

Turning and Twisting Histories of Women's Education: matters of strategy

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Abstract

This article discusses established and more recent methodological and theoretical strategies in histories of women's education. The established approaches to histories of women's education with which the article begins include networks, sites, technologies of the self and Bourdieusian notions of reproduction. To explore recent approaches that foreground processes and practices, the article then focuses on accounts that trace how gender has been made visible and audible in and through education, and how affect may become durable and thread across a scene, a site or an institution. This is followed by discussion of posthumanist strategies that orient the researcher to how human beings come into relation with one another and with non-human life with consequences for notions of temporality and context. The article ends by calling for dialogue to open up pathways framing the geopolitics of histories of women's education.

Keywords: women's education, methodology, theory, entanglement, temporalities, context

Introduction

Joan Scott argues that discernible lines of difference in women's history have resulted in a field of knowledge marked by an increasingly complex understanding of the project of re-writing histories.ⁱ Overviews of women's educational history illustrate a similar complexity,ⁱⁱ which has given rise to debates about the shape and strategies of women's education as a field of historical endeavour.ⁱⁱⁱ This article outlines some of the increasing complexity in histories of women's education that has arisen from intellectual trajectories focussed around

processes and practices. Rather than seeing debates amongst historians of women as fundamental divides, the article follows Scott in situating them as ‘matters of strategy’ in which each approach addresses the difficulty of writing women into history in a somewhat different way.^{iv} Resonating with Kathryn Gleadle’s *Women’s History Review* article, *The Imagined Communities of Women’s History: Current Debates and Emerging Themes, a Rhizomatic Approach*,^v the article argues that that emerging strategies, which Gleadle refers to as ‘fresh nodes of departure’, modulate but complicate more established approaches to histories of women’s education.

The article begins by discussing four overlapping frameworks that continue to inform histories of women’s education as they traverse the distinct but not mutually exclusive categories of women’s feminist and gender history:^{vi} networks, sites, subjectivities and Bourdieusian notions of reproduction. It discusses these frameworks through specific examples taken largely from the Anglo-phone scholarship with which we are familiar. The remainder of the article focuses on relatively recent orientations in histories of women’s education concerned more explicitly with processes and practices. The second section outlines historical practices of assemblage and the metaphor of the rhizome. It provides a number of examples that unpack how gender has been made visible and audible in education at different historical junctures. The third section focuses on affective practices through historical accounts of women’s education that illustrate how affect can be made durable and thread across a scene, a site or an institution. The fourth section unpacks posthumanist strategies in histories of women’s education that orient the researcher to consider how human beings come into relation with one another and with non-human life and unsettle notions of temporality and of context. Finally, the article calls for dialogue among researchers to open up paths to the geopolitics of knowledge in histories of women’s education.

Matters of strategy: networks, sites, subjectivities and Bourdieusian reproduction

Attention to networks forms a key strategy through which historians continue to illustrate how women contested received tradition about the relation of education and women's minds and bodies. Networks are central to Ruth Watts' analysis of eighteenth-century women as producers and disseminators of knowledge.^{vii} They inform Camilla Leach's study of early nineteenth century Quaker education for women and girls;^{viii} and they are important in Katarina Dalakoura's account of the ability of women teachers in Greece to develop a collective awareness of gender and to facilitate the power and means to intervene.^{ix} Linda Eisenman's framework for interpreting US women's educational history also includes networks alongside institution-building, religion and money.^x

As the Japanese-American network built around Tsuda Umeko (1864-1929) shows, histories of women's education illustrate the ambiguities of networks, particularly around intersections of femininity, class, ethnicity, and race. After an education in the USA, Tsuda founded Joshi Eigaku Juku (the pre-cursor of Tsuda College) in Tokyo in 1900. While the College was Japanese led, its foundation was financed almost entirely by a group of women from the social and economic elite of Philadelphia's Protestant denominations active in mission work in Japan. This trans-Pacific network facilitated and regulated the flow of many single Japanese women studying in the USA up to 1967 but was intersected by relations of power and tensions resulting from cultural differences and the interests of members. Tsuda wished to use the scholarships for study in America solely for students from her school. The American members of the network who saw the mobility of Japanese women serving edifying and modernising purposes, thought the scholarship scheme should be open to other candidates but understood little about the circumstances in which selection of Japanese women for study in American was undertaken. Although Tsuda resigned from the American committee

when her wish to use the scholarship solely for her school was rejected, as chair of the Japanese committee she continued to control the selection of students for study in America.^{xi}

Attention to networks has facilitated an expansive view of women's education extending to informal settings and 'popular' education and to cultural activities and relationships that have produced, transmitted or authorized knowledge.^{xii} As Eisenmann notes, the expansion in histories of women's education of the range of activity deemed educational builds paradoxically on the exclusion of women as historical actors from formal/patriarchal educational structures.^{xiii} Meritxell Simon-Martin's analysis of the letters circulating in the network around Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891) illustrates how letters could act for women as a source of *Bildung* - a process of self-formation through the dialectical interaction of the individual with culture and society that seeks the personal growth of individuals in terms of their intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic and physical development. Simon-Martin argues that for Bodichon, the leader of Langham Place Group (a mid-Victorian circle of English middle class women who campaigned to improve women's education and employment), letters acted as educational instruments. Letters functioned as fora where Bodichon acquired knowledge, exercised her critical thinking, carved out her identity and negotiated her autonomy. Foregrounding epistolary education enables Simon-Martin to provide a revised reading of *Bildung* which as she notes, has tended until comparatively recently to be viewed through a lens of masculinity.^{xiv}

Networks also re-appear as a 'matter of strategy' in Jane Martin's account of Mary Bridges Adams' 'fight for knowledge and power' between 1855 and 1939. As an Independent and Labour member of the London School Board (LSB) Bridges Adams (1855-1939) fought to increase educational opportunity for workers' children. As a member of the Gas Workers and General Labourers' Union she became prominent in the London Independent Labour Party, forming alliances with Social Democrats on the London Trades Council and

promoting the educational programme of the Trades Union Congress. As an elected member of the Provisional Committee of the Central Labour College of the Plebs League she brought forward plans for a Working Woman's College. She was in close touch with the European anti-war movement during the First World War, was heavily involved with Russian émigré politics, and had a range of contacts among suffragettes, trade unionists and socialists, as well as with Russian political refugees.^{xv}

