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# **“I feel like two different teachers”: the split self of teacher subjectivity**

## Abstract

In this paper, I use a debate between Albert Einstein and Henri Bergson about the nature of time as a heuristic tool to understand the nature of teacher subjectivity. This debate outlines notions of time as measurable and time as duration or flow. These two interpretations of reality, one from a physicist and one from a philosopher, are used to examine the bi-Discoursal nature of the teacher identity. An ethnographic participatory action research project in a preschool class in England finds that teachers operate as both physicist and philosopher, sometimes simultaneously. At times, the teacher is a physicist, measuring the geometry of child development and comparing it to a fixed point of normative expectations. At other times, the teacher is a philosopher, existing in the moment with children and focusing on the lived experience of being. The simultaneous existence of these two identities is a cause of anguish, forming a conflicted and contested self. This, however, is necessary to function in the current educational context and forms an aspect of the care of the self.

Key words: teacher subjectivity; identity; datafication; time; doppelganger

## **Introduction**

In 1922 the then well-known philosopher and scientist, Henri Bergson and the emerging physicist, Albert Einstein met at the Collège de France for a debate (Canales 2015).

Both held very different ideas about time, with Einstein discussing the nature of scientific time and Bergson focusing on the philosophical nature of time as *duration* or *flow*. For the physicist, time, and by extension, reality, was a concept that could be measured using mathematics. For Bergson however, what mattered was the experience

of reality, and he argued that to measure this was to change its very nature. In this paper, I mobilise Canales' account of the argument between the two men as a lens through which to understand the conflicted nature of the teacher self. The self is split into two opposing identities- the teacher as physicist and the teacher as philosopher.

This paper builds on my previous work, which uses the doppelganger or *ghostly double* as a trope to express the divided nature of the current professional educator.

These papers examined the creation of data-doppelgangers as an aspect of datafication (Pierlejewski 2019a; Pierlejewski 2019b). I argued that data-doppelgangers of children are created in the vast amounts of data collected about each child and then used to judge progress. Here, I use the doppelganger trope to problematise teacher subjectivity. I apply a narrative of the two selves, the teacher as physicist and teacher as philosopher, to my ethnographic work in a preschool class, as highlighting the conflicted character of current teacher subjectivity. I bring together a number of different research interests and phenomena in this paper, namely, interpretations of time, the functioning of the teacher self and datafication. I examine the intersection of these three phenomena through my investigation into teacher subjectivity.

### **The physicist and the philosopher**

In order to use the heuristic of the physicist and the philosopher, an understanding of Canales' (2015) text is necessary. I used this text as the main focus for analysis, as it gives a narrative of the move in discourse from philosophy to science. I found this account of the emergence of the scientific discourse fascinating and saw clear parallels with the emergence of the performative discourse in education. The book explores the relationship between Bergson and Einstein from the early twentieth century until the death of Einstein and beyond. It tracks the emergence and development of the debate about time, with philosophers arguing that time is defined as human experience and

physicists arguing that time is defined by its measurement. Although the debate was about time, it is difficult to separate time from reality as time is an aspect of reality and the argument was extended to consider the nature of reality itself. The debate begins with Bergson believing that the two ideas could coexist, as he saw himself as a scientist as much as a philosopher. Einstein, however, established a dichotomy between the scientific and philosophical view of time by stating at the Collège de France debate “*the time of the philosopher does not exist*” (19). Einstein believed that reality is that which can be measured. In his paper *Geometry and Experience* (Einstein 1921 in Canales, 2015), he claimed that his geometry was *the* geometry of the universe. His techniques were “*more than simply tools used by physicists; they were actual models of the universe itself*” (Canales, 2015: 157).

Bergson, on the other hand, argued that reality is not divisible. To measure time would be to separate the flow or *duration* of time into small sections in order to count them. This division of reality into smaller parts, for Bergson, was a change in the nature of time. He argued that this division transformed time into space as there must always be a concept of the parts existing next to each other in a spatial medium. He compared the measurement of time to film, where reality is recorded in a series of static frames that, when played one after the other, give the illusion of flow. A film, however, is not reality; it is a representation or symbolic form of reality: “*real time has no instants*” (Bergson 1965). Bergson, in fact, went further, arguing that when any kind of reality is put into language, its nature changes and it becomes symbolic, creating a “*second self which obscured the first*” (Bergson 1910). In my terms, Bergson saw measured reality as a doppelganger, or second self, of reality.

