**PART I IS THE ONTOLOGICAL CRISIS**

**The role of the ballot is to endorse a better ontological understanding. Our ontological understanding of the world shapes the way we perceive any kind of thinking it becomes a prerequisite before making any type of decision. Dillon**

[Michael Dillon, MA and PhD and Professor in Department of philosophy, politics, and religion @ University of Lancaster, **1999**, Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics Pgs. 96-98]

As Heidegger—himself an especially revealing figure of the deep and mutual implication of the philosophical and the political4 — never tired of pointing out, the **relevance of ontology to all** other **kinds of thinking is** fundamental and **inescapable.** For **one cannot say anything about any-thing that is, without** always **already having made assumptions about the is as such**. Any mode of thought, in short, always already carries an ontology sequestered within it. What this ontological turn [challenges] does to other-regional-modes of thought is to challenge the ontology within which they operate. The implications of that review reverberate through-out the entire mode of thought, demanding a reappraisal as fundamental as the reappraisal ontology has demanded of philosophy. **With ontology at issue, the entire foundations** or underpinnings **of any mode of thought are rendered problematic.** This applies as much to any modern discipline of thought as it does to the question of moder-nity as such, with the exception, it seems, of science, which, having long ago given up the **ontological questioning** of when it called itself natural philosophy, appears now, in its industrialized and corporatized form, to be invulnerable to ontological perturbation. With its foundations at issue, the very authority of a mode of thought and the ways in which it characterizes the critical issues of freedom and judgment (of what kind of universe human beings inhabit, how they inhabit it, and what counts as reliable knowledge for them in it) **is** also put in question. The very ways in which Nietzsche, Heidegger, and other continental philosophers challenged Western ontology, simultaneously, therefore reposed the fun-damental and inescapable difficulty, or **aporia, for human** being of **decision and judgment**. In other words, **whatever ontology you subscribe to**, knowingly or unknowingly, as a human being **you still** have to **act**. Whether or not you know or acknowledge it, the **ontology** you subscribe to **will construe the problem of action** for you in one way rather than another. You may think ontology is some arcane question of philosophy, but Nietz-sche and Heidegger showed that it intimately shapes not only a way of thinking, but a way of being, a form of life. Decision, a fortiori political decision, in short, is no mere technique. It is instead a way of being that bears an understanding of Being, and of the fundaments of the human way of being within it. This applies, indeed applies most, to those mock -innocent political slaves who claim only to be technocrats of decision making.

**Before you can even vote, your conceptions of debate and everything around you are swayed by your conceptions of ontology. Ontology is always a gateway issue because all theories are premised on how we understand the world around us and our role within it.**

**Our ontological understanding now is dangerously flawed. We view matters as textual objects, full of signifiers, narratives, and discourses – this creates a focus on how human subjects relate to the world and makes objects invisible**

Bryant 12 (Levi, prof of phil @ Collin College, http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/07/18/rsi-discursivity-critique-and-politics/)

