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**How should we educate children about violence?**

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## Abstract

*This paper addresses the pedagogical challenges when dealing with the education of violence for young children. Drawing upon personal teaching experience and wider critical engagements, it makes the case for a broader understanding of critical interventions that recognizes the political importance of the arts and humanities. Key here is to account for multiple ways violence can be addressed, while taking seriously the agency of children (both affirmatively and in terms of promoting self-reflection) in our educational practices. If children are active agents for change in countering violence, not simply through a responsive critique, but through a more affirmative appreciation of the art of politics, then there is a need to rethink what principles are required to guide their futures.*

**Keywords:** *Violence, Pedagogy, Children, Ethics, Arts.*

## Introduction

Children are at the forefront of our concerns when it comes to dealing with exposure to violence. Recognised as being amongst the most "at risk" group in any social order, they continually demand our care and protection. Children often find themselves in the firing lines, openly recruited into wars, indiscriminately targeted in zones of crisis, perishing as they attempt to cross unforgiving borders and deserts of the world, while abused in their own homes. They show us how violence can be truly life destroying, violating their very

sense of being and robbing them of whatever optimism they may have for their own futures. Without invitation, violence frequently comes to them, seeking them out and brutally absorbing them into its logics. But children don't need to be physically abused to be affected and even normalised into violence. Influenced by many formative cultures, from news media, interactive gaming formats, to wider cultural influences, the resemblances, and realities of violence have become an intrinsic part of the fabric of their everyday lives. Sometimes unmediated, this exposure to violence has a marked impact upon their worldly understanding, even if we can rightly assume that they don't have the necessary vocabulary or critical tools to make sense of what they experience. And yet it would also be a mistake to simply see children as mere passive agents or pure victims to violence. Children in fact can be violent agents on their own terms, which can create perpetrator, victim, and witness triangles that both mimic social practices, re-enact cultural performances, while displaying their own particularly novel forms of violent expression. Recognising these tensions alone should raise a number of pressing questions for educators to continually address, including: - 1) How should we educate children about violence in a way that does ethical justice to the subject? 2) What resources can we draw upon in developing such educational practices mindfully so that children also have political agency that demands respect and critical self-reflection? 3) What lessons can we teach them, so they have the confidence to speak truth to power and recognise their own complicities in violent practices?

I am writing this article as an author and researcher who has been working on the problem of violence for many years. During this time, I have written extensively on violence[1], notably highlighting the importance of trans-disciplinary interventions that bring together political theory with the arts and humanities. I have also engaged extensively in conversations with leading thinkers, artists, film makers and other cultural producers, to have a more open

public conversation on the multiple ways violence appears[2]. Through this, I have come to understand the importance of critical pedagogy (even if the term "critical" itself has become rather normalised today) and the power of education in terms of dealing with its lasting effects. I am also writing this as someone who has spoken in many public arenas, organised educational events for International Non-governmental organisations, whilst also being a father who has recognised the challenges confronted when speaking about such issues with our own children. Whilst recognising the importance of education, what I do know is its presence alone is insufficient. What matters is the *type* of education we give to them, including raising their voices while also forcing them to recognise the complexities of the world. This begins through a recognition that there is no value-neutral or objective system of education, regardless still of the protestation of those armed with the positivism of social science. Education is always a form of political intervention. And it is always a form of political intervention shaped by power struggles, competing claims over truth and knowledge, systems of verification, processes of subjectivisation, and sites of contestation and resistance. From the outset then, it is my belief that any meaningful engagement with the problem of violence requires a recognition of the organisation of power in the field of education, noting its authentications, and subtle disqualifications – especially when it comes to the right to express one's feelings and thoughts in a way that breaks down hierarchy through the creation of more open, challenging, and reciprocal pedagogies for learning and understanding. Admittedly, such an approach does have a long history, which stretches from Paolo Freire[3] to the likes of Henry A. Giroux in the contemporary moment. The latter I am notably indebted to as both a colleague, mentor, and dear friend.

Mindful of this, our concerns should start here by recognizing the importance of education in developing astute understandings of violence, and in the active

formation of informed and engaged children who can also learn to hold power to account by having the courage and grammatical tools to openly challenge violence in all its forms. Such grammatical tools may be discursive, though we do need to also be mindful of privileging language in a way that precludes non-discursive grammatical interventions of a more aesthetic, performative, poetic, or even musical kind. This means that we should have the confidence to begin developing critical awareness of the world at the earliest stages of a child's development. As Henry A. Giroux continually reminds throughout his extensive corpus of work, a critical education is fundamental to any viable notion of democracy shaped by pedagogical practices capable of creating the conditions for producing citizens who are self-reflective, knowledgeable, resistive, non-exclusionary, and willing to make ethical judgments in a socially responsible and engaged way. But this requires a distinct qualification. Such an account of education doesn't mean we should retreat from conflict either, or collapse everything into "safe spaces" which can suffocate challenging ideas[4]. Nor does it mean we shouldn't be prepared to introduce to children to ideas that may be unsettling and even upsetting from time to time. What it does require is for us to introduce them to concerns which should be patently intolerable in a manner that doesn't become debilitating. So what I have in mind is an understanding of education that doesn't simply belong to institutions but is open to all forms of political engagement (that can't be reduced to orthodox or statist notions of politics), which seek to affirm a dignified life. Violence maims not only the body but also the mind and intellectual spirit. Recognizing this alone should be enough to encourage the development of an approach to the education of children, in which questions can be raised about what it means to gain the knowledge and skill that enhance their agency, but also what it means to for them to unlearn those ideologies, values, ideas and falsehoods that lead them believe that they are individually responsible for the violence they witness or experience and that nothing can be done to challenge the insurmountable

problem of violence itself. Having said this, it is important that we do so without flattening vulnerabilities or worse still, have children believe that being a victim is a default setting for subjectivity – hence, that they simply partake in a world that is insecure by design.

