

# A Curriculum in the Post: A Reading of the First Foreign Language Sixth Grade Curriculum through a Posthumanist Lens

Rūta Gajauskaitė

Vilnius University  
[ruta.gajauskaite@fsf.stud.vu.lt](mailto:ruta.gajauskaite@fsf.stud.vu.lt)

**Abstract.** This paper looks at how the ontological and epistemological premises of posthumanism allow educators to reread a curriculum. Document analysis reveals the current grade 6 first foreign language curriculum in Lithuania as being, in Deleuzian terms, a striated, exhaustive, and positivist one. It is also ridden with tension to meet both the naturally arising learners' interests and standardized learning outcomes. Posthumanism, which invites educators to look at the curriculum rhizomatically, allows for different kind of learning – defined through thinking, becoming, and affirming.

**Keywords:** posthumanism, curriculum, becoming, affirming, rhizomatic curriculum

## Posthumanistinis žvilgsnis į šeštos klasės pirmosios užsienio kalbos ugdymo turinį

**Santrauka.** Šiuo straipsniu autorė siekia pateikti posthumanistinį ugdymo turinio perskaitymo būdą. Remdamasi ontologinėmis ir epistemologinėmis posthumanizmo, kaip *post* filosofijos, prieigomis, ieško kelio, kuriuo sprendžiamos įtampas tarp susidomėjimu, įkvėpimu vedančio mokymosi ir standardizuotų mokymosi rezultatų siekimo. Rizominis ugdymo turinys, kuriame mokymąsi apibrėžia galvojimo praktika, tapsmas ir teigimas, gretinamas su dokumentų reglamentuotu šeštos klasės anglų kalbos (kaip pirmos užsienio kalbos) ugdymo turiniu.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** posthumanizmas, ugdymo turinys, tapsmas, teigimas, rizominis ugdymo turinys

## Introduction

As the Lithuanian national curriculum is being piloted before it comes into full effect in 2023, the overall vision is already clearly formulated. According to the project's official website Mokykla 2030 (Mokykla2030, 2018–2020), the new curriculum would optimize the implementation of the Good School Concept (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2016), which is the second document of such scale in the history of independent Lithuania (Vaičekauskienė et al, 2013). The first one, *Tautinė mokykla*, set out to envision the role

Received: 02/04/2022. Accepted: 20/05/2022

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and shape of schooling in the wake of the country's independence (ibid.). The current one, the Good School Concept, aims to address the challenges of contemporary schooling in Lithuania by ridding the curriculum of redundant learning content, prioritizing its relevance to the pupil, empowering the teacher to become an active agent in creating the curriculum, and re-envisioning assessment practices. At the heart of the curriculum lies learning based on competence, in other words, on acquisition of skills, attitudes, and knowledge that would make pupils more equipped learners, citizens, creators, communicators, and members of cultural and social groups. The recently confirmed educational plans, which provide guidelines on how educational processes should be organized in schools (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2021), propose conducting transdisciplinary projects and making room for teachers to freely choose the required teaching methods, tools, and subject topics. To put it briefly, curriculum visionaries wish to see the curriculum work for the benefit of the learners and school communities.

The practical application of these proposals is cumbersome to many an educator (Bilbokaitė, 2022). As the learner's journey through the national educational system concludes with the final year examinations, which, in large part, determine the academic and professional future of a young person, little willingness, naturally, arises to experiment with both curricula and assessment. The overarching goal of going through the school-motions is often aimed at receiving the desired grades or percentages. The question that the learner asks is "How do I get this grade?" The teacher, in turn, asks, "What do I do for them to get that grade?" Creativity, communication, and social and emotional skills should be practiced and developed somewhere within the learning process; however, since doing so does not bring a tangible result, this imperative can easily be overlooked by the need to memorize and reproduce information. Educators find themselves torn between the desire to appreciate and respond to the needs of a particular group of learners and the pressure to produce proof of conducted learning, i.e. grades. A **problem** presents itself: how does one show that steering away from the formal requirements of the curriculum and using one's agency in the classroom is valuable and yields proof of learning?