So in response to a previous post, a lot of folks gave me grief about the following passage: I do think, however, that OOO can problematize our current political thought and open new avenues of political engagement and theorization. As it stands, **cultural studies is dominated by a focus on the discursive. We hear endless talk about signs**, signifiers, **“positions” or positionality,** **narratives, discourses, ideology, etc. Basically we see the world as a fetishized text to be decoded** and debunked. None of this should, of course, be abandoned, but I do think we’re encountering its limitations. In the few years I’ve been writing on these issues, I’ve been surprised to discover just how hard it is to get people to sense that **there is a non-discursive power of things; a form of power that is not about signs, ideology (as text), beliefs, positions, narratives, and so on. It’s as if these things aren’t on the radar for most social and political theorists.** I get the sense that the reason for this has something to do with what Heidegger diagnosed in his analysis of the ready-to-hand. Heidegger argues that **when the ready-to-hand is working it becomes invisible. We don’t notice it.** It recedes into the background. Us academics live in worlds that work pretty well as far as material infrastructure goes. We are, for the most part, in a world where things work: food is available, electricity and water function, we have shelter, etc. As a consequence, all this disappears from view and we instead focus on cultural texts because often this is a place where things aren’t working. In response to these remarks, I was told that 1) of course no one has the naive belief that everything is text (what a relief! of course, the question is whether this belief registers itself in theoretical practice), and 2) that, in fact, these things are all the rage in the world of theory. I’m well aware that there is a tradition of **theorists that don’t fit this mold,** and perpetually refer to many of these theorists in my own work. Theorists that come to mind are figures such as Haraway, Stengers, Latour, Kittler, Ong, McLuhan, Elizabeth Grosz, Jane Bennett, Stacy Alaimo, Karen Barad, [Kevin Sharpe](http://www.amazon.com/Reading-Revolution-Politics-Modern-England/dp/B0064XMBMC/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1342567497&sr=8-1&keywords=reading+revolution), [Jennifer Andersen](http://www.amazon.com/Books-Readers-Early-Modern-England/dp/0812217942/ref=pd_sim_sbs_b_5) et al, [Cathy Davidson](http://www.amazon.com/Revolution-Word-Rise-Novel-America/dp/0195148231/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1342567973&sr=1-1&keywords=revolution+and+the+word), Braudel, DeLanda, Pickering, etc. They exist. The point is not that they don’t exist, but that these forms of theory, I think, **have been** rather **marginal in the academy**; especially philosophy. In discussing these things, I’m not making some claim to being absolutely original or to be originating something full cloth. I’m more than happy to play some small role in bringing attention to these things; things that I believe to be neglected. I think, for example, that the new materialist feminists predate OOO/SR by 5-10 years, have many points of overlap with OOO, and have not nearly gotten the attention that they deserve. I think Latour and Stengers are almost entirely invisible in the world of philosophy conferences and departments; and I think that there are systematic reasons for this pertaining to the history of continental theory coming out of German idealism, the linguistic turn, and phenomenology. In German idealism you get a focus on spirit and the transcendental structure of mind. **In the linguistic turn, you get a focus on how signifiers and signs inform our relation to reality** (for example, Lacan’s famous observation that the difference between the men’s room and lady’s room results from the signifier in “The Agency of the Letter”, and Barthes’ claim that language is a primary modeling system in The Fashion System). In phenomenology you get a focus on the lived experience of the cogito, Dasein, or lived body and how it “constitutes” (Husserl’s language, not mine) the objects of its intentions. read on! **In each instance we get a focus on the differences that humans are contributing, with a relative indifference to the differences that non-humans contribute.** Material entities, as Alaimo observes in[Bodily Natures](http://www.amazon.com/Bodily-Natures-Science-Environment-Material/dp/0253222400/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1342568890&sr=1-1&keywords=bodily+natures), are treated as blank screens for human intentions, language, concepts, signs. The metaphor of the screen is here important, for a screen is that which contains no difference of its own beyond being a smooth and white surface, and is therefore susceptible to whatever we might wish to project upon it with a camera. **This has been the dominant mode of theorizing** that I’ve encountered in the last decade in my discipline of philosophy (and I have a fair background in rhetoric and literary theory as well). Phenomenology and the linguistic turn, I think, are the dominant positions represented at SPEP, for example, the main professional conference for continental philosophy (though thankfully things are beginning to change). When it is said that something is “dominant”, the claim is not that nothing different from it exists, but merely that a certain style of theorizing enjoys hegemony among that population. In media studies, I think, the situation is better. I think it’s better in geography as well. It depends on what population of theorists we’re looking at (a point entailed, incidentally, by my thesis that signifiers are material entities that must travel throughout populations).

This human oriented ontology leads to extinction and destruction of the world—a flat ontology is the most ethical system and the only way to solve

Bryant 12 (Levi, prof of philosophy @ Collin College, Flat Ontology/Flat Ethics, http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/06/01/flat-ontologyflat-ethics/)

