Lucas Rosendall | Case Study Analysis

Artificial Intelligence, Ethical Collapse, and the Future of Learning

Ethical Implications Considered

In order to prefigure the future, prediction must stamp its seal of approval into a sugar-coded, totalitarian present, skewed by an archival past ruminating with silences, absences, and disasters, what Hegel called the slaughter-bench of history, where wreckage is confusedly enmeshed, hurled, vomited, and accelerated forward by installed statecraft protocols, global and local infrastructures of networks—transportation, communication, utilities—synchronised through the nervous system of a cybernetic lifeworld, infected with kernels of catastrophe and apocalypse, spellbound by the specters of power and fear in the constant entrapment of predictive optimization imposed by a disavowing force—the artificial lubricating and overthrowing of individual subjecthood for the supernormal jouissance of attention mechanisms and stimulus reflexes, propelling hysteria and paranoia, object-fantasizing reflex responses, modulating and deterritorializing the architectonics of thought back into the palpitating impulses, channels and circuitries of easily managed social forms. Hence, the simulated dread and horror entrenched in what recrypted philosopher Maya B. Kronic (2017) has called the Hyperplastic-supernormal. In the midst of disaster and ruin, embedded in the biopolitical economy of the hegemonic state apparatus, which threatens to break every limit of illustory democracy (the state reserves the right to kill you at any moment), comes the inscriptions of the Department of Education: A 2023 report on *Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning*. Meanwhile, and elsewhere (but not entirely elsewhere elsewhere), pseudo-Shamanistic positivistic rationalists geek up in corners of the internet, occupied by conversations into Artificial intelligence that typify existential risks into planetary-scale singularities while rationalizing epochal histories of

colonial oppression and violence, normalizing a speculative imagination that assimilates all possible worlds into one, limiting the possibilities of future worlds (Cadena & Blaser, 2018). At the current conjuncture, there is an overall indifference to extractivist destruction— myopic logics overlaid with representable, predictable, and graspable models of reality that fail to confront data regimes built on surveillance, extractivism, and inequality, recreating disproportionate negative impacts along the lines of race, class, and gender. We are in submission to an ocean of cruelty, where domination and irrationality are pushed into the dark nucleus of relativistic afterthought by a resurgence of new and old fascist tendencies and desires. In the face of global polycrises, from pandemics to wars, economic uncertainties, and climate catastrophes, how shall we begin to make our way through the intestinal grime of such degenerative ethical collapse?

Surrendering your habitual being — the machinic mechanisms of reified social forms that automate desire and subjectivity — is what the cool kids are doing. If human instinct has been co-opted, redirected, and manipulated by modern technologized media environments, then the young, precarious generation responds by decoupling procreation from its biological and instinctive imperative, opting for artificial channels and supernormal stimuli in primitive algebras of sophisticated media, product design, and market forces (Kronic, 2017), pliable to consumption cues that carve out “undiscovered regions” of human affect—the black box of emotions, the compulsive triggers of the mind, a capitalist feedback loop of commodified compulsion (think robot sex, porn, aesthetic surgery, branded lifestyle products). For children and early adolescents, who poignantly account for a third of internet users worldwide (Livingstone, 2015), The constant, accelerated rhythm, and nervous reaction to information stimuli, with the offline and online increasingly blurred, commingle into a more rubberized,

squishable polycule of desertion, banality, and indifference: a resignation to extinction. How then, should we look to co-construct a digital future for the child in the midst of various transformative assemblages? Amid postmodern synthetic socialites eviscerating grand narratives, the militarization of everyday life through homogenized pattern warfare, hyperreal augmented deep fakes transforming "archives" into conglutinated image-text, and post-truth scientific illiteracy coalescing into mass disinformation and propaganda that distort what is true and standard, one might wonder how the Department of Education responds to the tremors of such a disquieting present—and what corollary ethical implications these shifting values and behaviors may have for the future of learning and education.