To reconstruct the story of Bridges-Adams life Martin's draws on Scott's configuration of the category of 'woman' as a 'site of resignification'.^{xvi} For Martin, situating Bridges Adams as a 'site' on which political and cultural contests were enacted,^{xvii} requires a cartography that delineates how constructions of gender, generation and social class frame both collective political practices and also autonomous agency. Martin deploys the notion of 'site' to situate struggles around education as concrete contestations over alternatives to forms of political order within the broader dynamics of state and international politics, and to illustrate how Bridges Adams troubled the social, cultural and political landscape and challenged Labour's traditional and patriarchal conceptions of domesticity. Martin threads her framing of Bridges Adams' as a 'site' together with notions of social career, subjectivity, situated subjects and networks. To move away from a linear narrative around a life-course culminating in old age, Martin entangles the personal with the political in Bridges Adams' classed and gendered political journeys by interweaving 'thick descriptions' that use a variety of sources; and she focuses on the politics of place by deploying a notion of community as a 'fluid network of social relations that may be but are not necessarily tied to a territory.'^{xviii}

Subjectivity is also a matter of concern in Julie McLeod's exploration of feminist reforms and feminist pedagogies in Australian classrooms during the 1970s.^{xix} McLeod brings together Teresa de Lauretis' 'technologies of gender'^{xx} and Foucault's 'technologies of the self' - techniques for acting on and fashioning the self. As Foucault reminds, 'technologies of

the self' always take place in relation to technologies of domination and regulation, as individuals effect operations on their bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct and ways of being, so as to transform themselves.^{xxi} But as McLeod makes clear, rather than a voluntaristic account of self-formation, this process can constitute a normative practice that structures the possible field of action.^{xxii} McLeod interprets feminist pedagogies as 'particular technologies of the self that ... enable or oblige or discipline individuals to conduct and fashion themselves in particular (feminist and non-sexist) ways'. She questions whether the feminist pedagogies she investigates contain their own 'regimes of truth'^{xxiii} in that 'non-sexist reforms embraced strategies for the resolution of 'undesirable and sexist thoughts'^{xxiv} that revealed the psycho-social heritage of feminism's then foundational ideas about personal formation and transformation. For McLeod, these foundational ideas linked to the production of new 'truths' about gender difference and the repudiation of a then conventional belief in sexual specificity in favour of a desire for gender freedom and a potential androgyny. The result, argues McLeod, was that 1970s feminist pedagogies positioned teachers as non-sexist moral exemplars who were to contradict pupils' everyday (sexist) perceptions and so devalued girls' existing beliefs and behaviours as irrational. From this perspective, the small world of the 1970s feminist classroom was a controlled and safe environment directed at changing girls' attitudes and aspirations but was not a space where pupils could freely express their attitudes in a relaxed atmosphere.

Agency in relation to restraint also surfaces in Sue Anderson-Faithful's deployment of Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' as a strategy to unpack agency, constraint and power in the educational work of Mary Sumner (1828-1921). Sumner established the Anglican Mothers Union (MU), which grew from its foundation in 1876 into the largest women's organisation in the Anglican Church. Sumner saw motherhood as a divine charge and an educational enterprise. The MU motto was 'train up a child in the way he should go'; and its 'mission' was to

educate mothers in Christian morality, parenting and pedagogy so that they might educate their children to be future citizens of empire and to 'influence' husbands and wider society towards behaviour that would alleviate the social evils of drunkenness, ill health, poverty and crime. Anderson-Faithful locates Sumner's activism in the context of clerical networks and identifies the strategies through which Sumner established her own pedagogic authority and advanced her organisation, which Anderson-Faithful argues were innovative in achieving a voice for a body of women within Anglicanism but were also complicit with patriarchal Anglican notions of womanhood and upheld class stratification.^{xxv} Anderson-Faithful unpacks Sumner's writings on education and motherhood and accounts of her activities through Bourdieu's theorisation of how power is accumulated and transacted, how structures of domination remain durable, and how organisations or interest groups invested with power seek to the reproduction of dominance through the exercise of symbolic violence,^{xxvi} in which both the dominated and dominating 'misrecognise' the authority of the dominating group, despite the arbitrary nature of claims to authority.^{xxvii} Anderson-Faithful uses Bourdieu's notions of habitus (the norms or tendencies that guide behaviour or thinking) together with his notion of the acquisition and deployment of various types of capital to analyse Sumner's activism, which Anderson-Faithful also locates in relation to Sumner's positioning in overlapping fields of education and religion, and sites of prestige and power, and through her association with figures of distinction.

Attention to connections, networks, subjectivity and the ambiguities of individual and collective histories also run through the 'fresh nodes of departure' with which the following sections of the article are concerned. Here, attention to processes and practices is more pronounced and there is heightened attention to non-human/human relations. The second section begins with the notion of assemblage and the metaphor of the rhizome, which frames discussion of Shenila Khojah-Moolji's analysis of the 'different appearances' of the Muslim girl in

colonial India, in the first decades after the establishment of Pakistan, and in postcolonial Pakistan.^{xxviii} This section also discusses Inés Dussel's attention (in this special issue) to the production in photographs from 1900 to the 1940s of particular visibilities about schoolgirls.^{xxix} In addition to considering how gender became visible at different historical junctures, the second section discusses Josephine Hoegaert's account (in the special issue) of the cultural work involved in 'sounding like a woman' through which gender became audible as well as visible in nineteenth century Europe.^{xxx}