The dichotomy between scientific and philosophical truth grew, with the positivist discourse of science as truth growing to become hegemonic. Bergson, who

had been one of the most celebrated philosophers of the century fell into obscurity and Einstein became arguably the best-known scientist of the time. In the same way, scientific truth was created in discourse as the only truth, with other forms of knowledge becoming marginalised. Following Foucault, I define truth as a concept created by discourse or *“ways of speaking and seeing, the whole ensemble of practices which served as supports for...knowledge (Foucault, 1984: 54).* Truth is not seen as an abstract concept, but rather as emerging from discourse and therefore susceptible to change. Here, truth has undergone what Foucault calls a *“global modification” (55)* as it has moved away from valuing philosophy and ideas to valuing science above all else. This discourse of science as truth can be seen in the evidence based practice privileged in contemporary education (Pring and Thomas 2004) where particular kinds of research showing *“what works”* are valued (Education Endowment Foundation 2020).

### **Datafication**

Alongside this understanding of the debate about time, it is also important to understand current discussions around datafication as it is the measurement of reality, or creation of data, that defines the teacher as quasi physicist. Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes’ work explores this in an educational context. They define datafication in terms of *“increased significance, visibility and constant governance through dataveillance, and as being what happens when people or systems are subjected to the demands of data production”* (Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes, 2017: 6). Their work ( Roberts-Holmes and Bradbury 2016; Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes 2016; Bradbury 2014; Bradbury 2019; Roberts-Holmes 2015; Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes 2017) explores both the productive function of datafication in producing teacher and child subjectivities as well as the reductive function of judging child development through attainment data alone. I build on this work, defining datafication as data becoming more important than the child, and,

correspondingly, assessment more important than teaching (Pierlejewski 2019b). Williamson also explores the notion of datafication, focusing on the impact of digital database systems on education (Williamson 2014; Williamson 2015). He uses the analogy of the data-doppelganger to explore the notion of the child being reproduced in data form (Williamson 2014). I take this notion further, exploring how datafication disadvantages multilingual children (Pierlejewski 2019b) and the impact of datafication on child subjectivity (Pierlejewski 2019a).

Datafication is defined in the field of digital sociology as “*the transformation of part, if not most of our lives into computable data*” (Cheney-Lippold 2017, 9). Cheney-Lippold argues that this data is used to predict who people are and will be. He sees this as less authentic than human judgement as what matters is not the authenticity of the subject, but its usefulness for classifying and categorising humans. People are reconstructed from easily measurable aspects of their lives and their subjectivity is complicated by “*layers upon layers of...algorithmic identities*” (5). Beer however, argues that data is seen as being more authentic and accurate than human judgement and the data-self becomes the focus of what he calls the “*data gaze*” (Beer 2019). The regulatory power of the data gaze controls what is made visible and which aspects are rendered invisible. Data is seen as a technology of power used to regulate society. The question of the authenticity of data was recently brought into public discourse in the UK when algorithms were used to calculate A level results in the absence of test data (Coughlan 2020). Results based on algorithms, rather than student attainment, were seen to be unfair and public pressure led to a government U-turn (Ricahrdson 2020).

## **Subjectivity**

This paper explores notions of subjectivity. My understanding of this concept is built on

the work of Foucault and Foucauldian scholarship. In his earlier work, Foucault (1977) examines governmentality, or the systems and technologies of power which produce the subject. Discourses work to create a matrix within which subjectivity can be produced, with certain subjectivities allowed and others disallowed. His later work however, focuses on the ethics of the self, or how the self is made an object of government by the self in a hermeneutics of subjectivity (Foucault 1994a).

In his work on Foucault as Educator, Ball (2017) explores the late work of Foucault focusing on the care of the self. He argues that the ethics of self-care require the subject to engage in *parrhesia* (Foucault, 2001). This term can be interpreted as meaning "fearless speech" or "truth telling". Here, Foucault moves from a focus on the construction of truth to a focus on the truth teller and the act of truth telling. *Parrhesia* has a dual purpose- to critique power and circumstance and to narrate the self differently. In this way, the subject can destabilise the powerful discourses which seek to create certain kinds of subjectivity and work to produce alternative subjectivities. Ball describes this as a double refusal as the subject renounces the idea of the intelligible self that is seen to be authentic and the refusal of the technologies of power which seek to represent it. This process of the construction of the self is ethical in that it produces a kind of freedom, the freedom of self-creation. It is also however, deeply uncomfortable, making the subject vulnerable and ambiguous. Zembylas (2015) refers to this as the "pedagogy of discomfort", building on Foucault's discussion of the ethics of discomfort (Foucault 1994b). He argues that a pedagogy of discomfort can lead to social and individual transformation as students question their long-held beliefs. This paper is in some ways a pedagogy of discomfort in itself, as the focus of investigation is the uncomfortable tension between conflicting identities.