Posthumanist philosophy serves a potential solution to this educator's riddle. What this approach offers to educational sciences has been explored both theoretically (Snaza, 2014, Semetsky, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008) and practically (Wallin 2010, Somerville and Powell, 2019), revealing a shift in how learners, classrooms, and schools can be seen to *be*. Moreover, posthumanism urges scholars and educators to rethink what constitutes learning, knowledge, and research practices (Ulmer, 2017, Boden and Gunnarsson, 2021, Braidotti, 2017a, 2017c, 2019b). In Lithuania, posthumanism has also appeared in educational research, namely in discussions of envisioning future education (Duoblienė, 2018, Kairė, 2021) and posthumanism's implications to sex-ed (Giniotaitė, 2018). Some features of posthumanist philosophy – its rhizomatic nature – have been investigated in non-formal education practices (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, 2018). However, formal education in Lithuania, to the author's knowledge, has not been viewed from a posthumanist perspective. Thus the **goal** of this article is to present a posthumanist

reading of a grade 6 first foreign language curriculum, which could serve as a starting point for *doing* posthumanist English-language learning and teaching in Lithuania. The following **objectives** are set, corresponding to the three main parts of the article:

1. To provide an outline of what posthumanism brings, ontologically and epistemologically, to understanding curriculum;
2. To exemplify the settled curriculum through a Lithuanian educational document analysis, regulating first foreign language acquisition in grade 6;
3. To superimpose the findings of the first two objectives with the aim of locating room for posthumanist curriculum to occur.

## 1. Starting at the beginning

To achieve the goals and objectives of the article, literature and document review and analysis is used. Treating posthumanist philosophy as a philosophy of the *post*, the analysis and review rest on Elizabeth St Pierre's (2014) proposition of allowing philosophy to precede methodology. In this spirit, the author first looks at what it means *to be* and *to know* in posthumanism. Secondly, the features of posthumanist *being* and *knowing* inform the researcher's analysis of the documents and help define the grade 6 first foreign language curriculum in posthumanist terms. Thirdly, looking at *what* and *how* the curriculum is, the author proceeds to consider what and how the curriculum *could be*. Throughout the paper, the author is in conversation with other posthumanist texts. Being a grade 6 English language teacher in Lithuania, the researcher chooses documents for analysis based on their relevance to the teaching process. That is, the documents analyzed are the documents that English teachers in Lithuania refer to when working with grade 6 learners. Doing so, the author takes advantage of the affordances granted by working with a post-philosophy: it allows the researcher to not only be involved in their research subjectively, but also to claim their subjectivity as part of the research (Ulmer, 2017). The open-endedness of a post practice "provides us with *nothing*. Instead, it offers us a tool to navigate and can turn into *anything*. But it implies hope and therefore is *everything*." (Boden and Gunnarsson, 2021). Thus, the reading of the grade 6 first foreign language curriculum in this paper through in this paper is not the singular, correct, true reading, but rather one of a multiple starting points in posthumanist readings of the curriculum.

### 1.1. Posthuman be

The disclosure of awareness that the definition of being human is subject to history (Snaza, 2014) allows for a variety of the new *human* to emerge: anti-, post-, meta-, trans-. They differ in their re-envisioning of the human in the face of the Anthropocene. Rosi Braidotti (2019a, 2019b) urges to refrain from viewing the posthuman era as the Anthropocene and directs focus to posthuman convergence, a phenomenon occurring when the post-human (the critique of Man) meets the post-Anthropos (the critique of Anthropos). Posthumanism not only reimagines the relationship between the human and

nonhuman, considering animals and other biological forms of life, as well as the affects and effects of the surrounding environment, but also expands the field of vision of what it means to be human beyond the liberal, free, and autonomous subject, practicing the privilege to exercise choice (Hayles, 1999, Žukauskaitė, 2016). Posthumanism purports that “the difference is embedded in the human species itself, with all of its gendered, racial, ethnic, social, individual varieties” (Ferrando, 2012, p. 10).