Critics might point out here that children have enough to deal with already in their lives, and what's really required is to shelter them from the resemblances and realities of violence until they have the emotional and political maturity and fortitude to deal with its witnessing and occurrence. Whilst well intentioned, such an approach nevertheless overlooks the multiple ways violence is already a part of their lives. Indeed, without early interventions there is a danger they become more and more deeply invested in upholding certain ideas that are complicit in perpetuating structural violence, which will be detrimental in the long term. Moreover, we know enough already about the saturation of violence in popular culture, not to mention the growing issue amongst adolescents concerning online bullying and even suicide to know that violence finds a way to reach children despite our best intentions. And we also know that in today's information age, whether we are talking about endemic poverty or acts of public shaming (which also includes the rise of the social media pile-on, also frequently cheer-led by so-called radicals) a different conversation is required. These reasons alone should encourage us to ask more searching questions regarding the relationship between children, education, and violence? Do we not still in our own subtle ways indoctrinate them about the natural history of violence, so that it appears to them as being a self-evident and insurmountable truth? Do we not continue to reaffirm to them certain understandings of politics, so they still ultimately think about it as either being the possession of grown-up thinking or something that is so devoid of imagination it has no interest for them? And do we not also encourage them to embrace certain dogmatic ideas that can too easily collapse into moral certainties, which in turn precludes a

more open understanding of the complexities and violence of the world? The aim of this paper is to draw upon my own pedagogical and life experiences to offer several possible ways for rethinking how we educate children about violence. It will especially look to connect these experiences with thinking on various interventions to offer a strong intellectual defence of the arts and humanities. Having done so, the paper will propose a number of principles for a more open conversation on violence that takes the political agency of children more seriously, both in terms of raising critical self-awareness and encouraging deeper self-reflection about violence in the world.

**Encountering Violence**

When thinking about violence, and indeed critical theory more generally, there is no impartial or objective position to be had. Violence affects us all, though how we experience, and respond is profoundly shaped by class, racial, gendered, distinctions. The very same violent event is often experienced very differently by people. I am also reminded here by Henry A. Giroux's important work on the war against youth[5]. Reminding us that the category of youth is often overlooked in the analytics of power and its effects, the importance of Giroux's brilliant intervention is to force us to recognise that children are a key object for power, actively drawn into the conscious production of political subjectivities. The subjects we expose them too are subjecting, even if they are often a forgotten category in our political deliberations (how often do we see critical theorists, for example, writing about the bio-politics of children?). Extending this understanding, we may also note how younger children too easily exist beneath the political radar, frequently depoliticised and effectively stripped of all political agency and responsibility. This is especially the case when dealing with children whose poorer social background defines them less by their potentiality and more by their deficits. Growing up on a social housing project in an impoverished community, these deficit markers are something I

can personally testify, and which I subsequently learned would not only be integral to the ways structural forms of violence could be hidden in plain sight; they would gloss over more difficult and searching questions concerning the complex relationships children have with violence, including the assumed aggressive behaviours peoples from under-privileged backgrounds are said to embody more generally – including the harsher language they use, which as many in poorer communities would testify, actually work to disarm potentially violent situations.

I should clarify that when referring to children here in this paper, I am talking about those who are under 16 years of age. I do of course recognise that such age limits are problematic when it comes to evidencing political awareness. Certainly not all 15-year-olds think alike! I am also mindful that universal educational prescriptions based on violence are also highly problematic, especially when conditions of economic depravity are factored in, which does have marked impact on a child's likely encounter with both routine and random physical attacks, along with enduring structural forms of everyday violence. Indeed, while I recognise how violence takes many different forms, which in terms of psychological abuse can seamlessly move across the economic divides, I have become more and more suspicious in my work of the ways the psychological/emotional fields to violence have been used in a way to create a distinct hierarchy of suffering, wherein actual violence is relegated. This is not about denying the importance of the psychic life of violence, as will be shown below. It is however to note there is a qualitative difference between feeling offended by somebody's political ideas on social media than being violently beaten or even killed on a poor housing estate. Further to this, some may rightly point out here that a notable feature of the contemporary moment is the way youths have been notably active politically, especially in the context of climate change and the Black Lives Matter movement. This may be true, but it's not

without its problems either. Leaving aside the evident problem of financial privilege that is apparent with many youth activists, a different conversation (though not fully separate) is also needed for young adults, many of whom in the West are fully invested in hyper-technologized visions of the future, which demands more critical self-awareness, including the rampant ageism taking over "radical" politics and their commitment to an accelerationist politics that clearly benefits Big Tech, which to my estimation has become the unrivalled source for power in the contemporary world.

Against this backdrop, a meaningful empirical start is to ask about our own encounters with violence? When did we first become aware that violence was a thing? These are invariably very fraught questions, after-all, the very term "violence" itself defies neat description and is subject to so many interpretations. Indeed - I have often found myself saying I have no real academic interest in providing a catch all definition of what violence is and how it can be stated as true. Violence, I have understood, comes in many different forms, sometimes physical, most often structural, and other times of a more psychological kind. Having said this, what I have also learned is to revise my won thinking, recognising in the process the need to have a tangible purchase on the problem to avoid collapsing all affronts to one's emotional sensibility as being violent. What I am referring to as violence then cannot simply belong to the realm of language alone (as much as we must recognise the injurious nature of harmful statements and how they can lead to actual violence – which however is not always so determinable), but it must be linked to real corporeal effects of pain, suffering and bodily harm, that is viscerally felt and ultimately physically damaging. Now, when I think back to my own childhood, several influences stand out as being formative in my personal encounters with the problem (even if I didn't see them in terms of violence at the time). While I grew up in a place where structural violence was both endemic and yet never

spoken about through a violent framing, at least before the miners strikes brought the unquestionable nature of state violence upon under-classes into the open, still its effects were so normalised it didn't seem to register. Exceptional violence I have since learned is easy to critique. Hiroshima, 9/11, they leave us in no doubt that something called "violence" is happening and it will have devastating consequences. Normalised violence, which I understand as being the types of violence that are not presented to be violence as such in any given social order, however, prove to be far more difficult when we try to open meaningful conversations about even its very naming as violence as such. Besides this, the cultural influences were undoubtedly pronounced. I initially recall the time my parents bought me a set of toy soldiers colour coded into the British, the American, the German and the Japanese, which left no doubt who were to good guys and who was the bad. The enemies often suffered the misfortune of being thrown across the room in some explosive rage or spending the rest of their time lying on their backs. We would carry these games into the streets mastering the art of "playing dead" in the most extravagant and performative ways. Then there was the motion picture *Star Wars*, whose spectacle of violence was quite unrivalled. This epic movie had an enormous cultural impact and got me into endless playground battles with a neighbour about whose turn it was to play Luke Skywalker. And yet as the author J.G. Ballard wrote shortly after the film's release:

> The slaughter in Star Wars, quite apart from the destruction of an entire planet, is unrelieved for two hours, and at times stacks the corpses halfway up the screen. Losing track of this huge body count, I thought at first that the film might be some weird, unintentional parable of the US involvement with Vietnam, with the plucky hero from the backward planet and his scratch force of reject robots and gook-like extra-terrestrials fighting bravely against the evil and all-destructive super-technology of the Galactic Empire. Whatever the truth, it's strange that the film gets a U certificate – two hours of Star Wars

> must be one of the most efficient means of weaning your pre-teen child from any fear of, or sensitivity towards, the deaths of others[6].