## **Identity**

Butler's work, which builds on the work of Foucault, is used here to define identity. For Butler, identity emerges from a subjectivity produced within a power network which determines what a person can and cannot be. Before an individual can take on an identity, they must first be made visible within the matrix of power relations which constitutes the subject. She defines "subjection" as being the process by which the subject is produced and maintained by power. She explains "subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency" (Butler 1997, 357:2). In other words, without the technologies of power which govern the subject, the subject could not exist, as it is these technologies which produce both compliance and resistance. Out of these subjectivities emerge a range of identities available to the subject. Brady and Schirato (2010) argue that for Butler, the politics of identity always emerges from, is dependent on and is made explicable by subjectivity.

Teacher identity has been well researched and is viewed primarily in relation to the performative school culture and as co-constructed with others. The performative culture can be seen to lead to an inauthentic self where "value" in terms of the effectiveness of the teacher, rather than "values" are what matters (Ball 2003). Wilkins and Wood (2009) argue that "coercive compliance" guarantees the erosion of professional judgement. Sachs (2003) argues that this can lead to two types of teacher identity, the managerial professional and the democratic professional. While managerial professionals comply with the performative regime, democratic professionals resist, valuing the teaching community over the organisation and developing an activist self. This, she argues, can lead to transformation where public accountability and professional autonomy are more balanced. Alsup (2005) examined the contested nature

of teacher identity and found that new teachers who problematised their identity and accepted multiple discourses simultaneously, were more successful. She draws on the work of Gee, who proposed that bi-Discoursal people, or those who work within two conflicting discourses are the “*ultimate sources of change*” (Gee 2015, 185). This is because bi-Discoursal people are able to enact changes in big Discourse by “infusing” them with aspects of other discourses.

Youdell (2011) also found that the acceptance of multiple identities was important in the development of subjectivity. Her work examines the subjectivation of both teachers and students in the context of a school for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Youdell examines the data in terms of intersectionality, looking at the multiple categories of identity occupied by the subjects and the relationships between these. She takes a post structural approach to analysis, examining how subjects are constructed within discursive matrices, situated within relations of power. In particular, she examines how the students are subjectivated as both bad school subjects and cool street subjects. These opposing subjectivations are constructed in the discourse of both students and teachers. Youdell suggests that the student's practices of self shift between the two commensurable identities. The discourse of the boys as "SEBD" school failures however, is their normative positioning and they act against this through finding lines of flight that might destabilise such a position. In this way, the students are struggling to choose where they stand as they narrate themselves within the discourses which make them recognisable.

My work builds on these notions of subjectivity and identity as I examine the power of the discourse of performativity to produce teacher subjectivity. Identity, in the form of the teacher as scientist and teacher as philosopher is explored, with particular focus on the tension between these two opposing identities. Like Youdell’s students, the

teachers in this study find themselves simultaneously occupying both identities and struggle to choose where they stand as they act their place within the discourses which make them recognisable. I find that the problematisation and acceptance of multiple identities is necessary for the care of the self.

## **Methodology**

The research on which this paper is based, was conducted in a preschool class in the north of England from 2018-2019. The school is in an area of very high deprivation and poverty (Communities and Local Government 2019). Its ethnic make-up is diverse, with the largest groups being South Asian and Eastern European Roma children. The aim of the project was to devise actions which would improve the assessment of preschool children. I was interested in datafication and its impact on child subjectivity and wanted to explore ways to challenge this discourse in practice. I chose a setting which had an ethos of child-centred learning and devised an ethnographic participatory action research project involving a research group at the school.

Ethnographic participatory action research is a methodology in which researchers work collaboratively with participants to affect change. The project was ethnographic, as I was participating as a teacher within the school. It was participatory, in that the research was conducted *with* the participants, rather than *on* them. Finally, it was action research, as the team decided on actions to be taken and reviewed these actions regularly in terms of their impact and effectiveness. The purpose of the research was to enact change, particularly with marginalised groups of children. Participatory action research challenges power dynamics as researchers and participants co-construct knowledge together (Tedmanson and Banerjee 2012).