For Braidotti (2017a), posthuman ontology is monistic and neomaterialist, based on the premise that all matter is one and it is intelligent and self-organizing. This provides three ways of thinking about posthuman *being*,<sup>1</sup> which, as we will later see, inform posthuman *knowing*. Firstly, in a monistic, neomaterialist worldview, the pool of matter – human and nonhuman, living and non-living – *is*; the human is not the sole organizer of it, but a drop in the pool. In turn, this shifts the understanding of what it takes to come into being, or, in other words, to be granted the status of being. In humanist fashion, those that were white, male, heterosexual, physically able made the decision what ought to *be* both ontologically and epistemologically (Ferrando, 2012), whereas posthumanism strives to see and show being as egalitarian in terms of human and nonhuman factors (Braidotti, 2017c). Secondly, some of what *is*, remains invisible to the eye. The ontological subject is defined through its planes of political, institutional, and power connections, which aid the ontological subject in establishing its differences and forming its immanent subjectivity. To fuse Braidotti (2017a) and Hayles (1999), the complex environments obligate one to do, think, and enact a certain way. Thirdly, *being* is rhizomatic in that it is constantly changing and moving without a predetermined linear direction. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2005) claim a rhizome cannot be portrayed but should be performed as a map. Through cartography, they propose “A Thousand Plateaus” making that which is a rhizome visible: it holds “multiple entryways,” “no beginning or end but rather a middle which it overflows,” is made into a substantive multiplicity that drops attachment to “the One as subject or object,” channels semiotic, material, and social flows simultaneously, exposing its asignifying, transversal capacity to always be “in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*.”

Following these three notions – that all matter is one, it is immanent, connected and constantly becoming – the following question presents itself: how does posthumanism, which feeds on interconnectedness and difference, inform knowledge production?

## 1.2. Posthuman know

The overarching premise to producing posthuman knowledge is that “thinking has to be of here and now; thinking has to be in here and on the present” (Braidotti, 2017b, 00:04:10–00:04:14). What is thought and known will, inevitably, be subjective and partial, and therefore objective in its own subjectivity (Braidotti, 2019b, 01:03:58). This marks a break from the humanist, positivist treatment of knowledge that aims for objectivity, certainty, disciplinary purity, and places humans on top of the species hierarchy. Knowledge was produced by people that fit the image of a knowledge-producer – a scientist, a philosopher, an academic, etc. – the characterizing features of whom were unbending and clear. For

centuries, it had been white, fit, heterosexual men, whose inherited social status granted them access to scientific or academic pursuits. In posthumanism, who can practice the power to produce knowledge, what counts as knowledge and how, in return, it affects and effects the world is defined not despite “the classical axes of negative differentiation: class, race, gender and sexual orientations, and age and able-bodiedness” (Braidotti, 2017a, p. 93) but because of them and through them.

The human does not stand alone, looking over the world, both living and non-living, attempting to make sense of it and harness it to further accommodate human being. Rather, the human is in the world, with the world and through the world, in a unique geopolitical and ecological setting and historical continuum (Braidotti, 2019a). To grasp one’s subjectivity due to gender, sex, social and political roles, race and age, not in isolation of these factors but in combination of them, allows one to expose subject’s transversality which had been previously overlooked in attempts to explain the world and human. This way, it allows for the “missing people,” whose *being* and *knowing* has not been considered valuable or actionable as it has systematically failed to fall into the category of “official, normal humanity,” to be included in shaping what it means to become-posthuman. In this sense, knowledge production is multiple and collective. It is also nomadic.

To be nomadic is to be on the outside, moving along the periphery, between and within “settled” territories with established power structures. The innate inclination to stay in flux, the ability to deterritorialize space instead of coding and decoding it, allows the nomadic to maintain its in-betweenness (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005). It acts with “speed, secrecy and affect” (ibid., p. 356), rendering the weight of each nomadic move detached from any fixed value. Applied to knowledge production, the nomadic shows the blurring of lines of institutionalized, isolated disciplinary knowledges. Posthumanism seeks the subject’s engagement in manifold discourses, stemming from and resulting in its transdisciplinary nature. It is rhizomatic in making connections and displaying transversality, and in its lack of any destination point. This, by no means, should be taken as encouragement to revolt against historical lineage of academic disciplines. Posthuman thinking does not suppose an *either...or* decision – the knowing subject does not have to choose between belonging to an academic tradition or shunning it. On the contrary, Braidotti (2017b) encourages one to step into a discipline, study it and comprehend how it got to where it is, and then work it to cater for the present. The choice, thus, is *and... and*.