Ballard's point here on desensitisation needs to be taken seriously. There is certainly a danger in overexposing children to violence. Again, this is invariably driven by the idea that children should be protected from witnessing violence on account of its deeply traumatic effects that induce anxieties and nightmares in their innocent minds. But there are two important points to make here when considering these concerns with childhood exposure. Whilst Susan Sontag was right to argue that images of violence have proved limiting when it comes to bringing about actual political change (the iconic photograph of the burning child Kim Phuc in Vietnam being particularly instructive for her in this regard)[7], the idea that society faces a compassion fatigue hasn't been something I can relate to in my own teaching practices. The empathy is there, what seems to be more a problem is how the political system itself thwarts the required change. Indeed, part of the problem today is that we have become too empathetic or at least subjected to the hyper-arousal of every sensibility, as the internet in particular has led to the heightened performativity of everything, especially the claims to be emotionally wounded. There is in fact a strong argument to be made that when it comes to atrocities, we don't see enough violence, for what is represented is highly mediated and indeed its effects displaced by the spectacle of shiny military technologies. Culture has invariably played its part here as the lines between fictional/imagined as opposed to actual/physical violence have blurred beyond all meaning and purposeful recognition. As for the trauma, invariably we should expect the encounter with violence to be deeply disturbing (whatever the age). But as educators who are ultimately concerned with overcoming violence, we should not apologise for this kind of exposure. What matters is how the emotions it produces can be harnessed in transformative ways. No student should ever be able to read the testimonies of Primo Levi and

what it meant to endure a Nazi concentration camp and not be deeply affected. Just as we shouldn't speak to any child about violence in a way that glosses over their complex emotional states, including their own violence. How we do this requires care, consideration, but also imagination in showing them that history is never determined or inevitable. Which in turn requires that we ask them to recognise their own complicities too.

There is also another danger that needs to be avoided when it comes to speaking with children about violence. We can often fall into the trap of thinking that violence is something they need to seek out and find. Whereas in fact it is endemic to our societies and both its visible and hidden effects are embedded deep into our psychological conditioning, which begins from early childhood. I grew up in the mining valleys of South Wales. These communities are by most statistical measure chronically underdeveloped and suffer from some of the worst social depravations. It is fair to say the people and the landscapes are both visibly depressed. And yet despite the violence, explicit and concealed, my interests took me all the way to Mexico, to "study" and perhaps come to terms with issues that were literally on my doorstep. Now, for me, even up to the age of 15 or 16, politics was never something any of my friends talked about – or at least we didn't know it was political. It seemed completely alien to us – something, which only concerned so called "educated people" who belonged to a different class of people. And yet, looking back, what growing up in these communities invaluably taught me was the following: 1) From a young age we talked about violence a lot. We knew it intimately. We experienced it daily. And yet we didn't ever know what to really say about it. In short, we knew the reality, we just lacked the theory and educational wherewithal to challenge its inevitability 2) The violence came in many different forms and it was often part of the normal fabric of everyday life. It ranged from endemic poverty, isolation and a sense of loneliness, poor health – physical and mental, domestic abuse,

and various forms of self-harm, including excessive drug and alcohol consumption. 3) To understand politics, you needed to understand the relationship between regimes of everyday violence and its forms of exclusion. This also included the (dis)empowering use of language and the ability to speak with a "credible" voice so often denied to the poor of this world. But I also learned how confrontational and conflictual language could also be disarming. Indeed, I would later learn there was far greater discursive violence in educated civility then the perceived aggressive posturing of the under-classes 4) To understand the plight, you needed to understand history or what Michel Foucault called the history of our present[8] – namely how did we get to where we are? Indeed, the more I studied violence, the more I appreciated all violence has a history and it needed to be understood in these terms. This especially includes the violence we embody from a very young age.

## The Violence We Embody

A few years ago, my then nine-year-old daughter was taking great pride in showing me her latest dance moves. I have always tried to encourage her to participate in performing arts, recognising their importance as a form of personal and political expression. She then proceeded to tell me the names of each of these elaborate routines she had mastered. Some were innocent like "Dab" or "Floss", others more revealing like "Orange Justice" or "Gun Show". Having been introduced to them on restricted social media and via her peers at school, she went on to explain they were from a game called Fortnite. This was a game, which due to its violence, had an age restriction of twelve. What invariably followed were numerous requests to be allowed to play this game. I resisted for a while, knowing I was merely delaying the inevitable. My point here is not about whether such age restrictions should be applied to such games. It's that the formative culture had already sought her out before she became "entertained". She was already embodying the ritualistic celebration of

violence, long before she experienced it as fact. She was also fully adept at "performativity", which including being acutely aware of the emotional stakes. There was nothing therefore arbitrary to this process. Violence is a remarkably powerful pedagogical force that is able to find its way around most forms of censorship. And it can also work in ways that too easily sweeps up what once appeared critical.

Rather than retreating into some state of protectionism, what this example however provides is a opportunity for speaking with children about their relationship to violence. Do they even recognise it as violence as such? Or is it for them merely a pastime as much as it is for adults who also played such cultured outputs? And what of the performativity? What can be said about this which might open more purposeful conversations? We know through extensive studies that our systems of entertainment and popular culture are saturated by the existence and glorification of certain forms of violence. But focusing on the singular case would seem to be altogether futile. Indeed, perhaps our problem is less about any cultural production than it is about the ways our societies have wilfully separated in damaging terms culture from politics? Reducing the political in such a way not only reaffirms existing and dogmatic positions, but it also actually prevents us from developing more viable and rigorous solutions. It's not just that culture, along with psychology and the life sciences are political. Politics is cultural, as much as it is aesthetic and psychological in its mediations and affects. Games such as *Fortnite* are therefore deeply political, especially in the styles for living they encourage, and the opportunities they give to us to engage in more critical conversations.