Matters of strategy: processes, practices and visibilities

In her 'Imagined Communities' article, Gleadle describes assemblages as open processes with a creative energy of their own, which Maria Tamboukou refers to as 'entities of heterogeneous components that can make multifarious connections'.^{xxxi} Assemblages are composed of components that connect with other assemblages through convergence and divergence as their component parts detach and plug into different assemblages in which their interactions differ.^{xxxii} Assemblages are infused with movement and change, which means they have temporal aspects because 'new territorial organizations, new behaviours, new expressions, new actors and new realities are produced when assemblages come together' and form organizations, mutate, transform, are displaced and replaced.^{xxxiii} Configured in these ways, the assemblage opens a fluid window into what some historians of women's education have cast previously as a 'site' (in Martins' analysis), or as a 'juncture', as in Tanya Fitzgerald's account of the mission station as a 'juncture of family and community' and 'civilised' and 'heathen' homes',^{xxxiv} or as an 'articulation', as in Frances Vavrus analysis of the relation of girls' education and 'tradition' within colonial and post-colonial educational policy making in Tanzania.^{xxxv} Gleadle follows Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in linking assemblages with the

metaphor of the rhizome - the root structure which grows in unpredictable and manifold directions. She notes: 'in association with notions of assemblage the rhizome allows sensitivity to the circuitous routes of some approaches, the ruptures in others: their refrains, subtle twists and lateral stems'.^{xxxvi}

Khojah-Moolji deploys the metaphor of the rhizome in a genealogical strategy to denaturalise the interplay of historical constructions of the figure of 'the Muslim girl' in relation to an emancipatory 'promise' of education for women in international development discourse. To examine discourses on Muslim women's and girls' education in debates internal to Muslim societies Khojah-Moolji explores a broad range of texts for the rationales given for women's and girls' education, the ideal curriculum for girls, and the spaces thought most suitable for this education. Khojah-Moolji's intention is not to discover some essential characteristics about the Muslim girl. She sets out to investigate 'the different appearances of this girl and [to] inquire into how she comes into being, the webs of discourses in which she is entangled, and the ways in which her constitution shifts over time'.^{xxxvii} To situate 'the different appearances of this girl' as an effect of power relations, Khojah-Moolji studies the nexus of power/knowledge in order to appreciate 'how certain subjects become intelligible and others deviant or unthinkable'.^{xxxviii} Her strategy exemplifies Noah Sobe's call for historians of education to unpack what is assembled and enacted and what is in play in a given instance.^{xxxix} Khojah-Moolji asks: Who is made 'recognizable'? Who is made 'unthinkable'? How might the norms of recognition be challenged and transformed? She highlights the assemblage of ideas, knowledges and concepts that makes the discourse on empowered girls possible at various times and places; and how different kinds of Muslim girls and Western girls and women were able to take up the subject position of 'empowered girls' at different moments.

Khojah-Moolji's analysis of the appearance and disappearance of different kinds of girls and women at different historical moments is a history of how visibilities and invisibilities themselves are entangled in notions like feminism, emancipation, nation, religion, etc. Orit Halpern defines visibilities as 'historically stipulated apparatuses for producing evidence about bodies, subjects, and ... new modalities of population'.^{xi} For Halpern, like Michel Foucault and Deleuze, visibilities are not merely 'visual' but can be constituted through a range of tactics from the organisation of space (including the archive) to the use of statistics. Halpern sees visibilities as sites of production comprising assemblages of relationships, enunciations, epistemologies, and properties that render agents into objects of intervention for power.^{xli} Here Halpern resonates with Michel Foucault's history of madness and his work on the panopticon, which highlight how susceptibility to the gaze of others and to the effects of being visible replaced one manifestation of power with another.^{xlii} Foucault also writes that for the historian working along genealogical lines with visibilities the task is not to 'show' the invisible, but to 'make visible what is visible ... what is so close, so immediate, so intimately connected to us that ... we do not see it'.^{xliii}

Visibilities are also the focus for Inés Dussel in this special issue. She interrogates the role of clothes and deportment in marking the boundaries of schooling and of national identities in photographs of girls in school uniform or dress code. Dussel analyses lighter shades in dresses and uniforms as markers of a visibility that favoured white as the colour of pure, hygienic identities; and she points to the central role of national symbols in organizing the spatial disposition of bodies and deportment in the photographs. She argues that both suggest how visibilities relate to wider regimes of gendered and national power. But she also stresses that visibilities did not govern every detail, for the co-mingling of bodies in some of the photographs she discusses produced effects at variance with more routine photographic displays of gender, nation and education.^{xliv}

The relation of visibilities to power that both Khoja-Moolji and Dussel highlight also suggests the converse - that shadows might be productive places for historians to linger as sites where power and knowledge intersect to ‘overshadow’ subaltern voices of various hues, as Pieter Verstraete comments.^{xlv} Fiona Paisley and Kirsty Reid alert researchers to the shadows and to the margins with their shadowy appearances of indigenous subjects and the traces of colonised, oppressed or exploited voices that are otherwise obscured in the webs of power through which archives align with dominant narratives.^{xlvi} But lingering in the shadows is not simply a task of recuperation - of correcting problems of invisibility and silence. It is oriented to understanding the discursive and material contexts in which women are rendered invisible, mute and silenced.^{xlvii}

Education provides a site where silence, sound, and their complex relationships to material, social and cultural contexts, and to the constitution of subjectivities, are formed through gendered practices.^{xlviii} In this special issue Josephine Hoegaerts highlights the cultural work that went into ‘sounding like a woman’.^{xlix} She reads nineteenth century vocal education manuals for their acoustic content as documents that recorded acoustic practices. She also zooms in on the embodied practices of girls’ and women’s vocal education, and so on the formation of women’s sounding voices. She examines the activity of breathing, as a performance that was treated as a prerequisite for vocalization, and often connected to the gendered nature of the body; and she explores different ‘registers’ of the voice. She attends to how female authors adopted and adapted tropes from the wider (generally male-authored) genre of the voice manual to represent performances, as well as where they diverged from the generally accepted discourse on the female voice. The object of Hoegaerts’ exercise is not to establish a rigid difference between male and female experts. By drawing attention to the role of the voice in ‘articulating’ gendered identities on the crossroads of nineteenth century science, music and education Hoegaerts argues that the minute attention given to the education

and development of healthy and beautiful voices, for both women and men (albeit with different acoustic characteristics) shows that adult middle class life, both public and domestic, was perceived as saturated with acoustic norms and expectations, and that gender was not only made ‘legible’ through embodied practices,¹ but was made ‘audible’ as well.