Becoming posthuman brings excitement and terror (Hayles, 1999). The challenge is to avoid succumbing to the desperation that is brought by the destruction of the planet and loss of species privilege. Hence Braidotti’s (2017b) insistence on affirmative ethics, produced by critique and creativity. The critical does not intend to criticize by pointing out flaws or failures. Its goal is a practice of freedom: spotting inner contradictions, recognizing underlying assumptions and opening these up for change (St Pierre, 2014). Creativity enables finding ways to joyfully embrace immanence and transversality. It activates “subjects to enter into new affective assemblages, to cocreate alternative ethical forces and political codes – in other words, to instill processes of becoming for the multiple missing people” (Braidotti, 2017a, p. 91).

## 2. The settled curriculum

The abovementioned merging of *being* and *knowing* outlines the posthuman. Approaching curriculum from this perspective would mean coming across ways in which nomadic movement against and with the “settlement” of an existing curriculum helps showcase the differences within and interconnectedness of an immanent partial group of learners. It would lead to planning lessons that generate affirmative action and enable becoming. The next part of this paper aims to answer the question: What is this “settlement” of the existing curriculum?

Drawing the periphery of the settled curriculum, in accordance with posthumanist principles, one ought to address its situatedness. For the purposes of this paper, the settled curriculum is defined by a few documents. It is, firstly, a Lithuanian grade six curriculum for first foreign language learning (in this case – English) (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018). Secondly, its accompanying document is the Language Learning Portfolio (2008), based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Lastly, the curriculum is philosophically governed by the Good School Concept (2015).

The overarching goal of learning a foreign language, as explained in the curriculum, is to gain communicative and intercultural competencies that would enable the learner to express themselves in English in private and public settings and demonstrate an openness to the world, tolerance, and creativity (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018). Throughout the document the reader is reminded that learning outcomes are to be treated flexibly for what is described as indicative of a 3-lesson-per-week English language learning course, when learner groups are kept small. The appeal of flexibility is, however, hamstrung by the documents’ striated, exhaustive, and positivist demands.

### 2.1. The striated

Deleuze and Guattari (2005) propose two modes of space – “smooth and striated: in the first case the ‘space is occupied without being counted,’ and in the second case ‘space is counted in order to be occupied.’” (p. 361–362) Both the national curriculum and the Language Learning Portfolio carry substantial features of the latter, the striated. The capacity to speak English, to put it broadly, is contained within a six-level system, with A1 signifying beginner and C2 proficient users. Within each level, its categories of skill – writing, speaking, reading, and listening – are dissected into objectives that are to be acquired at that level. These objectives contain series of concrete examples through which the capacity to use a foreign language is broken down to practical instances. Grade 6 falls under the A2 level, which means that a learner is expected to demonstrate, following the Language Learning Portfolio, listening skills (12 concrete, practical objectives); reading skills (11), oral production in monologue (13), spoken interaction (28); and writing (14). The national curriculum further creates a striated space by outlining the attitudes, skills and knowledge that comprise learning a foreign language at A2 level. Moreover,

organizing the learning process supposes separate tasks for teachers and pupils. Same goes for assessment, which is divided into three achievement categories. At any point in the learning process any pupil can be “boxed” – their ability to display the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge while writing, speaking, reading and listening can be ticked off and labeled as satisfactory (*patenkinamas*), good (*pagrindinis*) or excellent (*aukštesnysis*) (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018). In Deleuze and Guattari’s context, the space of the English language curriculum is striated, as the learner and the teacher rely on clearly prescribed courses of action, reaching and moving along learning-stops of fixed value.

## 2.2. *The exhaustive*

Rigidly defined learning stages and outcomes leave little wiggle room to swerve from the curriculum. The striated first foreign language curriculum (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018) renders learning contents exhaustive, making learners, their parents, and probably teachers believe that the English language can be broken down into units, and, if the learner masters those units, they will be able to use English to express themselves in some variety of contexts (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2008). The range of demonstrated attitudes, skills, and knowledge is held together by a fixed list of themes to be used in the classroom to facilitate vocabulary learning through topics. There are 12 general themes, among which there is climate, IT, shopping, culture, celebrities, and a healthy lifestyle (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018). Strategic, sociocultural and linguistic competences are broken down into bullet-point lists, adding to the scope as well as drawing the limits of what constitutes English language learning in grade 6 (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2008).