This thesis aims to proceed from the aforementioned presuppositions put forth: we presuppose the expansion of technologically-mediated social interaction accompanied by increasing individual atomization, fragmentation, layers of discipline and restraint through the continued economisation of space and time. Circumscribed within these constraints, I will argue, Miguel A. Cardona, Roberto J. Rodríguez, Kristina Ishmael (2023), all former officers at the department of education (DOE), forward a regulated, well-disciplined report that cannot foresee the catastrophic reactions of communication-technologies and the culture surrounding them, the surrounding aspects of cybernetic control (Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, 1991), as their premises aspire to order and maintain routines of the educational establishment through a continuation of the history of personalized learning and teaching machines (Watters, 2021). The report encompasses key insights and recommendations structured around "a consensus vision for AI-enabled edtech where humans are firmly at the center (Cardona et al., 2023). This includes addressing algorithmic bias, ensuring safety through privacy and data security, promoting transparency, and stressing effective AI across contexts. I offer a subsequent interrogation of this configuration on

the grounds that this blueprint, although quite practical and sound in its forward-facing value, constitutes a practice and a predictive world that designates a foreclosure of the imaginary and a limiting political ecology. Professional and wider societal ethical issues at stake are explained: By focusing on what Teachers and Students are doing in reaction to Artificial Intelligence inside the academic setting, the groundwork is laid for cognitive infrastructures which quietly necessitate shifts in the operative logics of assessment towards further standardized knowledge; invisible latencies of statecraft which seek to construct, indissociable from technology, embedded forms of subjectivity back into easily managed social forms and bounded cultural imaginaries. To this end the report fails to examine the kinds of exclusions and foreclosures, therefore the porousness and subversions, imbued into the mediating link; the interruptions and expansions of a new type of media, what artist and writer K Allado-McDowell (2023) has termed *neural media*—the many newly discovered forms of mediation that AI can take. Thus, beyond critiquing and challenging the DOE report, this paper will explore the co-constitutive relationship between the technical and social realms in greater detail (Introna, 2007), building out and expanding possibilities away from static academic practice and programmable instruction to interrogate how the child may interact with AI-mediated variation to determine what is true, credible, and real in a technologically advanced, post-truth, postmodern, post-reality society. Interpreting AI as a media—an environment that reinserts perception, behavior, and cultural meaning back into constructed identities and hyperreal realities—gives information professionals an approach to marshall in and install an expanded ethical framework for neural, alternet realities. My argument here centers on how we should position ourselves in relation to the impulses and responses of the child, and how, as we transition into a neural media framework, we might be able to reshape learning and education towards more beneficial ends.

Humans have always possessed the power to change reality and ethics according to our desires; what is imposed, mechanical, and prosthetic in us is supernormal, hyperplastic, packaged as entertainment yet tethered to violence, blood, and war, a common denominator of dehumanization in a hyper-imaged reality. Yet, if cruelty is the medium, can the artificial still offer a pull-lever out? To conclude, we will ask ourselves how the archive might respond to a totalizing technological future reinforcing commodity relations—how pedagogically interested AI can be steered towards public infrastructure that promotes and privileges beauty and pleasure, along with historical accuracy and usefulness (Adler, 2019).

Societal Ethical Issues at Stake

Before we can embark on the journey of genuine reorientation and alternation, we need a comprehensive understanding of the foundation to be uprooted, the various layers of arrogant depoliticizing and therefore, the strategic absences used to justify and organize the continuation of integral inequalities in need of governing, tinkering, and regulation. The main goal of the DOE report is to bring to the fore the omnipresent flaws of techno-liberal power and progress as a site for the anxious girding of its boundaries: to exhibit worry, concern, to acknowledge understanding of the concerns through connotations of care, and to justify a position without regard for the actual substance of that position; that is to say, estranging property relations and alienated exploitation in a world that has become infinitely more watchable than livable (Jacobs, 2025). Accordingly, the report fails to envision how education itself—its tightly woven interplay of power relations—naturalizes underlying political beliefs and structures of rights and wrongs, good and evil— that in return institute arrangements for concern and worry, inclusion and foreclosure. Algorithmic bias, concerns over safety and privacy, failures of transparency, and effectiveness of technologies like AI across context are then presented as foundational insights of

research. Generally, my intention with the subsequent paragraphs is not to scorn those involved, for this report is a published document produced under administrational orthodoxy, but to highlight the U.S government's more concealed role in educational technology development and more importantly as a larger engine for the construction of not only individual subjectivity, but informational relations: the espousal of a strange, yet certain neural intersubjectivity which, at this current conjuncture, metastasizes into ethical collapse.