We partly owe it to Judith Butler for making explicit the rather obvious links between politics, identity, and performance[9]. Though I would also mention that we do need to be critical of her work that too easily slips into the ontologising

of vulnerability[10], while also remaining vigilant to the ways performativity has now become highly mastered by those who socially profit from narratives of victimisation, often deployed in ways that make claims about non-physical forms of violence (e.g., the expression of hurtful words) seem far more problematic than actual experiences of physical violence. I am not however proposing an either/or situation here. There is no clear separation between life and its performativity, as much as there is no clear separation between the imagined and the real. Nor should we entertain some retreat into a pure state of politics where the theatrical is removed. Politics is a stage, and its routine and exceptional enactments part of the drama of everyday existence. What matters is how we teach children about performative affects (including the hyper-performative simulacrum of emotion), how their actions are always embodied, and how their gestures speak to broader issues and social concerns. Through performance, we can speak directly to them about the micro-political and how it too is part of the world we inhabit. This is especially the case when it comes to violence. Violence is a performance, which especially in a political context demands an audience. But children know this already. When I think back to some of the more brutal cases of youth violence, I witnessed, what was clear is that it never occurred simply between two protagonists who attacked one another away from the glaring eyes of the watching child audience. Playground violence was always a spectacle, which also communicated a message. On rare occasions this was about working out who was the “toughest kid in the school”, but more often it was about marking out who was the dominant and who could be publicly humiliated. Such performances, in short, were inherently political as they often revealed markers of prejudice, along with revealing generational patterns of violence and abuse.

While having children learn more about the witnessing of violence seems crucial, it also raises interesting questions in terms of teaching children about

violence from the perspective of the theatrical? How might we even rethink the curriculum, for example, by complimenting the more obvious ideas from canonical thought (notably democracy, freedom, peace, and rights) with the important playwriters and performers of history? We could think of an obvious move here that compliments the ruminations of Aristotle and Plato (who children are often briefly introduced to when discussing institutional notions of politics), with the powerful enactments of Aeschylus and Sophocles, which provide an alternative humanistic insight into more enduring questions, from issues of infanticide, class, revenge, dealing with tragedy and the possibility for resistance. Alternatively, might we not develop a truly imaginative curriculum that deals with many forms of violence by working with children through the embodiments of different Shakespearean characters? From Hamlet to Iago, Ophelia to Beatrice, Macbeth to Caliban and Tybalt, it is possible to teach children about the complexities of violence and its explicit and more subtle effects in the performative relations between perpetrators, victims and them as witnessing audience. But our concerns needn't be so historic or Eurocentric either. While our engagements with Ancient Greeks should be ever mindful of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*[11], we could also engage children with both contemporary theatre and opera in ways that ask powerful questions of the world they inhabit. We know that opera puts remarkable effort into producing a beautiful death. And we know the artform can uphold the most exclusionary forms of discriminations and a genuine sense of inferiority from children who visit its theatres from under-privileged backgrounds. But again, drawing from my own personal experience, I never failed to be taken or completely enthralled by the performance, even if the audience seemed to belong to a different world. Whilst breaking down the cultural barriers erected by the elite bourgeois remains a problem that needs to be addressed, like canonical thinking that needs to be properly read and understood before decolonising, the artform itself shouldn't be dismissed because of its appropriation into systems of power.

Opera, for example provides so many rich opportunities to discuss the question of gendered violence with children (many of which will be captivated by remarkable scores such as Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*), notably why the female soprano nearly always succumbs to a violent death? And what does this tell us, tell them, about the audience, its desires, and expectations?

**The Literary Imagination**

What applies to the theatrical can also be applied to the study of history and bringing alive its embodiments too. Studying history in the secondary school system in the United Kingdom during the 1980's was a remarkable exercise in reaffirming the Regal past, through to industrialisation, and its move to a leading democratic liberal nation. As the curriculum swiftly jumped from the Medieval period to the Tudors then onto the nations defeating of Nazism in World War 11, the brutal legacies of colonialism were completely absent (including its brutalising effects on internal colonies such as the Welsh valleys where I grew up), along with the need for a greater cultural appreciation of the world. Whilst there have undoubtedly been vast improvements since that time, notably including studies on Islam and the history of the global slave trade, what's taught still works within very reductive notions of history and how it continues to shape the contemporary order of things. Indeed, whilst this history would introduce violence through a factual pedagogical approach, it's no coincidence the lasting lessons on the problem didn't come through the reductive and dehumanising fixation on dates and statistics and its self-validating narratives of truth.

History is never bracketed, regardless of how much we try to break it down into neat chapters for the purpose of meaningful study and consignment. It matters precisely because we are always conducting a history of the present, where past and present collides and where the future is reimagined. Having been subjected,

for example, to the most restricted and over-politicised education in a colonial history which normalised it to the point of outright denial of any of its violent effects, my journey since this indoctrination has been to effectively undertake what Ariella Azoulay has termed "unlearning history"[12]. It has been to look beyond the unquestionable historical truth, to learn the history of people which has never been taught, to critically ask what violence has been necessary to create the systems of established power, privilege, and entitlement today, and to learn that what's truly important is to learn to ask the *wrong* questions. We often say to children that what's important is that they learn to ask the "right questions". Yet asking the right questions is to raise a concern within a given paradigm whose means, and ends are largely set. The wrong questions are precisely those which are not being asked within any given situation. Unlearning history in this way is to ask what is not being said, not being questioned, not being shown, and not being explained. This seems counter-intuitive to the factual or quantifiable approach to history that is still dominant in educational practices for children throughout all stages of their development. And yet, it is not antithetical to the critical inquisitiveness children continuously show in their deliberations. They simply need to be encouraged to see that this type of history is possible.