Jason W. Wallin (2010), a curriculum theorist and scholar, juxtaposed the curriculum with Jean Baudrillard’s exploration of a simulacrum. Wallin sees any subject in the curriculum, as well as what constitutes the learning and the teaching of that subject, merely as a simulacrum of the subject itself. The teacher, in such context, grants access to information and the learner reproduces it. What is taught and learnt is not English, but rather what resembles English. A collection of these resemblances presented in the national curriculum implies that *learning* English consists of acquisition and reproduction of certain reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, vocabulary items, and compensating strategies. In the learner’s world, then, English comes together similarly to a stained-glass image, in which a smooth union of different pieces of colored shard is nearly impossible.

Combining earlier thought with Ted. T. Aoki’s studies, Wallin (2010) sees the learner’s ability to choose as deceptive, as the “choices available to the individual [...] are *already* constituted” (p. 32). The scope of the English language grade 6 curriculum is so vast that there seems to be no room for spontaneity, smoothness, and rhizomatic movement. Therefore, when the curriculum is taught in its exhaustiveness, it is done so at the expense of the learner’s creativity.

### 2.3. *The positivist*

The Language Learning Portfolio (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2008) and the national curriculum (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018) advocate for an accurate tracking of learners' progress. The former is by itself a tool designed for a (self-) assessment of learning. The first part of it encourages to collect and document learning and cultural language experiences, by noting where and for how long the learner has travelled, corresponded, or what movies they have watched. The second part is designed for learners to tick off learning objectives that they have mastered extremely well (two ticks) or somewhat well (one tick). This assessment is a mixture of how pupils feel about themselves and how the teacher sees them.

The national curriculum (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2017–2018) suggests that the achievement of language ability can be measured even more meticulously. A grade-six student is expected to listen and comprehend texts of up to 100 words; read and comprehend texts of up to 200 words; write texts of 60–90 words; speak in 5–8-sentence monologues or contribute 7–9 lines to a dialogue. Assessment is comprised of formative, cumulative, and summative forms, for which clear criteria must be presented beforehand in class. Another area of assessment is learning to learn, which appears on all subject curricula. It consists of understanding or/and forming individual learning goals, doing accurate self-assessment using a Language Learning Portfolio (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2008), and seeking opportunities to expand language learning experiences.

The desire to measure and attach value to learning progress has its outcomes. Wallin (2010) broadly compares it to surveillance. He notices that this, firstly, keeps learners and teachers on track of the correct curriculum. Secondly, it ensures that every learner can be found, i.e., located within the curriculum. Thirdly, self-assessment invited learners to voluntarily continue this system of surveillance. Overall, students and teachers do not create or live the curriculum but execute it. Only that which can be measured is of value; the learner is signified by their achievements.

### 2.4. *The good*

Having been approved in 2015, the Good School Concept (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2016) is but a guideline towards becoming a good school; it does not provide a universal recipe on how to do it. Rather, it invites school communities to reevaluate the purpose of a school and helps construct a vision of what a good school is (Targamadžė, 2019). The concept reiterates the former policy aim to move from education for all to personalized education. It situates a school as a learning organization, where academic achievement and positive, meaningful schooling experiences are celebrated. Both learning results and methods to achieve them are equally important. However, individual progress should be prized above curriculum-described achievement. There is a drive towards self-efficacy. A good school nurtures a sense of community and provides plenty of opportunities for members' self-actualization. It readies its pupils to become citizens who follow humanist values and are able to plan their personal and professional lives.

Despite its far-reaching potential benefits, the practical application of the concept has been troubled. One of the concept's authors, Vilija Targamadžė (2019), insists that the document's openness to interpretation and the schools' inclination to cherry-pick which of the changes will be implemented lead to partial, inadequate, and inconsistent implementations of the concept, allowing to favor some aspects of the concept over others. Since 2015, some clarifications have been made and guidelines have been narrowed. Three major lines of thinking about a good school have been emphasized. To start with, the school must be viewed as an organic body. Additionally, the pedagogical approach should generally stem from social constructivism. Lastly, the student is in the center of education and all elements of learning are directed to the learner (Targamadžė, 2017).