To begin, the most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that of algorithmic bias and the resultant safeguards against through recommended "protections." Biased or Inappropriate—"bad associations in data"— foreground ("possible leading to") *algorithmic discrimination* in opposition to the more "useful" associations and relationships in the dataset (Cardona et al., 2023). The infiltration of "developers" and "implementers" of data analytic practices proliferate unabated and as a given despite the concerns of systematic unfairness. New technologies are integrated into the complexity of the educational establishment— political institutions with a diverse set of stakeholders (Reich, 2020) (teachers, students, families, communities, school boards, trustees, vendors, state and federal governments)—by "developers" who represent a particular less diverse cohort but who seemingly possess the ability to minimize algorithmic bias, promote fairness, and increase trustworthiness of deployed systems (Cardona et al., 2023). With opaque "developers" single handedly coding out entrenched, inextricably wicked algorithmic discrimination, algorithms themselves are free to iterate across the domain of education, modifying and transforming pedagogical relations for the benefit of its main constituents: teachers and students. If the developers undoubtedly come to disappoint, The DOE believes in a "human in the loop" paradigm: neural net algorithms which center the student, the teacher, the learning and the teaching. Phrases like "preserving human dignity" abound, but the word

“teacher”, the words “teaching”, “learning”, “learner”, and “child”, exist next to words like “strengths” and “needs”, “customize” and “personalize”, “agency”, “human”, and “support”, as if it is the fate of this report to crystalize abstractions of human classification into optimized assumption, fundamentally failing at what it acclaims—a human-centered view of human agency in its particularity. For it is first and foremost cultural and institutional fabrications of pre-existing power relations that set the standards by which we come to know the “student” and “teacher”(Airoldi, 2021). As education itself reinforces and reproduces normalization in ways that cannot be anticipated, it automatically assumes, determines, and classifies common tropes into generalizable truths about *all* teachers and *all* students. Mutually articulating yet distributed trajectories of wealth accumulation, mass incarceration, and state power situate enforced and rationalized symbolic boundaries upon the student, the teacher, and the institution of education as a whole (Benjamin, 2019). Such binary branching dances with the logic of the machine (Zuboff, 2019): “bad, biased associations” in data juxtapose the more “useful associations” which alternatively disseminate fair and trustworthy patterns. Like the turning of a switch (Amoore, 2020), The DOE liberal imaginarium envisages a “human in the loop” abort-button where a reasoning human subject or entity (teacher) asserts judgement, suprevision, and control over inert, feminized AI objects, systems, or tools (the child). Efforts at omnipotent pragmatism—”root out bias,” “represent *all* cohorts of learners”, “align AI models to a shared vision” will inevitably curtail into the embedded inequalities of reality. We are left in an impotent purgatory of fallacies brought about by the reports ontological inflexibility. Indeed, the main thesis of this little paragraph is that *algorithmic bias*, its prohibitions and permissions, presumes intrinsic, nonreflective, unconscious prejudice that can be reflexively, conditionally, and

consciously controlled and corrected by “humans in the loop.” In reality, the epistemological advantage of the human exists on the same ethicopolitical, sociocultural plane as the algorithm.

Understanding and recognizing the macro-level forces that impinge upon subjectivity is part of understanding algorithms in education and in learning. Humans compose algorithms which in turn compose us, a recursive loop assembled through time and space. The DOE’s conceptualization of Artificial Intelligence is not explicitly technical, objective, or neutral, as the report raises additional concerns about safety, transparency, and cross-contextual effectiveness, yet the tool is still dedicated to a particular form of technical rationality— a means to achieve a particular end (Introna, 2007). What are these ends? Or rather, what are the real-world politics driving and necessitating the implementation of AI in education? For the DOE, Artificial intelligence captures the imagination because it offers a technological fix for a wide range of social problems materially reproduced through the institutional violence of the state (Benjamin, 2019). The discursive logocentric overlaps between disciplinary institutions (like education) and lawmaking, regulation, and policy metabolizes in a private decentralized political circuit of partnerships and mandates (Block & Keller, 2011). The report stresses the need for robust data protections and ethical oversight, especially as it concerns surveillance or exploitative practices, but it does not explain the careful union of such data flows in a particular political economy: economic interests influence inputs into regulatory processes; onwards, technical standards instantiate legal rules. In other words, the government, corporate, and third-party data collection are socioculturally interoperable in a confluence of surveillance (Benjamin, 2019) (Levy, 2023). In the present report, the good people of the DOE refer to AI’s dependence on data requirements and subsequently insist on strengthened attention to data privacy, security, and governance; besides an educational institution’s efforts to comply with federal student privacy laws like the