In the context of violence, there have admittedly been some notable developments in teaching resources for children. We could point here to the successful "Horrible Histories" franchise, which does offer novel and humorous ways for teaching about the worst of the human condition. This builds upon earlier examples of using the illustrated format for explaining the intolerable. Nowhere was this more effectively deployed than with Art Spiegelman and his widely acclaimed graphic novel *Maus*[13]. This is a format I have also found to be most instructive with students of all ages with a graphic publication I put together titled *Portraits of Violence*[14]. Whilst narrating violent histories in this

form does raise several challenges in terms of how we avoid making light of the subject, we should not also simply dismiss it on account of its comic value. Indeed, there is still much to be gleaned from the art of comedy in dealing with tragedy in a meaningful and critical way. Despite the backlash from the established political classes who merely seek to protect their own entrenched positions, Russell Brand, amongst others, has shown how the comic can humanise politics and cut across class, racial and gendered divides in a way that disarms violence with a tragically attuned smile. Or as Simon Critchley has observed, 'Genuinely great humour recognises the world it's describing and yet we are also called into question by it. That's what great art should do. That's what great philosophy should do. The one thing about humour is that this is an everyday practice that does this'[15]. Critics might point out here how politicians today have also assumed the role of the comic or the clown in their vilification of others in ways that absolves complicity. I am reminded of Will Self's words following the attacks upon Charlie Hebdo staff in 2015: 'Were the cartoonists at Charlie Hebdo really satirists, if by satire is meant the deployment of humour, ridicule, sarcasm and irony in order to achieve moral reform? Well, when the issue came up of the Danish cartoons, I observed that the test I apply to something to see whether it truly is satire derives from HL Mencken's definition of good journalism: It should "afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted." The trouble with a lot of so-called "satire" directed against religiously motivated extremists is that it's not clear who it's afflicting, or who it's comforting'[16]. And yet, what's also a notable challenge today is to properly identify who exactly is "punching down" in the mire of identity politics. What we certainly shouldn't be doing is blaming the comedians for society's ills. Comedy is something children evidently relate to and does prove effective in teaching. It can also be a powerful grammatical tool for the marginalised and oppressed. When it's appropriated by power, when the jester turns into the vindictive clown, that's when it becomes mockery and shaming. The same

principle can be applied to teaching resources by asking whether they seek to liberate us from violence or simply laugh at the misfortunate of others without leading to broader ethical discussion.

Comedy aside, perhaps the greatest challenge we face in our attempts to have children (or anybody else for that matter) interested in the past is to make history come live again. For it to resonate it needs to be relatable. For this reason, as many educators will testify, the experience of developing pedagogical approaches to violence can only be effective if it connects to testimony and narrative. Whilst testimony brings the human back into the political field in vivid and emotionally challenging ways, we should not overlook how the experience and realties of violence are also brought alive through the literary imagination in ways that can be ethically felt and humanely considered. An important step here is to undo, as the author Tom McCarthy notes, ‘the distinction that’s usually made between “fiction” and “reality,” as though “fiction” were synonymous with fakery’[17]. Leaving aside the mythical qualities to all politics that began long before fake news was a concern (something children should also be taught about as we encourage them to look at constructs of the past), what the literary can achieve is adding more depth and feeling to disrupt absolute truths. Or as McCarthy explains, at its best, it can be an ethical ‘the act of witnessing, of affirming the existence of “the others” … [which] is not a journalistic or “scientific” act; it’s ultimately an imaginative one, an act of the imagination’. This releases the critical potential of what Michael J Shapiro has called “literary justice” that works by keeping ‘issues open and available for continuous reflection rather than imposing definitive judgements’[18]. Building on from Gayatri Spivak’s point that “literature is not verifiable”[19], Shapiro imagines liberating alternative grammars for understanding the staging of historical events, which not only place the reader in a closer and more humane proximity with the “drama of the encounter”, but it also affirms the need to

reimagine the future. What is the literary after-all if it is not an attempt to destabilise the epistemic ground upon which irrefutable truths rest, thereby exposing the myths through which all exclusionary systems depend? This requires appreciating how children's literature does have a formative impact on our understanding of violence and how it can either reaffirm or disrupt established tropes.

A purposeful example we could draw upon here is William Golding's classical book *The Lord of the Flies*[20], which has for generations been taught to children to introduce them to issues of violence, civility, and the inherent changes of chaos and disorder. Narrating a tale of pre-adolescent children who end up stranded on a paradise island in the Pacific Ocean, the book is seen to offer a quintessential explanation of the descent into "savagery". Conventional allegorical readings of this book also allow for straightforward explanations on the different between order and anarchy, civility, and the Hobbesian state of nature, along with neat separations between morality and immorality as children fantasises and their securities ultimately break down because of their unmediated freedoms and the madness of being thrown into a bestial condition. And yet this book, like so many others, also offers a truly powerful way to encourage children to question whose violence are we ultimately dealing with? Golding himself lived and witnessed some of the worst excesses of violence during World War II. From the reference to the fictious beast of the waters (which as students of theology will know points to a critical understanding of the appearance and not absence of the sovereign Leviathan), to the ritualistic and orderly marches of the key protagonist Jack who arguably embodies more the violence of patriarchy and established hierarchical forms rule, onto the conscious destruction of the ecology with the burning of the forests as the vengeful children seek out the other key protagonist Ralph in order to kill him like the previously slaughtered pig whose head is symbolically placed on a

spike (soon swarmed upon by an army of flies again with evident theological symbolism in its connection to both evil and more critically political animality), so the ability to expose more normalised forms of violence in the name of civility are also just as apparent in this complex and multi-layered narrative. Indeed, that the boys in this tale begin by fleeing a nuclear attack only to be "rescued" by a nuclear warship raises more critical and reaching questions about the location and eternal return of violence and technologies of annihilation.

What we might call here "the literary imagination" is inseparable to how we narrate the past and come to understand the future. It is humanising and loaded with political significance which far exceeds any disciplinary or crude academic framing. As an educator concerned with violence and the human condition, I have learned to find it far more enriching if students arrive at university having read Lewis Carroll, George Orwell, Franz Kafka, Toni Morrison, Virginia Woolf, and Mathias Enard, than any canonical tome of enlightenment privilege. Dante can teach us far more about violence than Immanuel Kant ever could. Our societies are full of allegories, myths, and constructions of truth, often at times parading as science and indisputable in their claims. This is not about denying the truth. Carroll after-all was both a literary genius and a remarkable mathematician. What it is however to acknowledge is how the most brilliant literary works that take us into the depths of human suffering reveal most fully the courage to truth, and more important still, they insist upon bringing the human back into the "quantifiably objective" and ordinarily dull world of political deliberation, which is actually complicit in the denial of the complexities of life and the suffocation of those unquantifiable emotions that make us all too human. Indeed, as I continually tell my students, *Alice in Wonderland* is, to my mind, the most important and brilliant book of political theory ever written. It begins with Alice chasing a white rabbit who has no time