To enforce these principles, a model of projective pedagogy, alongside smart education, is proposed in order to meet the characteristics of contemporary learner profiles. The teacher's role, thus, is to serve as a guide through the student's learning experience, understanding and helping them realize their learning potential (Targamadžė, 2017). Looking from a pupil's position, their learning is driven towards three concrete learning outcomes: personal maturity, progress, and achievement. The school provides them with ample opportunities to express themselves. Their learning is dialogical and based on inquiry. Their teachers are of different age, sex, professional experience. Their input is important in defining the school's mission. The learning environment is dynamic, open and functional (Targamadžė, 2019). Such is a good school: focused on each student's individual needs and results. But where does the national curriculum go?

## **2.5. Implications**

On the one hand, what happens in a grade-six English classroom is ruled by heavy to-do lists, which appear as to-teach, to-learn, and to-assess lists. Consequently, teachers likely find themselves under pressure to be more efficient in their work, scrambling to make sure that the time in the classroom is used constructively to move through teaching and learning material. An attempt to bring the curriculum closer to the learner has its limits, namely the risk of having the curriculum-imposed lesson structure overtaken and undermined, swirling out of its striated, exhaustive, and positivist frame. Precisely this combination – the striated, the exhaustive, the positivist – allows for calculated, measured, and guaranteed movement across the curriculum. The Language Learning Portfolio (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2008) makes learning visible, but also collectible: the ticks and the grades serve as evidence that teaching and learning took place, whereas the amount of the ticks and the average grade signify how much of it happened.

On the other hand, a good school encourages the teacher to respond to learners' organically arising interests, allowing them to take shape and later making time and space to reflect on it. The impetus of interest is the basis for the pedagogy of social constructivism (Duoblienė, 2011). However, interest cannot be gauged. Unless it aligns with the contours of the curriculum, it formally carries no palpable value; it does not

lend itself to being graded or assessed and therefore is not a sign of when, how, or how much learning took place. Furthermore, the directions towards which the school as an organic body can develop are predetermined. Life, movement, discussion within any classroom is reined in by the requirement to arrive at a fixed destination by the end of the school year. That is not to say it is harmful to education – on the contrary, it is essential to every class. The question lies at assessing its value by fully employing its potential, and that is valuable as much as closely it drives towards the fulfillment of the prescribed curriculum.

In a student-centered classroom, the curriculum, by definition, should serve the child. According to the Good School Concept (Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija, 2016), what is trying to be achieved in the process is a learning environment through which and in which the learner can express themselves. Nonetheless, some modes of self-expression will be more curriculum-proof than others. This yields a few points for understanding education. Firstly, the role of the teacher is that of the mediator between the pupil and the curriculum. Since the teacher knows both what needs to be learnt and what can be learnt, they choose the necessary methods to reach the maximum potential of individual progress and achievement. Secondly, what counts as progress and achievement is regulated by what can either be measured numerically or described verbally. The numeric achievement – the grade system – holds more weight, since it largely decides learner's future educational options. Finally, knowledge remains separate from the learner. It is acquired, developed, collected. It is – above all – bankable. The push for self-assessment and writing learning portfolios undoubtedly stimulates metacognitive abilities. However, it also reinforces the humanist notion that the world is to be organized, objectified, possessed.

The settled curriculum is, above all, ridden with tensions. Within them, the teacher attempts to create smoothness in a striated space, to compose a holistic picture from an overwhelming amount of fragmented learning pieces, to make learning about more than grades. It is in those points of tension that the curriculum lends itself to being nomadized.