Strategies focussed on making visible [and audible] what is ‘so close, so immediate, so intimately connected to us that (...) we do not see it’,^{li} are complemented by calls for attention to what Kathleen Stewart terms the ordinariness of affect.^{lii} Here, as the following section illustrates, experiences are palpable but do not operate through structures of language, discourse and meaning. Section three unpacks Kate Rousmaniere’s analysis of the nostalgia surrounding American Norman Rockwell’s (1953) painting *Girl with the Black Eye*^{liiii} and Barnita Bagchi’s account (in the special issue) of the nostalgia that south Asian Padmini Sattthianadhan Sengupta (1906-88) felt on returning to her former home in Golders Green England.^{liv} To illustrate how affective practices can made affect durable and thread across a scene, site or institution, and travel transnationally, this section also draws on Stephanie Spencer’s analysis of the British Federation of University Women’s Sybil Campbell Collection.^{lv}

Matters of strategy: processes, practices and affect

As Tamboukou,^{lvi} Ning de Coninck-Smith,^{lvii} Dussel,^{lviii} and Bagchi^{lix} illustrate in this special issue, affect works through forms of knowing that can be ‘felt’ as researchers attune to more non-conscious modalities of attention, memory and perception, to bodily capacities to affect and be affected, and to the augmentation or diminution of a body’s capacity to act, to engage and to connect.^{lx} Dussel’s article in the special issue exemplifies how historians of education are increasingly approaching images as objects that carry affects and particular materialities.^{lxi} Some do so by building on Roland Barthes’ notion of the punctum, in which there

is a push to go beyond discourse to include affective experience not always mediated by language,^{lxii} and some on Walter Benjamin's discussion of how some images have a quality that affects human beings in different ways, 'through an 'aura' or an 'air' that stares back at the viewer'.^{lxiii}

Kate Rousmaniere examines the affective currents of nostalgia surrounding Norman Rockwell's painting, *Girl with the Black Eye* (1953). Rockwell's painting depicts a young girl seated outside the principal's office after a fight, bruised and defiant, as she awaits her punishment. The male principal seated at his desk is visible through the partly open door of his office, where a woman staff member appears to be explaining his role to him in this situation. Rousmaniere suggests that the image can be read in a number of ways. It can be understood as relatively reassuring and domestic in that a man and woman are expressing concern about a child, who is a little girl, not a threatening teenage boy bully. But the two females are portrayed as strong and the principal as weak; so by bringing into question the authority and masculinity of school principals and the gendered behaviour of young girls it can be read as a play on contemporary anxieties about gender, sexuality and authority. But in an ironic twist, maintains Rousmaniere, the image works to disempower two otherwise threatening cultural trends of the period - girls' rebellion and men's fragility. It does so, she argues, by working to sanitise the pain and conflicts of the era by invoking nostalgia through a focus on a past, the selective use of history, and by relying on emotions. In these ways, concludes Rousmaniere, the image works to assure the viewers that although there is trouble in schools, it is nothing to worry about.^{lxiv}

Bagchi's article in the special issue also highlights nostalgia in Padmini Saththianadhan Sengupta's literary account of returning to the cottage in Golders Green, England, where she lived with her mother and brother during her education in England in 1919. In her biography of her mother, *Kamala Saththianadhan* (1880-1950) published in 1956, Padmini notes that her

mother travelled to England in pursuit of education for her son and daughter and to have her son appear for Indian Civil Service examinations from England. Kamala was the first woman in South India to complete her graduation, and she edited the *Indian Ladies Magazine* (published between 1901 and 1938). Her visit to England helped forge or cement the Sathhianadhans' lifelong transnational associational bonds with organizations such as the Y.W.C.A. Bagchi highlights how Padmini's text draws on everyday structures of feeling and everyday practices around the home. She depicts the Golders Green cottage as a happy and friendly place with chats on the stairs with the landlords and sharing of food. Bagchi notes that Padmini attaches the epithet 'cosmopolitan' to the cottage. But in 1953 Padmini recounts that on returning to the cottage she found it 'shut in', quiet and 'relapsed into a quiet suburban English cottage' and that she 'turned away with an overpowering nostalgia for those old days'. Bagchi argues that the affective dimensions of nostalgia are highlighted through Padmini's counterposing of the cottage as 'shut in' and English on her return in contrast to her earlier description of the cottage as 'cosmopolitan'. As Bagchi notes, this points to the importance of affective dimensions associated with transnational and cosmopolitan spaces and places.^{lxv}

In a similar vein, Stephanie Spencer locates the Sybil Campbell (Library) Collection as a site of transnational cosmopolitan affections and loyalties. Originally located at Crosby Hall in London, England (which opened in 1927 as a hall of residence for women graduates from overseas), the Collection formed part of the effort of the British Federation of University Women 'to foster international understanding in the hope that this would help build peace in the future'.^{lxvi} With the collection now conserved as an archive of women's history, Spencer notes that the devotion of the collection's trustees and the wide circulation of the Friends of the Sybil Campbell Library Newsletter are testament to the affection that this collection of books has generated that is far beyond its reading potential. Spencer portrays the Sybil Camp-

bell Collection as a site where transnational cosmopolitan affections and loyalties have become attached to the materiality of the books.^{lxvii} Her account illustrates Sara Ahmed's arguments that emotions about objects, texts and places circulate and accumulate through repetition and stick to objects.^{lxviii} Spencer's analysis also demonstrates that emotions can be approached not as merely personal, but link to the circulation of feeling and to the production of spaces and places.^{lxix}

