway 2016a: 89). Haraway, for example, frequently shares who and what enables her thinking, writing and career: her Catholic upbringing, her canine “companion and research associate” (Haraway 2016a: 7) Cayenne, the spider *Pimoida cthulhu* (Haraway 2016a: 31ff), her father, a sports writer, the post-Second World War arms race and the Cold War, including their impact on U.S. national science-education policy, the women’s movements and the debates within them – to name only a few (Haraway 2016b: 51; Haraway 2016c: 93). Haraway situ-

ates her writing in this complex situation and draws many themes of her analysis from it. Also, she draws upon her personal and biographical relations, connecting them to a larger context, thereby attempting to make visible, those who play a role in it while being overlooked all too often. For instance, in *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2016c), starting from her relationship with her dog Cayenne, she enfolds a story (not only) of racial discourse, the oppression of indigenous people, the exploitation of native land and livestock, the capitalisation of animal breeding and of biopolitics. By connecting these stories and their multiple players, she politicises not only the relationship with her dog, but also all those relations and their stories that made it possible. By putting herself in touch with these others, Haraway makes kin which is more than merely symbolic, because “[o]nce one has been in touch, obligations and possibilities for response change” (Haraway 2008: 97). So, one part of SF-philosophy is collectively learning to live with the (hi-)stories that we are coming to know. Another part is to tell new stories to re-articulate and re-narrate relations (for an example of such a re-narration from a perspective of educational philosophy see: Palaver 2023: 153ff).

4. Conclusion

Making kin and working with tropes are examples of narrative SF-practices in scholarly production that can help to partly undo epistemic violence in educational philosophy. They decentre the self, the individual and collective subject, the human, not only conceptually, but also in practice. Starting from specific relational constellations, thinking about education and its presuppositions is possible in a non-individualistic way. Also, central but problematic humanist concepts such as ‘autonomy’ or ‘reason’, which are tightly connected to the western self of education, are submitted to deconstruction, as SF refers to the affective, aesthetic, and collective dimension of thinking practices. An SF-methodology allows one to be attentive to various others and to produce partial answers to (epistemically) violent conditions. By connecting and re-telling stories,

relations can be politicised, reworked, and rearticulated. Furthermore, SF-practices emphasise the interest- and location-boundedness of scientific knowledge (production), as well as the social dimension of it (see Birkner 2022: 15). Therefore, SF-practice always requires a socio-critical perspective of analysis, which has been strongly advocated by representatives of critical theory in the philosophy of education (see Holzer 2017). Following these perspectives critical of power and domination, SF-practice also makes it possible to criticise and deconstruct the anthropocentrism of western knowledge production, seeing it as a powerful social relation (Müller 2021: 196ff).

A socio-critical perspective in thinking about education includes questioning the context of academic knowledge production and demanding conditions that enable SF-philosophy to undo epistemic violence. In opposition to the increasing neoliberalisation of academic production, SF-practices need institutional and structural approaches that enable slow and caring science (Stengers 2017). In SF-academia, the current state and role of the university as a place of knowledge production must thus be questioned and related to the societal pathologies and their associated stories in which it is always embedded. This requires space, time, and opportunities for creative and risky thinking, and for reflection, criticism, and solidarity (Müller 2021: 199). If academic practice is truly committed to undoing epistemic violence and to transitioning into a richer, more promising age than the Anthropocene, political action for making universities places for kin-making is needed.

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ABSTRACT Dieser Beitrag zielt darauf ab, die Potenziale eines posthumanistischen narrativen Ansatzes für den Abbau epistemischer Gewalt in der Bildungsphilosophie zu untersuchen. Mittels „SF“ – einem von Donna Haraway entwickelten Ansatz – werden methodologische, erkenntnistheoretische und ontologische Aspekte epistemischer Gewalt einer kritischen Reflexion unterzogen. Eine der wichtigsten Schlussfolgerungen daraus ist, dass Sensibilität für epistemisch gewaltsame Theorien, Konzepte und Praktiken der Wissensproduktion entscheidend, aber nicht ausreichend ist. Vielmehr ist es für den Umgang mit epistemischer Gewalt darüber hinaus zentral, Theorie und Theoretisieren auf radikal andere, postanthropozentrische Weise zu denken.

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