The research team consisted of a preschool teacher, Tania; the head of school, Lucy; a new to English lead teacher; Amelia, a Polish bilingual support worker; Sophie,

a teaching assistant; Danny, a Hungarian Roma informant and me. My position within the project was of both teacher within the school and academic. I taught alongside the main class teacher every Friday and recorded my ethnographic reflections as field notes. The research team met regularly and made decisions together about the process of the project. Actions to be enacted were decided upon together and reflections were shared during meetings and informal communication. The research followed ethical guidelines laid out by the British Educational Research Association (2011) and all names and identifying features of the participants are anonymised.

Conversations with the class teacher, Tania and the head of school, Lucy, were instrumental in the construction of field notes. Although I wrote the notes, they were a result of collaborative thinking and represented a co-construction of knowledge. In addition to my field notes and the notes from research team meetings, I made notes on meetings with parents, preschool team meetings and conversations which happened around the school. I also collected data in the form of group mind maps and conducted a small number of interviews with teachers at the beginning of the project. One of these interviews has been particularly fruitful in writing this paper. This is with Francesca, a preschool teacher, who was about to leave the school and move to another post elsewhere. She was interviewed in the summer of 2018, just prior to the beginning of my regular teaching at the school. The data analysis for this project took several forms. I worked with other members of the team to analyse data for some publications but chose to work on the data independently for this paper.

The main action of the action research was to implement an approach called *In the moment planning* (ITMP) (Ephgrave 2018). This is a child-led approach which emerges from a child-centred discourse. Ephgrave advises teachers to move away from planning lessons in advance and rather, to look for “*invisible moments of possibility*”

(Dubiel, 2016: 32) when interacting with children. Teachers look for these opportunities and decide in the moment, how they can support the child in their development and learning through sensitive interaction. It is very different from the approach favoured by many schools in England, where teachers use assessment data to identify gaps in knowledge and plan activities in advance, to fill these gaps. This is enshrined in the Standards for Teachers, Standard 6: “*use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons*” (Department for Education, 2013: 12).

### **Doppelganger as method**

The approach to data analysis, used in this paper, doppelganger as method, was developed in a previous work (Pierlejewski 2019a). It builds on Burman’s (2017) “child as method” approach in which the trope of child is examined to evaluate how it functions to constitute socio-political axes. The child is a figure through which the research topic is viewed. In the same way, I use the trope of the doppelganger, taken from both literature and film, to view educational policy and practice. I examine the function of the divided self, in this case, the teacher as physicist and teacher as philosopher, in producing teacher subjectivity.

In order to understand this approach, it is important to have an understanding of the doppelganger genre in literature, film and psychoanalysis. The genre emerged during the Enlightenment period as an aspect of the Gothic. Examples of this can be seen in Hoffman’s *The Devil’s Elixirs* (Hoffmann 2008), Poe’s *William Wilson* (Poe 2009) and Dostoevsky’s *The Double* (Dostoyevsky 1846). It has also been explored in many films such as *The Double* (Ayoade 2013) and *Fight Club* (Fincher 1999). In all of these stories, during moments of mental anguish the subject comes across another version of themselves. This deeply disturbs the subject and they develop an ambiguous relationship with the other self. Many stories end with an attempt to kill the

doppelganger, but these in turn reveal the true nature of the double as an aspect of the self. To kill the doppelganger is to kill the self. The doppelganger genre has several key features identified by Rank in his (1971) psychoanalytic analysis:

- The doppelganger is an exploration of identity in terms of the relationship between the self and the self
- The doppelganger is inextricably linked to the subject and neither can exist without the other
- The presence of the doppelganger is a source of acute anxiety to the subject
- The doppelganger is ambiguous, both realising and restricting desires

In this paper, I use the trope of the doppelganger to investigate teacher subjectivity. I ask how the teacher's self is divided and examine the relationship between these two identities. I combine this with the two interpretations of time documented in Canales' (2015) text to identify two versions of the self. These are the teacher as physicist and the teacher as philosopher. I ask

- How does the teacher function as a physicist?
- How does the teacher function as a philosopher?
- How do the two selves operate simultaneously?

The next section explores the two aspects of the split self, addressing each of the questions in turn.