Spencer's discussion of the Sybil Campbell Collection supports Margaret Wetherell's contention that affective practices form patterns that 'thread' between people, and can be spatialised as they become knotted and entangled with degrees of density that can make affect resistant, durable and thread across a scene, a site or an institution.^{lxx} Wetherell argues that practices (for example ways of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of others, etc.) situate individuals as bodily and mental agents who not only carry patterns of bodily behaviour, but also certain routinised ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring that are understandable to both the agent(s) and potential observers (at least within the same culture) through what Wetherell terms 'interpretive repertoires.'^{lxxi} Spencer's analysis illustrates Wetherell's argument that scaled up in collective moods, affect can be 'held in a particular place' in processes and practices that confer distinction (or mark its opposite).^{lxxii} Spencer's discussion also suggests how particular kinds of emotional subjects and citizens are repeatedly materialised via what Sara Ahmed calls affective economies,^{lxxiii} and it highlights 'Ahmed's and Clare Hemmings'^{lxxiv} view that these processes might be characterised more by fixity than movement through complex interrelationships between becoming and being, flux and permanence.^{lxxv}

In addition, Spencer's arguments around emotional engagement with the physicality and provenance of the books in the Sybil Campbell Collection point to the importance of ma-

teriality and its entanglement with time, place, and people. Section four focusses in more detail on material, materiality and the co-mingling of objects, human beings and events in histories of women's education. To focus on strategies that see material, non-human and human agencies as mutually productive of one another, discussion returns to Dussel's article in the special issue. This highlights the importance increasingly attributed to a renewed consideration of artefacts and objects in gendered histories of education. Section four outlines the feminist posthumanist work of quantum physicist, Karen Barad.^{lxxvi} To frame discussion of how Baradian-related analysis unsettles notions of historical context it draws on Joyce Goodman's analysis of the entanglement of cosmopolitan and professional subjectivities and the objects that professor Sophie Hart collected on her travels and displayed in her Wellesley office in the 1930s,^{lxxvii} and Geert Thyssen's exploration of the entanglement of time, space and matter in the food education developed by the Liverpool Training School of Cookery founded in 1875.^{lxxviii}

Matters of strategy: Human/non-human processes and practices

Dussel's contribution to the special issue points to the importance of bringing artefacts, spaces and textures to the forefront and placing them in a symmetric position to humans and in the co-constitution of networks. Dussel argues that girls' dress codes, hairstyles and other traces of their material cultures can no longer be thought of as the interrelation of signs defined solely by discourses. Rather they should be seen as the effect of the co-presence and co-mingling of objects, human beings and events in particular settings where different unfinished trajectories meet.^{lxxix}

The co-mingling of objects, human beings and events to which Dussel alerts resonates with arguments from scholars working from a posthumanist perspective. The post in posthu-

manism is not anti-humanistic; nor is it 'after' humanism in the sense of going beyond. Rather, it is 'post' in terms of 'offering an experimentation with or a questioning of the human'^{lxxx} and a de-centring of the human in historical analysis. From a posthumanist perspective, material, non-/human and human agencies are seen as mutually productive of one another'.^{lxxxii} Posthumanism, therefore, orients the researcher to consider how human beings come into relation with one another and with non-human life to produce particular purposes and effects.^{lxxxiii} Posthumanism also assumes that the researcher is dealing with thoroughly entangled processes.^{lxxxiii}

As outlined in the special issue's Afterword, articles by Tamboukou and de Coninck-Smith both draw on the work of feminist physicist Karen Barad to unpack entanglements of their archival research. Barad reworks Judith Butler's concept of performativity, in which the world is created through actions or performances that are ongoing. Barad brings her background in quantum physics to extend Butler's reconceptualisation of gender as a doing rather than an attribute and to take Butler's thinking about the subject, performativity and materialisation further. In Butler's performative approach matter is understood to be constituted via discourse. But Barad includes non-human agency and understands discourses, organisms (human and non-human) and matter as performative agents in ongoing processes through which new entities emerge.^{lxxxiv}

To provide an understanding of how bodies and things mutually interconnect in repetitive relations, Barad deploys the language of intra-action and intra-activity as a counterpoint to the more usual notion of interaction. Interaction assumes that there are separate individual agents or agencies prior to the interaction. But for Barad, intra-action denotes that distinct agencies do not precede the relating but emerge through it. She argues that the interweaving and entangling of different entities in an ongoing process of intra-action results in the production of new entities.^{lxxxv} Intra-action, then, describes processes of materialization, connection

and emergence. For the researcher, intra-action signifies that different entangled strands cannot be adequately dealt with in isolation, as if they were unrelated to the others.^{lxxxvi} From a Baradian perspective, the researcher's task is to consider how constructions and intra-actions are not just about bodies (human and non-human), nor just about words, nor just about non-human material, but about how they link and connect to produce subjectivities and performative enactments.^{lxxxvii}

Goodman uses Barad's notion of intra-action to explore how the objects that American professor Sophie Hart (1868-1948) collected on her overseas travels in the 1920s and 1930s, which she displayed in her office at Wellesley College, USA on her return, were entangled with cosmopolitan and professional subjectivities.^{lxxxviii} Goodman draws on Barad's comments that viewing agency as distributed over nonhuman as well as human forms does not mean simply that agency should be granted to non-humans, or that agency can simply be distributed to nonhuman and human forms.^{lxxxix} Rather agency lies in intra-active entanglements through relations between elements.^{xc} Goodman orients her analysis to relations of 'mattering' that include materials, spaces, places and temporalities, and she takes in staples of women's history, including memory, the body, and age, to which she adds sonorities, touch and the degradation of the materials from which the objects in Hart's office are made. The starting point for her analysis is a description by two students in the *Wellesley News* of 5 November 1936 of the 'lovely and interesting objects' in Hart's office that Hart described as 'the loot of her travels'. These included: 'brass temple lamps from Japan, teak elephants from Rangoon, a brass bowl from Tibet and delicately carved white jade.' There was also a 'large, elaborately brass-bound desk' that Hart explained 'was once a Korean Chest', with an 'old lock', 'a kind of brass barrel on a brass bar', which Hart could not 'make to work'. Goodman notes how corrosion, wear and tear, and the degradation of the lock's materials entangle in Hart's ongoing cosmopolitan relations in America beyond those of the international students

for whom she was responsible. Aligning with Barad's view that agency lies in entanglements Goodman notes that the mutating materials that resulted in the corrosion of the lock intra-acted with Hart's expressed 'need' for 'Chinese friends' 'to turn the lock' for her. Goodman asks what different cultural meanings might have been evoked by the feel of the brass barrel and the sound of the lock turning as 'Chinese friends', far from the country of their birth, brought cultural-technical expertise to aid an American academic in a Wellesley office. And she questions how intra-actions of the degrading materials co-mingled in the making of embodied and entangled 'Western' and 'Eastern' cosmopolitan and professional subjectivities for Hart, for students, for colleagues and for visitors who entered Hart's office. Goodman notes that posing such questions places 'imagining' on the same plane as more traditional forms of data-derived historical analysis, and in this case opened new questions and new lines of thinking around her earlier research.