for anything. Could there be a better metaphor for the contemporary moment than this? In Carroll's Wonderland the nonsensical is the rule, the exception has become the norm. It's a place full of injustice, where violence is arbitrary, and power is unmediated. And let's consider the Queen, was there a more fitting caricature of Donald Trump — she utters therefore it's true? But more important in this brilliantly crafted tale is Alice. She continually learns to see things from different perspectives. Indeed, this little girl is a real revolutionary subject in the most affirmative sense of the term. Alice doesn't negate the world; she brings out its wonder. Alice doesn't hide away; she resists what is patently intolerable. Alice doesn't judge the strange fellows she meets on her journey; she accepts people for their differences. And most importantly of all, Alice doesn't lament, because she is armed with the greatest weapon of all — the power of imagination. Lewis Carroll is once said to have uttered, "You know what the issue is with this world? Everyone wants some magical solution to their problem and yet everyone refuses to believe in magic." We can put this quote another way — let's not give to our children an image of a world that will appear to them as catastrophically fated and bereft of an alternative that empowers their imagination.

## The Art of Violence

A few years ago, I went to visit the TATE modern gallery in London with my wife who is an abstract painter. Whilst increasingly of the opinion that such large gallery settings actually destroy the creative encounter as they mimic the logics of digitalisation, demanding that we simply look upon exhibit after exhibit, *looking without actually seeing or reflecting*, I was also stuck by the number of children walking around the setting. To my mind, it is not a question of whether we should be introducing children to art at such an early age. What we need to question is how the experience may or may not add something to their understanding of life and the world? I spent most of this visit in the

company of Mark Rothko's "Seagram Murals", which are housed in a dimly lit room of their own. Having spent considerable time with my wife talking about the brilliance and tragedy of these works, soon after a mother and young boy sat next to us in a most studious fashion. She began by asking this child "what do you think about these paintings"? The child's response was both honest and quite profound: "I feel confused mummy". That he spoke of feelings rather than trying to discern some truth or clarity of thought spoke volumes. In response, the mother then proceeded to tell him exactly what Rothko was trying to do and what the true meaning of the painting was like as if lifted directly from an art book that provided the scientific truth. The child for their part looked quite unsettled looking at these abstract works. We cannot know what he was truly thinking at the time, but I would suggest he recognised something quite unsettling in Rothko's immersive paintings, which defied the very description and epistemic certain upon the red and black compositions the mother had sought to offer. In this encounter alone, I was both reassured about the power of art to capture the child's imagination (which is increasingly a difficult thing to do as their attentions are continually harvested), and furthermore for the need to engage better with children so they can express better how it relates to their experience of the world. Yet as Rothko also reminds, this is not immediate. It demands an immersion that takes time.

The time in which we live is widely said to be defined by the power of the image. Half a century on from Guy Debords prophetic ruminations on the society of the spectacle[21], it is well established in many fields, from neuroscience to politics, history to popular culture, that humans and especially children are "image conscious" in how they experience, learn about, and come to understand the world[22]. We also know this consciousness is not objective or neutral but is subject to an onslaught of hyper-technologized visual stimuli, which certainly go some way to explaining the explosion in overly medicated

attention deficit disorders that reveal far more about the incessant dangers of technology than anything else. So how then might we use the power of art to educate better children on worldly concerns? The important point to stress here is that politics and art do not occupy different realms. Politics has always been aesthetic. And its mastery has always depended upon controlling the power of images. This is not just about what is seen and explained to us as being truthful. It is also about how we imagine the future and the ways this connects to ideas of self-projection, which are so integral to the mobilisation of political ideas and in the formation of movements for change. This becomes particularly acute when dealing with artistic depictions of brutality, which consciously seek to deal with normalised and sanctioned forms of violence. From my own teaching experiences and methods of assessment, I know how the power of art can add far greater depth to our understanding of political concerns. Just as lectures on the Holocaust become far more compelling for students if I connect the words of Primo Levi with the thought of Giorgio Agamben in the presence of the visual testimonies of Aldo Carpi, so the same is evident when teaching about critically about feminicide and the aesthetics of disappearance by bringing into conversation the thought of Jean Franco and Jacques Ranciere with the artworks of Ana Mendieta and Chantal Meza. So why would we think that engaging with younger children should be any different? Do we honestly believe children could not relate or speak about Picasso's *Guernica*?

The importance of artistic expression in terms of helping children come to terms with the trauma of violence is well documented[23]. Many IGO's have deployed art as a method for allowing muted children to express their feelings and document what they have witnessed when their words seem too painful to utter[24]. This merger between art and psychology in the field of "art therapy" (which owes a great deal to the pioneering work of the Brazilian psychiatrist Nise da Silveira)[25] has made important advances in how art can disrupt a stored

memory of abuse and the colonisation of bodily sensations[26]. Artistic expression in this regard can allow for the breaking open of the memory of a wound and positively alter the lived visual memory of suffering through a different use of bodily sensation. In this regard, we can also appreciate more explicitly the power of abstract art as it disrupts the painful certainty of a memory that appears to be insurmountable in terms of the violence it recalls. Whilst this is important, there is however a danger that we simply see art as somehow reactionary or that it is inserted merely into a therapeutic governance frame, which has clearly set out the means and ends. Worst still, that we endorse a therapeutic approach to art, which runs the risk of becoming yet another strategy in the nihilistic doctrine of resilience (notably through the tendency to reduce art to some kind of empathetic and sensitive response to individual pathological deviancy )[27], thereby forcing children to partake in a world that still appears catastrophically fated. To overcome this, our concerns need to go further in their artistic aspirations. If art truly can be an antidote to violence, it cannot simply be used solely as some therapeutic response. The power of art, especially the power of abstract art and how it can liberate the abstract in thought, should be positively encouraged in children to freely liberate the senses to mitigate violence *before* it appears. As Timothy Morton has written, 'Art is thought from the future. Thought we cannot explicitly think at present. Thought we may not think or speak at all'[28]. Children should be encouraged to harness its creative potential, so that some may learn someday to also become artists. Now, of course, the memory of violence may already be prefigured into these forms of expression. Yet in that regard, art does already gesture towards its expressive and transgressive value. But the real power of art is not simply to deal with the trauma of the past. It is to encourage children to see art itself as deeply political, which means integral to how they can be agents for change. Art in this regard becomes an ethos that is inseparable from an aesthetic life. This means having conversations with children what the art of politics means so they

develop the necessary critical tools to challenge the seemingly insurmountable problem of violence itself. How might the future study of politics begin to look if classes at all levels of education that ordinarily teach “American Presidents” or “Theories of Government” and “Liberal Democracy” were replaced by courses on “The Art of Politics,” “The Power of Imagination,” and “Poetics of Resistance”? Perhaps then we might be able to take seriously Michel Foucault’s demand: “From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art […]. We should not have to refer the creative activity of somebody to the kind of relation he has to himself but should relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity’.