### **Teacher as physicist**

An analysis of field notes indicates a discourse of teacher as physicist throughout. There are three main aspects of this which emerge from the data. These are the regulatory function of time as a technology of power; the non-statutory guidance *Development*

*Matters* (Early Education 2012) becoming a geometry of child development; and the joy of data seen in the pleasure derived from creating and analysing data.

### ***Time as a technology of power***

From the very first meeting with staff at the school, the pressure to achieve the statutory measure of school readiness was a dominant feature of discussion. In England, this is known as the Good Level of Development (GLD), and is determined by the ability of pupils to achieve a number of goals in personal, social and emotional development, language and communication, physical development, literacy and mathematics (Standards and Testing Agency 2018). At the end of the reception year (age four to five), all teachers in England must assess their pupils against a number of early learning goals in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Standards and Testing Agency 2018) and this is submitted to the local authority. From this 'profile' data, the GLD is constructed and used as key performance indicator for the school. The aim is for all children to achieve the GLD but the current average percentage is 71.8% (Department for Education 2019). This pressure to meet targets requires the teacher to focus attention on measurement. Reality, for the teacher as physicist, is that which can be measured. Pupils must be assessed throughout the year to ensure that they are on track to achieve the GLD. It also requires the teacher to collect vast quantities of data in the form of observations and other assessments, to prove that each child is meeting the target. In the same way that, in his theory of special relativity, Einstein measured a clock travelling at the speed of light and compared it to a static clock back on earth, teachers measure the lived experience of the child and compare it to the static descriptor of the child found in *Development Matters* (Early Education 2012).

This performative pressure to move children to a specific goal in a particular time frame can be seen in several comments by teachers about the nature of the early

years foundation stage (EYFS). Francesca, a preschool teacher at the school, describes her role in an early interview as:

*You've got to start from that point, you've got however much time with them and you've got to get them reading and writing by the end or they will not get it*

The EYFS year is conceptualised as a race. This aligns with imagery used in education which uses the race as an analogy for schooling (Paterson, Tyler, and Lexmond 2014)

This conceptualisation posits the teacher's job as to get as many children to the finishing line as possible in a short period of time. The teacher must "get them reading and writing". It is her job to coerce the children to perform certain tasks "reading and writing" by the end of the year. The consequences of not getting them reading and writing by the end of the year are devastating. Francesca, later goes on to say, "You get a good score, you get looked upon as a good teacher". This implies that if you do not get a good score, if enough children do not perform the required tasks, you are not a good teacher. The value of the teacher as physicist depends on the quality of the data. If the data is not good, the teacher is not good. This can also be seen at the end of the research project when the scores for each class are calculated. My field notes record a meeting in which all members of the preschool teaching team evaluate the statutory assessment scores. One teacher, Susanne, received the news that a low percentage of her children had achieved the GLD. My notes record her reaction:

*As soon as Lucy [the head of school] worked out that the overall GLD was 53% all of the teachers were clearly disappointed. It was as if their balloon was deflated. The morale slipped.*

*Susanne was particularly upset with her data as she only had 9 children at the GLD. She said: "It's upsetting" "it's sad" and was visibly upset, close to tears.*



Susanne narrates herself as feeling that the measurements of her children convict her of being a bad teacher. She is experiencing the “*terrors of performativity*”, as Ball (2003) so brilliantly puts it.

### ***The geometry of child development***

In order to measure children, a fixed point for measurement must be established. For most schools in England, this fixed point is outlined in the non-statutory guidance, Development Matters (Early Education 2012). This non statutory guidance document outlines child development in age bands from birth to sixty months. Each age band overlaps the next and contains a number of descriptors for each of the seven areas of learning. Each list of age-related descriptors ends with an early learning goal (ELG), which must be achieved by the end of the year. An example is a descriptor for the speaking element of communication and language for a child aged between forty and sixty months: “*Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words*” (Early Education 2012, 21). These descriptors of normative development are taken by the teacher as physicist to be fixed points. They are accepted as the geometry of child development, rather like Einstein believed he had discovered the geometry of the universe. They are not seen as a possible way to describe reality, but rather the description of reality itself. This can be seen in my discussion with Tania, the preschool class teacher, about a child’s progress towards the ELGs.

Tania and I discussed GLD. We were talking about whether Maria would get the GLD or not. Tania had said that she thought Maria was on track. We talked about the difficulty of using past tense and retelling stories, which are ELGs she can’t do yet.