### **3. Nomadization**

Seeing the settlement of the curriculum and attempting to nomadize it with speed, secrecy, and affect calls for a meditation on trajectories through which the process could be initiated. It is equally important to discuss the goals of such an endeavor. Lilija Duoblienė (2018) sees the liberation of education at the heart of the question and contrasts doing so in a neoliberalist way, with a non-linear, experimental, a-prescriptive approach to education. She describes the complications coming from the encouragement to be oneself, be free, and learn at one's own pace, as with the inevitability of being tested against the norm, the standard, which, quoting Michel Foucault, reinforces the image of a worthier, more human learner as compared to the rest. In the Lithuanian context of education, Duoblienė (2018) spots a move from the child-centered classroom towards a classroom where both the teacher and the pupil share the centeredness; however, the human element prevails. Duoblienė (2018) presents several examples of research that

deterritorialize the space within the classroom, trust its interconnectedness, allow for unplanned outcomes to surface, and illustrate how rare and untamed such a practice of teaching is. Thus, moving forward, the questions, for the moment, are what is meant by freeing the education, and how is the focus shifted from the human?

The function of the curriculum is to outline the kind of learning that happens in the classroom. This includes, as shown in the previous chapter of this paper, the acquisition of attitudes, skills, and knowledge. The curriculum also instructs on how to assess learning and categorize learners. This structure immediately separates children into those for whom the curriculum works and those whom it fails. To overstep the striated, exhaustive, and positivist framework of the curriculum would allow for a different kind of learning to take place. Wallin (2010) looks at the curriculum etymologically (the word *currere*) and finds that it is “an active conceptual force” (p. 2), with a capacity to create and produce rather than react. Setting a starting point for a lesson rather than an ending point allows pupils to be active agents in maneuvering the direction(s) their learning takes, makes space for their individual knowledges to encounter each other and drive further collective knowledge-making, and finally allows to assess what is and what has become, instead of what should be. A different type of learning happens in a smooth, affective, and affirmative environment.

### 3.1. Thinking

In applying a Deleuzian philosophy to education, Inna Semetsky (2008), insists that “[i]t is pedagogy – in art, science, and philosophy alike – that must educate us, respectively, in becoming able to feel, to know, and to conceive, that is – *create concepts*” (p. viii). She explores the rhizome as a model of thinking, symbolizing unlimited transformations. The Cartesian image of thought, which presupposes its fixation, is representational, for it aims to provide a stable, complete reference of a concept (Semetsky, 2003). Deleuzian concepts are not tied to an image; they are not finite; they are in the making, and what they *do* outweighs what they *are* (Wallin, 2010). In a way, then, concept creation is a process of negotiating the world and, according to Wallin, creating *a* world (ibid.). This contrasts with *the* world – a predetermined, right, fixed way of being, knowing, acting. Rhizomatic thinking offers space for new concepts to emerge.

Ronald Bogue asserts that “to learn, then, is to immerse oneself within an alien element and thereby open oneself to an encounter with signs” (2007, p. 11). Such a practice pushes the learner to perceive and understand the world in a new way, moving beyond skill and information acquisition (ibid.). In the classroom, pupils do not repeat what the teacher does (Semetsky, 2003, 2007) nor are guided by them (Wallin, 2010). Teachers are emitters of signs, invoking encounters and inviting learners to explore a dimension of freedom (Semetsky, 2003). As a result, at the center of a lesson is not the child, towards whom education is directed, nor the teacher-child duet; it is the process of thinking, or learning, or concept creation, which forces new understandings of the world into being.

### 3.2. *Becoming*

If what the teacher aims for in a lesson is not a reaction to the curriculum and reproduction of it (by the learner imitating the teacher) but creating a chance for the learner to think by encountering a sign, by stimulating the creation of a concept and of a world, the teacher inevitably forces the learner to encounter themselves. Rhizomatic thinking is always future-oriented, joining the virtual, the potential in the learner and transforming the unconscious into conscious (Semetsky, 2003). A smooth surface is a must for rhizomatic thinking to occur, as it allows multiple connections, plurality, and non-linear movement (Semetsky, 2003, 2007). Moving through this surface, the learner is open to continuous, open-ended encounters, changes; in other words, continuous becoming. Through experience and experimentation, through a becoming along the line of flight enabled by the potency of a rhizome does learner grow intellectually and morally (Semetsky, 2007).