Thyssen^{xcvi} also draws on Barad's notion of intra-action to bring new insights to a long standing thread in histories of women's education around domestic economy.^{xcvii} He deploys aspects of Barad's analytical frame to explore entanglements of time, place, material and people in non-/formal education using archival material from the Liverpool Training School of Cookery (LTSC), founded in 1875, and from the Liverpool Food and Betterment Association (LFBA), that began in 1893.^{xcviii} Thyssen sees temporality 'not as a single thread (the thread of time) but as a string of many threads (temporalities) intertwined'.^{xcix} In seeking to understand 'how multiple (...) events and trajectories come together' in the food education developed by the LTSC and LFBA,^{xcv} Thyssen draws on Barad's intra-action as a strategy to analyse how time, space/place and matter become entangled as foodstuffs, dishes, depots, barrows, kitchens, recipe books, institutions, diets, cookery, home economics, domestic and other nutrition-orientated sciences. He illustrates how elements coming together in this food

education moved with different temporal trajectories and intensities in re/imaginings of classes, genders, ethnic-/religious groups, charity and professionalism. To do so Thyssen draws on how Barad expresses the entanglement of time, space and matter as *timespacematter*, which Thyssen reframes successively as *timespacematter*, *spacetime* and *matter-time*. To unpack these entanglements he deploys assemblage to explore how components related to food education connected, detached and plugged into different assemblages in which their temporal and spatial threads differ. For example, in focussing on entanglements of *spacetime* he unpacks the LTSC classes for sailors as an assemblage that linked the LTSC to the port of Liverpool, with its long-standing legacy of transatlantic and trans-imperial shipping routes through which spices entered England along with slaves. He also links these classes to more recent developments in nutrition and food hygiene that entangled with the development of the LTSC as an organisation and were embodied in the LTSC's female teachers. He discusses how professional threads with differing institutional and personal temporalities not only plugged into the spatial location of the LTSC within the port of Liverpool but also into other networks of food education and food educators, nationally and internationally.

Goodman's and Thyssen's deployment of Barad's notion of intra-action suggests that what researchers have been accustomed to calling 'the environment', or the context, is a 'domain of entanglement' that makes up the texture of the world.^{xcvi} As Terri Seddon, Julie McLeod and Noah Sobe argue, context has often been considered as surroundings to be identified, observed and described via stable categories, which they argue situates context as a container based on 'evacuated notions of time and space'.^{xcvii} Similarly, Tara Fenwick, Richard Edwards and Peter Sawchuk claim that what is material is often taken to be the background context against which educational practice and historical events take place or within

which they sit, and material artefacts are often taken simply as tools that humans use, or objects they investigate.^{xcviii} In research strategies oriented to processes and practices context as a backdrop or container for knowing and doing education is replaced by a focus on how contexts are made^{xcix} and on space as ‘eventful’, as in the analyses by Dussel, Goodman and Thyssen.^c This shifts attention from context to contextualisation and from place to placing and so to the practices and process of ‘weaving and assemblage’ through which ‘objects and contexts come to be intelligible and conjoined, and through which spatial, temporal, institutional, discursive and theoretical categories intersect, overlap and change over time to texture the time-spaces of education.^{ci} As Sobe and Jamie Kowalczyk explain, from this perspective the object of analysis becomes two things at once: ‘one, the assemblage that is often mistaken for “context”; and two, the effect (policy, practice, phenomena) that it constitutes (what we might think of as the traditional “object” of study)’.^{cii} Marianne Larsen’s historical account of academic mobility is instructive here; for the educational institutions with which academic mobility and immobility are associated are not the context in which (im)mobility occurs. They constitute power laden assemblages in which mobility is entangled with how institutions operate and are viewed.^{ciii}

Conclusion

Research strategies oriented to processes and practices shift attention from questions of identities to questions of practices, from emotions as entities to the question of ‘What emotions do?’^{civ} They lead to a similar shift from representational thinking around bodies as entities, to bodies as processes, mediated and afforded by practices and to the question of ‘What can a body do?’^{cv} This resonates with a view of context as contextualisation and space as ‘event-

ful'; and points to practices of assemblage through which objects and contexts come to be intelligible and conjoined, intersect, overlap and change over time to texture histories of women's education.^{cvi}

But Ahmed's^{cvi} and Hemmings^{cvi} discussion of affect points to these processes bringing together fixity and movement. In so doing they highlight the complex interrelationships between becoming and being, and the recognition that there is some actual world out there, already constituted. Alfred North Whitehead refers to the world already constituted as 'the stubborn fact which at once limits and provides' and which he argues plays into the conditions of possibility for a future anchored in the present.^{cix} His comment is reflected in how the 'fresh nodes of departure' illustrated in the special issue nuance histories of women's education that have a longer lineage. These 'fresh nodes of departure' are bringing new insights to longer-standing 'matters of strategy' around networks, the constitution of subjectivities, the body, technologies, agency, constraint, and a concern with the archive. Together the entanglement of 'fresh nodes of departure' with 'more prolonged conduits of inquiry' continue to modulate but also to complicate the intellectual trajectories that inform histories of women's education.