In this excerpt, I narrate myself as acting within the teacher as physicist identity. I am basing my discussion with Tania on the assumption that Development Matters is the fixed point of measurement. I am assuming that this is where Maria should be and that

her difficulty in reaching some aspects of the goal indicate that she has failed. I accept the goal unquestioningly in this discussion, as if it told me some truth about Maria, despite the fact that when acting as teacher as philosopher, I know that developmental norms are classed, gendered, raced and culturally biased (Burman 1994). They are not the neutral statements they claim to be.

Why is it that, in the role of physicist, teachers accept norms which in the role of teacher as philosopher, they know to be non-neutral? One explanation may be the need to have a fixed point to measure from. Without the fixed point, measurement is meaningless as no comparisons could be made. Without measurement, the teacher would not know whether they were “*looked upon as a good teacher*”. Within the discourse of performativity, the purpose of education is to achieve particular measurements at the end of a fixed time period. This can then be used to judge the quality of teaching, establishing the value of the teacher. Truth, within the discourse of performativity is different to truth emerging from a discourse of child-centred education. The teacher must navigate both of these opposing truths simultaneously in order to drive change and survive.

Another explanation is proposed by Britzman (2011) who, in her psychoanalytic exploration of education, explores the notion of the manual as an object of transference relationship. Transference, she explains, is when feelings about past relationships are transferred to other people or objects. She claims that it is central to therapeutic and, arguably, also other educational and institutional processes. This extends also to educational policy documents. The manual, an instruction text, is an example of such an object. Love (among other feelings) is transferred to the manual as, like a parent, it will remove vulnerability of not knowing. This covers over the vulnerability and lack of knowledge of the child, thus reducing the unbearable feeling of not knowing. The

manual thus becomes a love object. Development Matters can be seen as such an object. It acts in the role of parent for teachers, reassuring them that they are not vulnerable, that their lack of knowing is hidden as the manual contains the knowledge they lack. This can be seen in an excerpt from my field notes where Tania and I look at the data for the class. I had devised a system where assessments against Development Matters are converted into quantitative data and then used this data to show that children had made progress.

*I then looked at the data with Tania and asked about progress. I calculated how many points were on track at baseline- 115 and how many at mid point- 240ish. This is a big leap and showed Tania that more children had made progress.*

With the help of the manual, Tania and I were able to narrate ourselves as good teachers. The manual functioned as a parent, reassuring us of the value of our work.

### ***The joy of data***

When our measurements demonstrated success, we experienced a sense of joy in this data. As a physicist, the analysis of data and the subsequent knowledge that is generated is a source of joy. This can be seen in my own reflections about data. Following on from the previous excerpt, in which Tania and I “discover” that our children are making good progress, I note the following:

*We discussed this data quite a lot. Tania had not analysed the data in this way before and found my analysis helpful. This is the believer me who loves data! ...I love analysing this data.*

In this excerpt, I narrate myself as loving data because it reassures me that I have value as a teacher. The transference object of the manual had been effective in acting like a parent to protect us from our unknowing and we loved (or feared) it in return. The use of the term “believer” is also interesting as it aligns my relationship with assessment data with a religious belief. I write that I am willing here, to put faith in the data, not

because I know it is true but because I need to feel it is true. As it is telling me the story I want to hear- a story of success, I am willing to suspend my disbelief and put my trust in it. This again relates to Britzman's (2011) concept of the transference object. The data here is the love object which appears to be loving me back. I believe in it because it is giving me what I need.

The joy of data also relates to the concept of the mirror of data (Pierlejewski 2019a). This emerges from Lacan's (1977) work on the mirror phase, in which the mirror enables the subject to see themselves for the first time as an object. Bibby explores this, explaining how children learn about themselves through looking into the mirror of the teacher (2011). I take this further, positing data as a mirror which reflects a version of the teacher. I suggest that "*this activity is narcissistic in nature as it involves making the formulation of good data, the polishing of the teacher's doppelganger, the obsession of the teacher*" (Pierlejewski, 2019b: 7). The doppelganger here is the assessment data which creates another version of the teacher. My obsession is to make the data as pleasing to me as possible. Like Narcissus, I like what I see in the reflection, it brings me joy.

The idea that there are two types of teacher identity, two teacher selves, emerges from the research data early on. Francesca described two types of teacher in her interview:

True early years teachers feel that way. Data teachers who can only teach to this [the GLD] because this tells you what to do, don't fully understand how a young child learn and the pedagogy behind that learning

Clearly, Francesca narrates herself not as a data teacher but as a "*true early years teacher*". Despite the fact that Francesca has also described her role as "*to get a certain percentage of GLD through to year 1*", she does not define herself as a data teacher.