I think that Eileen Joy, in a comment over at Alex Reid’s [Digital Digs](http://www.alex-reid.net/2012/05/the-object-industry.html), best articulates what the aims of an object-oriented ethics (OOE) might look like. Responding to one of his recent posts, she writes: For me personally**, turning one’s attention to animals, objects, post/humanism and so on is precisely about thickening our capacity to imagine more capacious forms of “living with”; it is precisely about developing more radical forms of welcoming and generosity to others,** who include humans as well as trees, rocks, dogs, cornfields, ant colonies, pvc pipes, and sewer drains; it is precisely about amplifying the ability of our brains to pick up more communication signals from more “persons” (who might be a human or a cloud or a cave) whose movements, affects, and thoughts are trying to tell us something about **our interconnectedness and co-implicated interdependence with absolutely everything (**or perhaps even about a certain implicit alienation between everything in the world, which is nevertheless useful to understand better: take your pick); it is precisely about working toward a more capacious vision of what we mean by “well-being,” when we decide to attend to the well-being of humans and other “persons” (who might be economic markets or the weather or trash or homeless cats) who are always enmeshed with each other in various “vibrant” networks, assemblages, meshes, cascades, systems, whathaveyou. And just for me — likely, just for me– **it is also about love, with love defined, not as something that goes in one direction from one person to another person or objec**t (carrying with it various demands and expectations and self-centered desires), but rather, as a type of collective labor that works at creating “fields” **for persons and objects to emerge into view that otherwise would remain hidden (and perhaps also remain abjectified), and which persons and objects could then be allowed the breathing/living room to unfold in various self-directed ways, even if that’s not what you could have predicted in advance nor supposedly what you “want”** it to do (in other words: ethics as a form of attention that is directed toward the “for-itself” propulsions of other persons and objects, human and inhuman). So, for me, work in post/humanism, and in **OOO, is attentive to the world, which includes and does not exile** (or gleefully kill off) **the human (although it certainly asks that we expand our angles of vision beyond just the human-centered ones); it is both political and ethical**; and it is interested in what I would even call the “tender” attention to and care of things, human and inhuman (I think that the work of Bennett, Bogost, Morton, Harman, Steven Shaviro, Jeffrey Cohen, Stacy Alaimo, Julian Yates, Myra Hird, Freya Matthews, Karen Barad, Donna Haraway, and Levi Bryant, and many, many others who \*never\* get cited in these discussions, especially the women working in materialism, science/gender studies, queer ecology, environmental humanities, etc.) especially exemplifies this “tender” attention to and care of all of the “items” of the world. Any enlargement of our capacity to think about the agential, signaling, and other capacities of as many items/objects/persons, etc. of this world represents, in my mind, an enlargement, and not a shrinking, of our ethical attention. It’s asking for a richer, thicker ontology, which gives is more to be responsible for (after all, that’s partly where the specialness of humans comes in), but also: more to enjoy. It seems to me that the sort of ethico-political vision that Joy here proposes has two faces.  On the one hand, there is that face directed towards our contatus, our endeavor to persist in our being and flourish.  Recognizing our interconnection with nonhumanthings and our impact on nonhuman things is not simply some hippy-dippy thesis that “we’re one with the universe”.  No.  It is a matter of self-interest.  It’s the recognition that 1) we are dependent on this ecosystem to flourish, 2) that these relations upon which we are dependent are fragile and can be broken, and 3) that these things can also exercise oppressive power over us, undermining our ability to flourish or live well.  As Spinoza saw, we always act with other bodies.  Some of these bodies enhance our power of acting, while others diminish it.  By and large, **ethical thought has been blind to our relations with nonhumans, focusing only on questions of how we should treat and live with other humans.  Yet this completely obscures our real ethical circumstances or conditions.  Today, more than ever, our collective survival depends on broadening the domain of what counts as sites of political and ethical concern, and that means taking into account our relationship to nonhumans**

**The AC proposes we adopt a flat ontology. This means that all objects, humans and non-humans are on an equal ontological playing field. This opens up the starting point for anti-oppressive and educational ethics and epistemology. Bryant 3**

[Levi R. Bryant, The Democracy of Objects, 1. Grounds For a Realist Ontology, [Open Humanities Press, 2011](http://www.openhumanitiespress.org/), <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/9750134.0001.001/1:5/--democracy-of-objects?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>]

