

**Embodiment, Philosophy with Children and *The Tunnel*,
a Picturebook:
How Meaning Is Formed through Hybrid Metaphors**

Atiyeh Firouzmand

PhD student, Department of Educational Administration and Planning, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran. atiyehfirouzmand@gmail.com

Maryam Banahan

Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Administration and Planning, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran. (Corresponding Author)

banahan@alzahra.ac.ir

Seyed Mahdi Sajadi

Professor of Philosophy of Education, Department of Education, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran. sajadism@modares.ac.ir

Introduction

Posthumanism has created a new paradigm shift towards philosophy for children (P4C) in order to provide a liberating response to the dominance of mind over body, adulthood over childhood, and formation over emergence. Concurrently, Mark Johnson has added his

three proposed Es, i.e., emotional, evolutionary and exaptation, to the already existing four Es in cognitive sciences, i.e. embodied, embedded, extended and enacted. Johnson believes that these seven Es are fundamental features of cognition. The convergence of these two perspectives (posthumanism and Johnson's theory) can lead to ten concepts: critique of dualistic logic, critique of hierarchical structure in anthropocentric ontology and epistemology, non-human agency, relational onto-epistemology, human and non-human bodies, imagination, emotion, intra-action (instead of interaction), philosophy of animism, and metaphor. Thus, the relationship between children's embodied experiences with other beings within the world shapes their perception of the world. This phenomenon is reflected in some contemporary picturebooks.

Method, Review of Literature and Purpose

This study employs interpretive-abstract and comparative methods to investigate how embodiment is represented in Anthony Browne's *The Tunnel*. By considering the ten aforementioned concepts and their intra-actions, this research aims to explore how meaning is constructed through embodiment representation in this picturebook and in philosophical inquiry with children. It appears that despite the intersections mentioned, it is still possible to shift some terminologies in Johnson's embodied approach towards a posthumanist approach, such as using intra-action instead of interaction.

The significance of metaphors and the use of Johnson's embodied approach in this study stems from the fact that posthumanism accentuates differences. However, thus far, there has been little

discussion regarding how children confront philosophical differences and multiplicities. This is where the formation of metaphors can facilitate the understanding of differences. Metaphors that are not based on similarities, but rather on shares experiences, can be constructed.

Discussion

In this study, first the theories of posthumanism (from the perspective of Murriss and others) and embodied philosophy (from the perspective of Lakoff and Johnson) were examined. Then, what seemed useful to the researchers in each theory for the PWC program was selected. In the next step, what both approaches shared explicitly and with similar expressions were placed in the core, and what enabled a new reading of the conversation between the two approaches was placed in separate area.

To show the enactive aspect of cognition, intra-action was replaced by interaction. By considering the intra-action, the evolutionary and the exaptation aspects of cognition can be expressed in relational ontology. The embodied aspect of cognition in the critique of dualistic logic and hierarchical structure, embedded and expanded aspects in the agency of human and non-human bodies, and emotional and metaphorical aspects are manifested in the emotion and imagination that shape the animistic philosophy. This research intends to test the metaphorical aspect of conceptualization in philosophical thinking with children and how it can influence/receptivity on nine other categories in reading *The Tunnel*.

The picturebook *The Tunnel* demonstrates how fluidity in images, in the use of hypertext, in verbal-visual-motion intra-actions in

the work as a whole, and even in the audience participation in shaping the work, can convey relationships. The process of home-away-home, a common feature in children's literature, gains a new function when considering this aspect. This process is inherently embodied, as challenges within home are often experienced more tangibly and from different perspectives outside of it. In *The Tunnel*, the girl's visualization outside of her home expands, and her embodied knowledge becomes broader, leading to a new function. Her visualization of fear and darkness, in intra-action with other human and non-human entities, leads to fluidity in her gender identity and ultimately to power dynamics between her and her brother. The book moves beyond simply showing movements and changes of the boundaries; it shifts them. The boundaries between inside and outside of self, inside and outside of home, stillness and movement, stability and change, becoming oneself and becoming part of the world, gender boundaries, power dynamics, and boundaries between reality and imagination are all shifted. This boundary shifting or blurring enables children participating in philosophical discussions and facilitators to create a continuous movement between various metaphors and create interstitial worlds that aid in understanding differences.

Conclusion

This research revealed the role of embodiment in the possibility of relational understanding between children in the philosophical enquiry through reading picturebooks. The proposal of this research is that by introducing embodiment from the perspective of embodied philosophy and openness to the possibility of changing linear metaphors to hybrid

metaphors, it is possible to construct intermediate worlds by discovering various current metaphors and creating new metaphors. In this way, multiple differences arise and the posthuman world is brought closer to the relational epistemology of children and the relationship between them is made corporeal and embodied, parallel to their corporeal connection with the picturebook and with the philosophical enquiry. With such a view, while re-emphasizing attention to intra-action in philosophical thinking with children, it is suggested that hybrid metaphors also be added to this process. In this way, we can hope that philosophical thinking with children will move towards de-authoritarianism as much as possible.