Conversely, the role of teacher as philosopher is felt to be the *true self* of the

participants, despite the fact that they are often very much in the role of the data teacher, or teacher as physicist.

### **Teacher as philosopher**

Bergson's work as a philosopher is useful in understanding the role of teacher as philosopher. In his view, reality was confused, ever changing, chaotic and unpredictable. To measure this reality, to put it into discourse even, was to change its very nature. He explains this in his thesis *Time and Free Will* (Bergson 1910, 45)

*Our perceptions, sensations, emotions and ideas occur under two aspects: the one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing and inexpressible, because language cannot get hold of it without arresting its mobility or fit it into its common place forms without making it into public property*

What he means by this is that language changes what we experience. When we put things into language, we put them into the symbolic and create another version of the self- the symbolic self. This is a kind of doppelganger. The symbolic self in terms of children is the version of them which we describe and quantify. By observing and measuring, we change that which we measure. He goes on to clarify this point saying,

Thus, a second self is formed which obscures the first, a self whose existence is made up of distinct moments, whose states are separated from one another and easily expressed in words (48)

By trying to create data out of human experience, we reduce that experience to a series of distinct moments which exist separately from each other. This doppelganger obscures the subject, as it recreates it in the symbolic forms of words and numbers.

### ***The joy of the moment***

The teacher as philosopher embraces the experience of teaching, finding joy in the moment. By this, I mean that their joy comes from the experience of the flow of time, from the “*confused, ever changing and inexpressible*” nature of being. This can be seen by

the spontaneous expression of joy given by Tania while playing with children outside. Tania has been playing in the rain with a group of children, splashing in puddles. The children and teacher have co-created games in which children measure the splashes and mark on the floor how far each splash went. Tania speaks to me towards the end of the session saying “*I love my job this week! We’ve had such a good week!*”. Tania had not planned to play in the puddles, she had been led by the children’s interest.

This kind of working involves practitioners focusing on the moment, on the experience of time as duration as opposed to planning activities in advance. Rather than focusing on future learning outcomes, the focus is on what the adult and child are doing now. Adult and child work together to co-create learning, with the adult sensitively interacting with the child, looking for opportunities to support the child to move their learning forward in their child-initiated play (Ephgrave 2018). There is an unpredictability about this pedagogy which is expressed by practitioners as “*going with the flow*”. I reflect on this in my field notes, noting,

*This way of learning is unpredictable, unplannable and chaotic. It is highly creative, brave, scary and kind of insecure. You never know where you are going to go each day. You can’t really prepare for it, but you use all the skills you have gained along the way.*

The analogy of the journey recurs throughout the study. Our in the moment planning approach feels like a journey to an unknown destination “*you never know where you are going each day*”. There is no map, no planned route and no specific destination. This can provoke feelings of insecurity as it feels like a high-risk strategy, but this risk may be a part of what makes the practice exhilarating and therefore provokes feelings of joy. I reflect in my field notes, “*I love that we never know what we are going to do*” indicating a pleasure derived from the risk of the unknown. Rather than using the manual as a

transference object to control vulnerability, I narrate myself as embracing the vulnerability and finding pleasure in it.

Practitioners reported that they felt that ITMP pedagogy gave them a sense of freedom. This can be seen in an evaluation meeting I held with the preschool teaching team at the end of the project. I asked the participants to mind map their response to the implementation of ITMP. They utilised terms such as “individuality”, “autonomy” “flexibility” and “loose” in their mind maps. The pressure to measure, the regulatory function of time seemed to have been removed. This corresponds to Bergson’s ideas about measurement of time. Guerlac paraphrases Bergson, saying

*If we try to measure and count our feelings, to explain and predict our motives, and actions, we will become like automatons- without freedom, without beauty, without passion, and without dreams. We will become mere phantoms of ourselves (Guerlac 2006)*

Science, for Bergson, was appropriate for measuring *things*, but not for measuring human experience. The measurement of our lived reality removes our freedom and passion and makes us into doppelgangers, perhaps in the form of the teacher as physicist. Conversely, to remove this requirement to measure, restores a sense of freedom and passion, which can be seen in the responses of participants to the change in pedagogy. The joy emerging from the experience of acting in the moment with children is comparable to the joy experienced in analysing the data.