## Rethinking Pedagogies of Violence

Building on from what I have presented in this essay, I would like to conclude by proving a set of possible recommendations that could be considered when opening new conversation on how should be educate children about violence today. By no means exhaustive and while ever mindful of the dangers of imposing a new critical dogmatism, the intention here is to propose a set of ideas that may create an ongoing dialogue, which just might allow us to steer history in a different and more just direction:

1) Children should be openly encouraged to speak about violence, including how they understand the problem. While this needs to be done with care and sensitivity, key to this will be to encourage children to recognise their roles as victims, perpetrators, and witnesses to violence.
2) Children should be asked to reflect on everyday examples of violence they are witness to. This could include opening conversations on cultural outputs, while also asking them about their understanding of the

world, including their forced witnessing to violent events on news and social media channels.

3) Children should be taught to have a more critical appreciation of the multiple ways violence can appear in society. This should range from evident studies of political violence (i.e., war and terror) onto the more subtle everyday form of violence of a more structural and psychological kind.

4) Children should be taught to be self-reflective on the different ways oppression can be understood and framed. This needs to include having an appreciation of the ways the dominant object for power is widely contested, including capitalism, patriarchy, whiteness, and technology. They need to be encouraged to recognise that not everyone sees the problem as they do.

5) Children should be taught to have a more critical appreciation of history, especially including colonisation and the persecution of indigenous life. This however should be broad and challenging, including teaching about the ways colonisation was also imposed upon poor white communities such as in Ireland and many other white peoples across Europe as well.

6) Children should be taught that words and language can be injurious. But they should also be taught to contextualise violence, so they are able to draw qualitative differences without flattening violence, or worse still, purposefully seeking to adopt the position of the victim. This means we should teach them there is a world of difference between being offended and a concentration camp.

7) Children should be openly encouraged to discuss their feelings about violence and injustices in the world. This however should be done in a way that doesn't simply normalise vulnerability. Nor should these attempts to show them the importance of affective states result in them

being encouraged to collapse emotional feeling into some unquestionable truth about the world. They need to be taught that emotions are just as complex, constructed and contested as any other claim to truth (which is also inseparable from claims to power)

8) Children should be taught there are multiple political ways in which to critique violence, including the discursive, the literary, the performative, along with the visual and critically aesthetic. Teaching them that politics is as much an art as a science will allow for alterative conversations about the phenomenology of violence, along with reimagining non-violent modes of living.

9) Children should be taught that a critique of violence takes time. This means showing them how some of the most violent episodes in history were brought about through the demands to accelerate change in the name of revolutionary progress (including fascist revolutions and others that have taken place for capitalist accumulation). Which in turn, encourages them to appreciate that temporality is amongst the most important political categories that demands our respect.

10) Children should be taught to recognise how culture makes its own pedagogical demands upon them in ways that can normalise violence. This is not about being culturally deterministic. Nor is it to train them to become future cultural warriors. On the contrary, it is to encourage them to have appreciation of the links between politics and culture so that they may develop a better understanding on the need for complete creative freedom in society.

11) Children should be taught about the dangers of intellectual seclusions and digital sectarianism. The world is difficult and often populated by peoples who simply don't see and feel the world the same. Having an appreciation of this will encourage better conversations with

those they disagree without having to fall back onto the demands for banishment.

12) Children should be taught that victimisation can take many different forms. But they should also be encouraged to steer away from attempts to create notable hierarchies of suffering, which turns victimisation into some kind of competition. They should be reminded there's nothing to be gained from proving who suffers the most, and certainly there's a marked ethical difference between speaking out against injustice as opposed to victim performativity.

13) Children should be taught to recognise and address the history of class, racial, and gendered persecutions. But they should also be taught to never simply take terms of reference as being uncritical – especially if they are advanced by prominent critics. We might think here of terms such as "white privilege", which although well intentioned, might also be questioned as a way for the bourgeoise to relocate its colonial guilt onto the backs of the poor.

14) Children should be taught to be respectful of other people's ideas, including the elderly too. In today's runaway technology world, it's easy for young adults to flip to the other extreme and believe they have all the answers and previous generations the source of all the world ills. This means teaching them the dangers of ageism in political and social affairs, which includes recognising the importance of lived experience when it comes to thinking deeply about problems such as violence that can without contradiction appear timely and yet timeless.

15) Children should be taught that while violence needs to be critiqued in all its forms, society also needs its antagonism. The greatest of violence has been carried out in the name of universality. They need to be taught this, as much as they need to be taught that difference is not the source of violence. So, while all violence is conflictual, they should be

encouraged to see that not all conflict is necessarily violent or destructive. Conflict, they should learn, can be the source of our best creations too!

16) Children should be taught to be weary of those who claim that the answers to the world's problems (especially violence) are simple, obvious, and straightforward. Nothing ever is. This means we need to show them the importance of questioning reductive explanations when it comes to violence and oppression, including how to learn to distance themselves from thinkers on the right and left whose hyper-moralism can too easily lead into a dangerous puritanism.

17) Children should be taught that often violence cannot be separated from an assault on a person's dignity and selfhood. This means that they need to recognise the importance of one's individual autonomy when it comes to free expression, and the rights people have to simply have rights.

18) Children should be taught that systematic violence most often occurs when individuality is destroyed. This is not about crude liberal notions of the reasoned and autonomous subject. It is to teach them more about a poetic sensibility, which includes taking seriously the politics of love. A position in turn which should teach them to also be suspicious of the power of technology.