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), or state privacy laws generally, translating governance ideals and preferences into legal mechanisms—what is legally and practically possible—is another story. Since, secure, protected, consensual, and sustainable public infrastructure for AI institutionally adopted at the local, state, and federal level is as unlikely as Elon Musk's next government supported entrepreneurial pursuit, development of data infrastructures in education will give rise to resistance based on who has access to data and under what conditions (Gulson, Sellar, & Webb, 2022). Unrealistic assumptions around "ownership" of data more broadly—that is, unrealistic expectations of individual rights that derived from aggregated data—as well insufficiencies of FERPA to impart meaningful oversight and concrete standards in a datafied world, play on concurrently with battles to procure basic protections and rights for children. Despite reactionary evangelical dub of the capital-C "Child," a universalized, symbolic entity mirrored in the DOE's understanding of what we could call the capital-S "Student", both of which must be "protected", children have not been a significant focus of the debates over artificial intelligence and ethics (Tucker, 2024)(Ito et al., 2023). Historically, internet governance presumed adult users, but, as previously remarked, one in three internet users worldwide is a child (Livingstone, 2015) (Ito et al., 2023). To integrate their perspectives into policy and design means thinking through childlike perception not through adult conceptions of the child, but through the pure fantastical consciousness of the child— its attraction to eeriness, risk, secrecy, tantrum, wonderment, adventure, and desertion. The DOE cannot imagine such possibilities . . .

To state more clearly what we have briefly grazed upon, or buoyantly floated around, departments like the DOE do not merely have the power to translate values such as safety, transparency, and cross-contextual effectiveness into realities, but assume the machinery, the power, to breathe meaning into these concepts in the first place. Instead, layers of abstraction, like acknowledgment of the need for transparency, explainability, and auditability of AI tools in learning environments, accordion fold into other irrigating abstractions like “fairness”, “accountability” and “safety.” “AI often arrives in new applications with the aura of magic . . .” (Cardona et al., 2023), but rather than upending existing educational systems, the DOE’s school culture—finely tuned to homeostasis— domesticates new technologies (Reich & Mizuko, 2017). New apps, software, and devices are put in the service of existing structures and systems, rather than rearranging them (Reich, 2020). Artificial Intelligence in schools then can be seen through a technosolutionist paradigm. Everything can be known, will be known, and must be captured by way of technology. For the agentic class, of which the DOE represents, captivation is an invitation to an indexical relation inside a democratic surround. Although it isn’t at all apparent, the surround harnesses our impulses into affective swipe gestures, all while calling for strengthening trust and safety, as if it dispenses security and not violence. The American states reinstantiation of subjecthood and individuation back into corralling, classifying, and captivating technologies invariably complements AI’s glued embedding in the medium of all-encompassing network—a matrix of metadata schemas, interrelated tags, and algorithmic sorting. The Interlinked and self-organizing taxonomies of the database—variously labeled as deep neural networks, deep learning, machine learning, and artificial intelligence—have steadily developed to intermingle with advertisements, analytics, and metrics to promise fully automated techno-military cyber-circulation: enhanced behavioral management tools as feedback loops in

informational architecture, an accelerated propulsion of Skinner's behaviorist psycho-technologies once so critical to understanding the space of EdTech (Watters, 2021) (Zuboff, 2019). The synthesis of new kinds of algorithmic media translate into governing rationalities that in return legitimate new societal norms, new thresholds of normality and abnormality, against which actions are calibrated. In a rush to forge consensus over the 'methodological potential' of AI amidst uncertainty and ambiguity, transparency is betrayed by techno-generative certainty. Or, in a different register, "the constitutive element of individualism being adverse, if not antithetical to the dark feminine, which is to say, everything" (Gumbs, 2018).

The idea of personalization tools that automatically adjust the "sequence", "pace", "hints", and trajectories of learning experiences (Cardona et al., 2023) did not originate in Google's headquarters, nor did it begin after Skinner's pigeons (Watters, 2021). Individualizing education is the long-running pinnacle of education technology (Watters, 2021); a forgotten, no-longer-identifiable ideological framework ontologically subsumed by our normative instincts vis-à-vis exchanges of media, knowledge, power, and authority. Within the media ecology of our time, that of neural media, the child oscillates between capture and subversion, forever breaking out from the stiffness of legibility and form, yet the simultaneity of simulacra converges towards the collapsing, indoctrinating consumerism of platform realism (Meyer, 2025): fanfiction fundamentalism, hypermasculine mid gimmicky grindsets, and gore-slicked mutating memospheres—rabbit holes cascading into collusive collages. With the right inputs and linguistic cues, The DOE believes in a distinguished form of algorithmic neural media that searches its database for a way to not only express knowledge in differentiated styles, but appropriately includes context as it detects patterns and automates decisions (Cardona et al.,