Taking the notion of becoming into the classroom informs it in a few significant ways. Firstly, any state of things contains multiplicities – “relational entities constituted by multiple lines or dimensions irreducible to each other” (Semetsky, 2006, p. 2). In Braidotti’s writing, this corresponds with the subject’s partiality and subjectivity, determined by its geography and historicity, neither of which are at their finite state. “Subjectivity is the *relation* to oneself, and therefore it is also a multiplicity” (ibid.). Secondly, subjectivity is not aligned with identity, but instead is being produced by “becoming-other, that is different from the present self” (ibid., p. 3). Thirdly, the capacity to be affected that lies in the body (in which matter and thought are not juxtaposed but are both integral parts of a body) makes it possible for new, unknown subjectivities to emerge. Lastly, becoming is not a destination; it is an affect and happens between the two points it would connect (Semetsky, 2006). Briefly, in a classroom setting, the learners experience affect, which triggers the change within them, pushing them to become a different version of themselves.

Duoblienė (2018) marks that becoming is enabled through action, affect, and unhindered emotion. The harnessing of emotion, of desire, of the wild is, as described in a paper by Nathan Snaza (2014) and others, what constitutes a humanist classroom. They paint the schooling system as fueled by clear instructions, obedience, and sameness. It purposely extracts the animal in human and instils thinking about humans and animals as separate organisms. Rational thought is valued over instinct, and preferred, as it paves the way for a pre-defined life of office work, bathroom breaks, and sitting (ibid.). In this classroom, becoming out of one’s potency, actualizing the unconscious, is suppressed.

Snaza (2014) sees the necessity for curriculum studies to draw the attention to being-with and being together. Removing the thinking about human as exceptional brings the surrounding world into sight, encouraging to spot connections between the different elements, human and non-human, affecting and effecting each other, and makes it possible to access emotion.

### 3.3. *Affirming*

To Deleuze, Wallin (2010) elucidates, there is no *a priori* image of what is human. Rather, there is a galore of images of the human, pointing to the process of becoming. Through actualizing the virtual, a difference is affirmed. The power here is about the political, which offers “nomadic and transformative forms of becoming.” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 31). Snaza (2014) names democratic being-together as one of the goals of a posthumanist curriculum. A need to re-evaluate power relations between subjects in the classroom arises. The practice of affirming prioritizes enabling the subject “to enter into modes of relation with multiple others” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 34). Blockages are factors and events that disable our coming into connections with others, that limit our becoming. Anything negative can be transformed into positive (*ibid.*), making a classroom a space where new maps of curriculum can be drawn (Wallin, 2010), a space for the many to become and affirm their subjectivity.

#### **Instead of a Conclusion: A Starting Point?**

In contrast to a prescriptive curriculum, rigidly regulated by national documents and agreements, a posthumanist curriculum refrains from pointing out a specific destination. It invites to treat the settled curriculum as a starting point, whereas the ending point could really be anything, everything, nothing. The rigidity of the settled curriculum, in an affirmative fashion, must be transformed into an affective, sign-emitting openness. In other words, the teacher’s task in taking the curriculum to the classroom is to seek the open-ends in the dead-ends. That feat alone, to paraphrase Semetsky (2009), in the multitude of paths it can take, is nomadic.

Nomadism, which provides an attractive option of unharnessed creation in contrast to mundane repetition, must be grounded, reterritorialized (Duoblienė, 2018). By professing itself, nomadic action risks becoming representational, singular (Wallin, 2010). The goal is not to escape the subject’s situatedness, its immanence, but to become within it. This means that the nomadic element cannot be detached from the settled curriculum. To Wallin (*ibid.*), the planned curriculum is not fixed or non-negotiable. He implores to look for points where the curriculum can be deterritorialized and, for the course of the line of flight, the rigidity of it undermined. When the curriculum is nomadized not in its totality, but in parts, rhizomatically, the teacher’s task is less daunting and more practical. Posthumanism urges foreign language teachers to participate in the becoming of the language alongside learners in a classroom, where all its members – be it people, objects, animals, or technology – matter equally. This kind of learning allows to see what language *becomes* rather than focusing on how language should be. This way learners may affirm their being, becoming, learning.

So how does one show that steering away from the formal requirements of the curriculum and using one’s agency in the classroom is valuable and yields proof of learning? In posthumanist terms, if learning aids becoming through thinking and affirms the learners’ situatedness, it may be claimed valuable. The proof of learning, however, is

intangible – it escapes the grip of grading. But could it be that precisely through grading the deterritorialized curriculum is reterritorialized? This remains to be seen.

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