To end we re-iterate the question posed by Julie McLeod,^{cx} who asks following Sarah Ahmed^{cx} not just what feminist and gender history are, or have been, or could, or should *be*, but what these constellations of ideas, concerns and approaches *do* in and for histories of education now and what differences they continue to make. McLeod ponders what the weave of re-assessments in feminist histories of education and the adding and jostling from multiple theoretical positions reveals about the narrativisation of history of education as a historical process.^{cxii} As part of a critical 'what next' conversation, McLeod poses a number of challenges around how to renew and reposition the ethical and analytical project of feminist his-

tories of education amidst the claims of other theoretical and historical lenses and in the complex globalising geo-political and social transformations that trouble both the historical present as well as understandings of gender. One question McLeod poses for historians of education is to consider the time and geo-political location of feminism and knowledge, power, or gender dynamics. Our discussion of established and more recent approaches to histories of women's education is situated largely in the Anglo-phone world with which we are familiar. But as Marilia Carvalho highlights, analysis based in the Anglo-phone world can include a tacit assumption of metropolitan social science theories and methodologies.^{cxiii} In this respect, comparative collections along the lines of and Mary O'Dowd and June Purvis', *A History of the Girl: formation, education and identity* (2018)^{cxiv} and Christine Mayer and Adeline Arrendondo's forthcoming *Gender, Power Relations and Education in a Transnational World*,^{cxv} are helpful in opening up pathways to the geopolitics of knowledge. We end along these lines by reiterating Dussel's call for an 'intermingling among researchers from different geolocalities' through 'dialogue, conversations and crossovers'^{cxvi} in order to inform the shape and strategies of histories of women's education.

Notes

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- ⁱ. Joan Wallach Scott (1989) *Gender and the Politics of History*, Rev. edn. (New York: Columbia University Press), p.18.
- ⁱⁱ. Anglo-phone overviews of the history of women's education include Ruth Watts (2005) Gendering the Story: change in the history of education, *History of Education*, 34(3), pp. 225-241; Rebecca Rogers (2007) The Politics of Writing the History of French Girls' Education, *History of Education Researcher*, 80, pp. 136-143; Joyce Goodman (2012) The Gendered Politics of Historical Writing in *History of Education*, *History of Education* 41(1), pp. 9-24; Penny Tinkler, Stephanie Spencer & Claire Langhamer (2016) Revisioning the History of Girls and Women in Britain in the Long 1950s, *Women's History Review*, 26(1), pp. 1-8; Penny Tinkler & Carolyn Jackson, (2014) The Past in the Present: historicising contemporary debates about gender and education, *Gender and Education* 26(1), pp.70-86.
- ⁱⁱⁱ. Stephanie Spencer (2010) Educational Administration, History and 'Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 42(2), pp. 105-13; Julie McLeod (2018) The Movement of Feminist and Gender History in Educational Research, *International Journal of Historiography of Education*, 8(1), pp. 66-73; Stephanie Spencer (2018) Gender No Longer a Useful Category of Analysis? *International Journal of Historiography of Education*, 8(1), pp.74-78.
- ^{iv}. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p.18.
- ^v. Kathryn Gleadle (2013) The Imagined Communities of Women's History: current debates and emerging themes, a rhizomatic approach, *Women's History Review* 22(4), pp. 524-40.
- ^{vi}.Jane Rendall (1991) Uneven Developments: women's history, feminist history and gender history in Great Britain, in K. Offen, R. Roach Pierson and J. Rendall (Eds.) *Writing Women's History: international perspectives* (London: Macmillan), pp. 45-58.
- ^{vii}. Ruth Watts (1998) Some Radical Educational Networks of the Late Eighteenth Century and Their Influence, *History of Education*, 27(1), pp. 1-14.

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- viii. Camilla Leach (2006) Religion and Rationality: Quaker women and science education 1790–1850, *History of Education*, 35(1), pp. 69-90.
- ix. Katerina Dalakoura (2016) Paradoxes, Contradictions and Dilemmas in Greek Women Teachers' Life and Work (19th century –Interwar Period), in A. Cagnolati and A. F. Canales (Eds) *Women's Education in the Mediterranean World: historical perspectives (19th -20th centuries)* (Rome: Aracne), pp. 1-28.
- x. Linda Eisenmann (2001) Creating a Framework for Interpreting US Women's Educational History: lessons from historical lexicography, *History of Education*, 30(5), pp. 453-470.
- xi. Sally A. Hastings (2012) Japanese Women as American College Students, 1900-1941, in A. Freedman, L. Miller and C. R. Yano (Eds.) (2012) *Modern Girls on the Go: gender, mobility and labor in Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 193-208. Linda L Johnson (2005) 'Contributing to the Most Promising Peaceful Revolution in Our Time,' The American Women's Scholarship for Japanese Women, 1893-1941, in Andrea Walton (Ed.) *Women and Philanthropy in Education* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), pp.298-19; Joyce Goodman (2015) Gender, Cosmopolitanism and Transnational Space and Time: Kasuya Yoshi and girls' secondary education, *History of Education* 44(6), pp. 683-99.
- xii. For popular education see Alejandro Tiana Ferrer (2011) The Concept of Popular Education Revisited –Or What Do We Talk About When We Speak of Popular Education?, *Paedagogica Historica*, 47(1-2), pp. 15-31.
- xiii. Eisenmann, Creating a Framework.
- xiv. Meritxell Simon-Martin (2013) Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon's Travel Letters: performative identity-formation in epistolary narratives, *Women's History Review*, 22(2), pp. 225-238; Beatrix Niemeyer (2017) Training Female Ways of Knowing or Educating (in) a Common Sense: a historical analysis of space-times of (adult) education, in J. McLeod, N. W. Sobe and T. Seddon (Eds.) *World Yearbook of Education 2018: Uneven Space-Times of* This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in WOMEN'S HISTORY REVIEW on 3rd May 2019, available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09612025.2019.1611120>.

Education: historical sociologies of concepts, methods and practices (London: Routledge), pp. 44-52; for Bildung see Rebekkah Horlacher (2015) *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung: a comparative cultural history* (London: Routledge).

^{xv}. Jane Martin (2010) *Making Socialists: Mary Bridges Adams and the fight for knowledge and power, 1855-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press). Discussion in the paragraph draws on pp.1-15 and 208-214 unless otherwise stated.

^{xvi}. Judith Butler (1992) Contingent Foundations: feminism and the question of postmodernism, in J. Butler and J. W. Scott (Eds.) *Feminists Theorize the Political* (London: Routledge), pp. 3-21, here pp.14, 16.