2023). This is a thoroughly reductive position pedestaled to consolidate a horizonless mainstream, a smooth, gruesomely deluded ultraviolence that normalizes the solidifying and forecasting of conceptual categories that then can be constrained into the future; an overall shift from ‘governing the present’ to ‘governing the future’ (Gulson and Sellar, 2024). For one, foundational datasets, large enough to personalize a homework assignment permeate a particular plausibility: aesthetic refinement or fine-tuning of these models at the behest of a white, male, western demographic (Buschek & Thorp, n.d.) (Meyer, 2025). Any representations of diversified data meant to destabilize and delegitimize the topologies of the dominant epistemology percolate from the edges back into the mainstream, immediately captured by western culture hegemony (Brock, 2020). A variety of different contexts, a plurality of worlds, is mapped into the total space of the possible (Meyer, 2025). By all possible means, the blazing fire in Plato’s Cave, the actualizing of a particular meaning practice, in short, must captivate even context.

Conclusion: Ethical Counter-Narratives for Informational Professionals

The convertibility of bodies to the extreme violence of desubjectification makes me wonder how we can approach the intersection of technology and pedagogy with less certainty. In the meantime, developing an evolving legal and ethical framework for a technologically advanced, post-truth, postmodern, post-reality society requires a comprehensively local and inclusively global approach; a framework that ultimately ends in the emancipation and the dismantling of the military industrial (Fossil Fuel, Nuclear, State Terror) 21st century global capitalism complex, of course. Nevertheless, To address the ongoing ethical collapse, especially the challenges imposed upon the child: the incoming rush of statistical frequencies in education, youth inclusion in gore layers of algorithmic augmentation, ubiquitous narcissistic consumption, deepfakes and sinister

suggestion, tyrannical disinformation, high-dimensional hallucination, all while considering diverse demographics and histories, Informational Professionals follow this outlined process:

First, research and multidisciplinary collaboration: Assemble a diverse team of experts from education, law, technology, ethics, media studies, social sciences, and relevant fields to research and address the multifaceted challenges ahead; embrace an interdisciplinary future to positively envision new realities. Second, international collaboration: Reframe and detoxify troublesome western, hegemonic views of AI that assume universalism; assume a world of many worlds; Work with a plurality of countries and international organizations to develop global standards and guidelines that address transnational challenges of technology and media; address the core capitalist countries greed of inertia and catastrophic death drive. Lastly, cultural sensitivity and all-inclusivity: recognize and address cultural sensitivities and biases within the radical framework prompt described below; aim to accommodate diverse cultural perspectives and beliefs; glorify ethics in its simplicity despite the dilemmas; and remember: kindness, love, care, perpetual peace, uncertainty. Not everything must have unrelenting meaning. Embrace an ethics of ambiguity.

The decentering of the human according to the logics of artificial intelligence is going to leave massive resonances of revision which will mirror decentering or reorientations of the law; in the midst of this, the archival profession must position collections next to play, desire, and aesthetics (Adler, 2019). A childlike perception of the world involves a plurality of worlding: it is simultaneity of wonder, fear, joy, hate, risk all of which propagate in community and pedagogical life, but more importantly in the need to make sense of a world. All children, all of us, are portraitures of assumptions, juxtapositions, findings, possibilities, and associations: all of which can be found in collection-making, in making and producing knowledge. Amassing evidence is

the making of a world, and there are many worlds to make. Informational professionals should strive to steer imagination towards public infrastructure that promotes and privileges beauty and pleasure along with historical accuracy and usefulness. The center of this ontology includes rethinking the archive for the damaged and marginalized child. Human life, artificial intelligence, documentation and indexing, are all innately tied to performance. The child realizes this in its entirety. To exist is to perform. Should the archive not be more of a performance? In its current rendition, the archive performs a world, so why not perform the world of the child? Attempting to know is the first misstep. It positions archives against innocence, against vulnerability. Both of which are the enemies of knowledge. We must lead as memory workers first, informational professionals second, and should aspire to reflect the love and care and pain of worldmaking back onto the child. Only then is life championed in its complex mosaic: a plurality of worlds.

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