### **The contested self**

Throughout the research, the teacher as physicist and the teacher as philosopher are both equally present in a contested or bi-Discoursal self.

### ***Two teachers***

The notion of the contested self is perhaps made most explicit in the Tania's comments following parent interviews. Tania reflected on the kind of feedback she gave to different parents. She noticed that she did not mention the GLD to parents whose children, she felt, had no chance of achieving it. When talking to others however, she mentioned that they were on track to get the GLD. Tania indicated that she felt that there was something morally wrong with this saying, "*I feel like two different teachers. Morally, it's not sitting right with me*" This was a turning point in the study, as Tania and I both began to narrate ourselves as existing within two discourses simultaneously. Tania expresses her dissonance here by describing herself as a split self: two teachers. She is aware that she has a doppelganger. Tania also expresses her feelings about this split self. She is uncomfortable with the incongruity of the divided self. This bi-Discoursal self, however uncomfortable it might feel, is essential for the development of the subject as it drives change. Through problematising both the teacher as physicist and the teacher as philosopher, a new version of the teacher-subject can emerge. A self which accepts the notion of the split self.

My own narration of the self in the field notes also suggest a complex subjectivity. The following excerpt follows a meeting in which staff discussed school assessment data.

*I reflected at the meeting that I have a very complicated relationship with data. I can at the same time discuss data as if it were a real signifier of knowledge while resisting data as a false signifier of knowledge. What is it? How do I really feel about data?*

*I genuinely want children to get the GLD even though I think it is false. I can't escape it. I am trapped by data. It impacts on who I am and makes me something else. I want to resist it, but I can't. It is always there, influencing how I think about children*



The overwhelming feeling I describe here is that although I want to be the teacher as philosopher, I cannot escape the teacher as physicist in me. My account of feelings of being trapped by data indicate that I feel my agency has been removed and I am unable to be the intuitive, creative self I expressed in my reflections on planning in the moment. I see myself as simultaneously the teacher as physicist discussing “*data as if it were a real signifier of knowledge*” and the philosopher “*resisting data as a false signifier*”. This challenges my belief that my subjectivity should be somehow coherent. My realisation that I have a doppelganger, that I am not a coherent self, that I can simultaneously think as two different teachers causes mental anguish. I narrate myself as powerless to be myself and experience a feeling that I am “*something else*”. This corresponds with Rank’s (1971) work and Dolar’s (1991) description of the effect of the double on the subject: “*this crumbling of the subject's accustomed reality, this shattering of the bases of his world, produces a terrible anxiety*” (Dolar 1991, 11). This anguish, however, can also be interpreted as the pedagogy of discomfort. In order to care for the self, it is essential that I experience the discomfort of changing my beliefs in order for a new type of subjectivity to emerge. In this subjectivity, multiple identities are possible and the idea of a coherent self is rejected.

### ***The completion of the ego***

The subject and the doppelganger, in the forms of the teacher as philosopher and teacher as physicist remained throughout the study. One of the features of the doppelganger in literature is that as part of the self, it cannot be destroyed. To kill the doppelganger is to kill the self. Dolar argues that the doppelganger completes the ego (Dolar 1991).

According to Lacanian psychoanalysis, to understand subject/object relations, the subject needs the mirror image as, without the image, the self as other, the subject’s ego is not developed. In the same way, the knowledge of my split- self helps me to understand

who I am as a teacher. I narrate myself as being able simultaneously to be both teacher as physicist and teacher as philosopher and derive joy from both.

## **Conclusion**

During the study, I had hoped to rid myself of the teacher as physicist. I felt, like Francesca, that I was not a “*data teacher*” but a “*true early years teacher*”. Planning in the moment (Ephgrave 2018) seemed like a pedagogy which would enable me to do this, as the focus was on interacting with the child in the here and now, rather than on planning for future learning based on assessment data. The reality of teaching in the current political context, however, is that the discourse of performativity as much as the discourse of child-centredness produces the bi-Discoursal subject. Both are instrumental in creating subjectivity. To participate in the current educational reality, where quality is measured by outcome data, involves becoming a part of the system. The teacher as philosopher *is* trapped by data and in order to operate in this world, must embrace the opposing role of teacher as physicist. To completely reject either aspect of teacher subjectivity would be to kill the doppelganger, which in the literature of the doppelganger genre, can only result in death. The care of the self therefore, depends on the acceptance of the divided subject.

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