^{xvii}. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p.32.

^{xviii}. Martin draws on Linda McDowell (1999) *Gender, Identity and Place: understanding feminist geographies* (London: Polity Press).

^{xix}. Julie McLeod (2010), The Promise of Freedom and the Regulation of Gender-Feminist Pedagogy in the 1970s, *Gender & Education*, 10(4), pp. 431-44. This paragraph draws on pp. 434-436.

^{xx}. Teresa de Lauretis (1987) *Technologies of Gender: essays on theory, film and fiction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan).

^{xxi}. Michel Foucault (1988) Technologies of the Self, in L. H. Martin, H. Gutman and P. H. Hutton (Eds.) *Technologies of the Self: a seminar with Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock), pp. 16-49, here p.18.

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^{xxiii}. Here McLeod draws on arguments from Jennifer Gore (1993) *The Struggle for Pedagogies* (London: Routledge).

^{xxiv} McLeod, The Promise of Freedom, p.442.

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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09612025.2019.1611120>.

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^{xxvi}. Pierre Bourdieu & Jean-Claude Passeron (1990) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: SAGE Publications) (first published 1970), pp. x-xi, 8-11, 31-2.

^{xxvii}. Pierre Bourdieu (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p.164; Pierre Bourdieu & Loic J. D. Wacquant (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.162.

^{xxviii}. Shenila Khoja-Moolji (2018) *Forging the Ideal educated Girl: the production of desirable subjects in Muslim South Asia* (California: University of California Press).

^{xxix}. Inés Dussel, Historicizing Girls' Material Cultures in Schools: revisiting photographs of girls in school uniforms, *Women's History Review: Special Issue Turns and Twists in Histories of Women's Education*.

^{xxx}. Josephine Hoegaerts, Women's Voices in Educational Manuals: the gendered sounds of speech therapy, song and education in Europe c.1830-1900, *Women's History Review: Special Issue Turns and Twists in Histories of Women's Education*.

^{xxxi}. Maria Tamboukou (2010) *In the Fold between Power and Desire: women artists' narratives* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars), p. 47 fn. 6.

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- ^{xxxiv}. Tanya Fitzgerald (2005) Archives of Memory and Memories of Archive: CMS Women's letters and diaries 1823–35, *History of Education* 34(6), pp. 657-74.
- ^{xxxv}. Frances Vavrus (2002) Uncoupling the Articulation between Girls' Education and Tradition in Tanzania, *Gender and Education* 14(4), pp. 367-89.
- ^{xxxvi}. Gleadle, *The Imagined Communities of Women's History*, p.525.
- ^{xxxvii}. Khoja-Moolji, *Forging the Ideal Educated Girl*, p.17.
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- ^{xli}. *Ibid.* see pp.21-27.
- ^{xlii}. Michel Foucault (1977) *Discipline and Punish: the birth of the prison* (New York: Vintage Books); idem (1988) *Madness and Civilization: a history of insanity in the age of reason* (London: Vintage Books).

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- ^{xliv} Dussel, Historicizing Girls' Material Cultures in Schools.
- ^{xliv}. Verstraete, *In the Shadow of Disability*.
- ^{xlvi}. Fiona Paisley and Kirsty Reid (2014) *Critical Perspectives on Colonialism: writing the empire from below* (London: Routledge), Introduction.
- ^{xlvii}. Mahua Sarkar (2010) *Visible Histories, Disappearing Women: producing Muslim womanhood in late colonial Bengal* (Durham: Duke University Press), Introduction.
- ^{xlviii} Pieter Verstraete and Josephine Hoegaerts (2017) Educational Soundscapes: tuning in to sounds and silences in the history of education, *Paedagogica Historica* 53(5), pp. 491-97.
- ^{xlix}. Hoegaerts, Women's Voices in Educational Manuals.
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- ^{li}. Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, p. 594, in Verstraete, *In the Shadow of Disability*, p.68.
- ^{lii}. Kathleen Stewart (2007) *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press).
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- lxi. Inés Dussel (2017) and Karin Priem (2017) The Visual in Histories of Education: a reappraisal, *Paedagogica Historica* 53(6), pp. 641-49, here p.643.
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- lxx. Margaret Wetherell (2012) *Affect and Emotion: a new social science understanding* (London: Sage), p.11.
- lxxi. Ibid. pp. 147, 152. interpretive repertoires are ‘threads of sense-making that work through familiar tropes, metaphors and formulations’, see Margaret Wetherell and J. Potter (1988) Discourse Analysis and the Identification of Interpretative Repertoires, in C. Antaki (Ed.) *Analysing Everyday Explanations: a case-book* (London: Sage), pp.168-183.
- lxxii. Wetherell, *Affect and Emotion*, p. 14 (quotation) and p.16.
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- lxxvi. Karen Barad (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press).
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^{lxxxix}. Alecia Youngblood Jackson and Lisa A. Mazzei (2012) *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research: viewing data across multiple perspectives* (London: Routledge), p117.

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^{lxxxix}. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; see the succinct outline in Amy Palmer (2011) How Many Sums Can I Do? Performative strategies and diffractive thinking as methodological tools for rethinking mathematical subjectivity, *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* 1(1), pp. 3-18.

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^{lxxxix}. Prophet and Pritchard, ‘Performative Apparatus and Diffractive Practices.’

^{lxxxix}. Jackson and Mazzei, *Thinking with Theory*, p.111.

^{lxxxix}. Goodman, *Circulating Objects and (Vernacular) Cosmopolitan Subjectivities*.

^{lxxxix}. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, p.214

^{xc}. Tamboukou, *Archival Research: unravelling space/time/matter*.

^{xc}. Thyssen, *Time as Cookery*.

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^{xcvi}. Tim Ingold (2011) *Being Alive: essays on movement, knowledge and description* (London: Routledge), pp.66-67.

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^{xcviii}. Tara Fenwick, Richard Edwards, and Peter Sawchuk (2015) *Emerging Approaches to Educational Research: tracing the socio-material* (London: Routledge), 1, 3-4.

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