19) Children should be taught the importance to upholding complete freedom for the art and the humanities. While this may be challenging for them to accept, including how they may be influenced by social media pressure from peers in the cultural wars, they should be taught that without this freedom means nothing. This means teaching them how artists have historically been amongst the most important transgressive witnesses to violence, and that its no coincidence that they are more often than not the first casualties in totalitarian states.

20) And finally, children should be taught that violence can be overcome and that the future is never certain. They need to be encouraged to challenge the natural history of violence thesis. This means teaching them that while violence may appear endemic, it does not and should not define the human condition. Educating them about violence is thus the surest way to subvert its normalisation.

## Notes

[1] For my more theoretical engagements see, Brad Evans, *Liberal Terror* (Cambridge, Polity Press: 2013); Brad Evans & Henry A. Giroux, *Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in the Age of the Spectacle* (San Francisco, City Lights: 2015); Brad Evans, *The Atrocity Exhibition: Life in an Age of Total Violence* (Los Angeles, LA Review of Books Press: 2019); and Brad Evans, *Ecce Humanitas: Beholding the Pain of Humanity* (New York, Columbia University Press: 2021)

[2] This has included leading dedicated series on violence in both the New York Times and continued with the Los Angeles Review of Books. These have been published in the anthologies, Brad Evans & Natasha Lennard, *Violence: Humans in Dark Times* (San Francisco, City Lights: 2018) & Brad Evans & Adrian Parr, *Conversations On Violence: An Anthology* (London, Pluto Press: 2021)

[3] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (London, Continuum 2001) [originally published in 1968]

[4] I discussed this issue with Giroux in the following interview that appeared in the *New York Times* titled "The Violence of Forgetting". https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/20/opinion/the-violence-of-forgetting.html

[5] On this see in particular Henry A. Giroux, *America's Education Deficit and the War on Youth* (New York, Monthly Review Press: 2013) and Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (Chicago, Haymarket Books: 2014)

[6] J. G. Ballard, "Hobbits in Space?" (A review of Star Wars) (1977)

[7] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London, Penguin: 2003)

[8] During an interview in 1981, Foucault stated that he was interested in history primarily because he 'saw in them ways of thinking and behaving that are still with us. I try to show, based upon their historical establishment and formation, those systems which are still ours today and within which we are trapped. It is a question, basically, of presenting a critique of our own time, based upon retrospective analyses'. See John Simon, "A Conversation with Michel Foucault" (Partisan Review vol. 38, no. 2, 1981) pp. 192-201. This developed upon his earlier insight in which he stated, the aim was not to write 'a history of the past in terms of the present' but rather that of 'writing a history of the present'. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York, Vintage Press: 1977) p. 31

[9] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York, Routledge: 1997)

[10] This critique was previously made in Brad Evans & Julian Reid, *Resilient Life: The Art of Living Dangerously* (Cambridge, Polity Press: 2014)

[11] Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (London, Vintage: 1987). This need to rethink our philosophical legacy in this ways is also well made by Simon Critchley, "Black Socrates? Questioning the Philosophical Tradition (Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory No. 86: 1995), pp. 79-98

[12] Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (New York, Verso: 2019)
[13] Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivors Tale* (New York, Pantheon Books: 1986)
[14] Brad Evans & Sean Michael Wilson, *Portraits of Violence: An Illustrated History of Radical Thinking* (London, New Internationalist: 2016)
[15] Simon Critchley, *On Humour: Thinking in Action* (London, Routledge: 2002)
[16] Will Self, "The Charlie Hebdo Attack and the Awkward Truths About Our Fetish for 'Free Speech'" (Vice Magazine, 9th January 2015) Online at: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/kwpvax/will-self-charlie-hebdo-attack-the-west-satire-france-terror-105
[17] Brad Evans & Tom McCarthy, "Literary Violence" in Brad Evans and Natasha Lennard, *Violence: Humans in Dark Times* (San Francisco, Citylights: 2018) p.196
[18] Michael J. Shapiro, *War Crimes, Atrocity and Justice* (Cambridge, Polity Press: 2015) p. 1
[19] Gayatri Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalisation* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press: 2012) p. 324
[20] William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London, Faber & Faber: 1954)
[21] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York, Zone books 1995) [originally published in 1967]
[22] For a critical mediation on this see Brad Evans & Henry A. Giroux, *Disposable Futures: The Seduction of Violence in Age of Spectacle* (San Francisco, Citylights: 2015)
[23] Early pioneering studies on this can be seen in the work of Edith Kramer, notably in her book *Art as therapy with children* (New York, Schocken Books: 1971). On Kramer's influence and further writings see also, Lani Alaine Gerity, *Art as Therapy: Collected Papers of Edith Kramer* (New York, Jessica Kingsley Publications: 2000) For a concise overview of the field's wider development, see Helen P Landgarten, *Clinical Art Therapy: A comprehensive guide* (New York, Routledge: 1981) and Susan Hogan, Healing Arts: The History of Art Therapy (New York, Jessica Kingsley Publications: 2001)
[24] The literature on art and its therapeutic use and importance to advocacy and policy work is extensive with a number of journals dedicated to its enquiry such as *The American Journal of Art Therapy, Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, Arts & Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice, The International Journal of Art Therapy, Art Therapy Online, and The Arts in Psychotherapy*. For a useful set of essays that highlight the therapeutic approach in (post)conflict situations see Marian Liebmann [ed.], Arts Approaches to Conflict (New York, Jessica Kingsley Publications: 1996) and Bobby Lloyd and Deborah Kalmanowitz, *Art Therapy and Political Violence: With Art, Without Illusion* (New York, Routledge, 2005)
[25] On the life and work of Nise da Silveira see Roberto Berliner's sympathetic docudrama *Nise: The Heart of Madness* (TV Zero: 2015). Alongside the more radical work of de Silveira, we also see more popularised accounts of this understanding of art in works such as Alain de Botton & Joan Armstrong, *Art as Therapy* (London, Phaidon: 2013)
[26] Vija B. Lusebrink, "Art therapy and the brain: An attempt to understand the underlying processes of art expression in therapy" (Art Therapy Vol. 21 No. 3: 2011) pp.125-135
[27] On this see Brad Evans & Julian Reid, *Resilient Life: The Art of Living Dangerously* (Cambridge, Polity Press: 2014)
[28] Tim Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Existence* (New York, Columbia University Press: 2016) p. 1

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