Therefore, while Johnsonian interaction gains a new function after being converted to “intra-action”, hybrid metaphors also replace linear metaphors in the sense that following the intra-actions of human and non-human agencies, whose experienced quality is mixed with imagination and emotion and the animist philosophy, a relational ontoepistemology is formed far from a binarized and hierarchical logic. In such a process, the formation of hybrid metaphors is possible in the fluid co-thinking between different vantage points. Such intra-active moves can be considered subversive; in the sense that if linear metaphors are changed to hybrid metaphors, they create a new intermediate world that can break the former boundaries. This embodied game reminds the facilitator and the children, active in the co-thinking process, of being responsible and responsive. It reminds them that they can consciously, swingingly, and fluidly respond to the multiple agencies of human and non-human bodies and retain their accountability or agency. It also puts aside language dominance in the

philosophical dialogue and considers everything—from action taken in stillness and silence to movement and relocation—as dialogue.

Keywords: hybrid metaphors, embodiment, intra-action, philosophy with children, *The Tunnel*, Anthony Browne

References:

- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.
- Biesta, G. (2011). Philosophy, exposure, and children: How to resist the instrumentalisation of philosophy in education. *Philosophy of Education*, 45(2), 305-319.
- Braidotti, R. (2002). *Metamorphoses: Towards a materialist theory of becoming*. Polity.
- Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman*. Polity.
- Browne, A. (2008). *The tunnel*. Walker Children's Paperbacks.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2014). *A thousand plateaus*. Bloomsbury.
- Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Haynes, J., & Karin, M. (2019). Taking age out of play: Children's animistic philosophising through a picturebook. *The Oxford Literary Review*, 41(2), 290-309.
- Johnson, M. (1987). *The body in the mind: The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*. University of Chicago Press.
- Johnson, M. (2007). *The meaning of the body: Aesthetics of human understanding*. University of Chicago Press.

- Johnson, M. (2017). *Embodied mind, meaning, and reason: How our bodies give rise to understanding*. University of Chicago Press.
- Johnson, M. (2018). *The aesthetics of meaning and thought: The bodily roots of philosophy, science, morality, and art*. University of Chicago Press.
- Jokinen, P. & Murriss, K. (2020). Inhuman hands and missing child: Touching a literacy event in a Finnish primary school. *Early Childhood Literacy*, 20(1), 44-68.
- Khosrownejad, M. (2008). *Innocence and Experience*. Tehran: Markaz. [in Persian]
- Khosrownejad, M. & Atashi, L. (underprint) *The wind knows the answers*. Tehran: Kargadan. [in Persian]
- Khosrownejad, M. & Shokrollahzadeh. S. (2020). From silencing children's literature to attempting to learn from it: Changing views towards picturebooks in P4C movement. *Childhood & Philosophy*, 16, 1-30.
- Kohan, W., Reynolds, R. & Murriss, K. (2023). Moving human and nonhuman bodies from 'question & answer' to a 'pedagogy of questioning'. In Karin M., Karin & Bozalek, V. (Eds.), *In conversation with Karen Barad: Doings of agential realism*. Routledge, 41-58.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press. (Original work published in 1980)
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*. Basic Books.

- Malone, K., Tesar, M. & Arndt, S. (2020). *Theorising posthuman childhood studies*. Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. (2002). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. Falmer Press/Taylor & Francis, Inc.
- Murris, K. & Babamia, S. (2018). Bodies with legs: ‘Fidgeting’ and how recording practices matter. In Murris, K., & Haynes, J. (Eds.), *Literacies, literature and learning: Reading classrooms differently*. Routledge Research Monographs Series, 110-121.
- Murris, K. & Borchers, C. (2019). Body as transformer: “Teaching without Teaching” in a teacher education course. In Taylor, C., & Bayley, A. (Eds.), *Posthumanism and higher education: Reimagining pedagogy, practice and research*. Palgrave MacMillan, 255-277.
- Murris, K. (2015). Posthumanism, philosophy for children, and Anthony Browne’s *Little Beauty*. *Bookbird*, 53(2), 59-65.
- Murris, K., & Haynes, J. (2020). Troubling authority and material bodies: creating sympoietic pedagogies for working with children and practitioners. *Global Education Review*, 7(2), 24-42.
- Murris, K., de Souza, L. A., da Silva, H., & Reynolds, R. A. (2022). Is the sand alive? Posthuman experimentation with/in early years teacher education. In A. Kuusisto (Ed.), *The Routledge international handbook of the place of religion in early childhood education and care* (Pp. 149-164). Routledge.
- Murris, K. (1997). *Metaphors of the child’s mind: Teaching philosophy to young children*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Hull.

Vansieleghen, N., & Kennedy, D. (2011). What is philosophy for children, what is philosophy with children, after Matthew Lipman? *The Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain*, 45(2), 171-182.