Onticology proposes what might be called, drawing on DeLanda's term yet broadening it, a flat ontology.Flat ontology is a complex philosophical concept that bundles together a variety of ontological theses under a single term. First, due to the split characteristic of all objects, **flat ontology rejects any ontology** of transcendence or presence **that privileges one** sort of **entity** as the origin of all othersand as fully present to itself. In this regard, onticology proposes an ontology resonant with Derrida's critique of metaphysics insofar as, in its treatment of beings as withdrawn, it undermines any pretensions to presence within being. If this thesis is [persuasive](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/9750134.0001.001/1:10/--democracy-of-objects?rgn=div1;view=fulltext), then metaphysics can no longer function as a synonym for “metaphysics of presence”, nor substance as a synonym for “presence”, but rather an ontology has been formulated that overcomes the primacy of presence. In this section, I articulate this logic in terms of Lacan's graphs of sexuation. Here I believe that those graphs have little to tell us about masculine or feminine sexuality—for reasons I will outline in what follows—but a great deal to tell us about ontologies of immanence or flat ontologies and ontologies of transcendence. Second, flat ontology signifies that the world or the universe does not exist.I will develop the argument for this strange claim in what follows, but for the moment it is important to recognize the definite article in this claim.The claim that the world doesn't exist is the claim that there is no super-object that gathers all other objects together in a single, harmonious unity. Third, followingHarman,flat ontology **[it] refuses to privilege the subject-object, human-world relation as** either a) **a form of**[metaphysical](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/9750134.0001.001/1:10/--democracy-of-objects?rgn=div1;view=fulltext) **relation different in *kind* from other relations between objects,** and that b)refuses to treat the subject-object relation as implicitly included in every form of object-object relation. To be sure, flat ontology readily recognizes that humans have unique powers and capacities and that how humans relate to the world is a topic more than worthy of investigation, yet nothing about this establishes that humans must be included in every inter-object relation or that how humans relate to objects differs in kind from how other entities relate to objects. Finally, fourth, flat ontology argues that all entities are on equal ontological footing and that no entity, whether artificial or natural, symbolic or physical, possesses greater ontological dignity than other objects. While indeed some objects might influence the collectives to which they belong to a greater extent than others, it doesn't follow from this that these objects are more real than others. Existence, **being, is a binary** such that something either is or is not. Apart from the fact that I believe these propositions to be ontologically true, the [broader](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/9750134.0001.001/1:10/--democracy-of-objects?rgn=div1;view=fulltext) strategic import of **the concept of flat ontology is to diminish the obsessive focus on the human,** subjective and the cultural **within** social, political, cultural **theory and philosophy** that found in Ian Bogost's work, pathbreaking work such as that found in Protevi, DeLanda, and Massumi, ecologists like Timothy Morton, Marx's meditations on how the money-form, technologies, and factories change our very identities, critical animal theorists such as Cary Wolfe, and a host of other thinkers.

**PART 2 IS THE LIVING WAGE**

**Living Wage Defined. JEWNC 15:**

Just Economics of Western North Carolina “About Living Wage” 2015. http://justeconomicswnc.org/about-living-wage/

**A “living wage” is the minimum amount that a worker must earn to afford** his or her **basic necessities, without public or private assistance.** In short, a living wage is the real, just, minimum wage.

**I affirm the living wage as a way we can endorse a flat ontology here, at the point that we see say that a nonhuman object, wages, are a prerequisite to our social and/or physical being we are on the same ontological level. Understanding wages as a prerequisite to social life is a better understanding of money because humans are dependent on money as a means of navigating culture and their social environment, our perceptions about money shape our very survival and thus a relationship of dependency is healthiest. Baumeister 08:**

Roy Baumeister (Prof of Psychology @ FSU) “Why Does Money Matter? The Psychological Meaning of Money” Jun 18, 2008. https://www.psychologytoday.com/experts/roy-f-baumeister

Another difference is that a genuine tool enables you to do things, directly. It doesn't matter what other people think about a tool. You just use it, and it gets results. But **money depends** utterly **on what other people think about it.** **Unless they agree to recognize it as having a particular kind of value that can be exchanged for other things, it is just useless** paper and metal. **The** pragmatic **usefulness of money depends completely on a set of assumptions shared by many different people.** What sort of resource is money? **Money is control over the** [**environment**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/environment) **by means of the social system.** You have control to make the system give you what you want. Money thus makes the person less dependent on the good will and social approval of others. Money enables you to use others to get what you want. The broader perspective of this blog regards human beings as cultural animals. That is, human beings combine nature and culture in a remarkable, probably unique way. **Humans are animals** (nature) **who get what they**, as animals, **need and want by virtue of the complex social system known as culture.** Thus, **culture is the biological strategy of humankind.** Nature measures success in survival and reproduction, and all else is geared toward furthering those ends. (Evolutionary purists insist that even survival is merely a means toward reproduction.) **For most animals, survival and reproduction depend on dealing directly with the physical environment,** including the other creatures they want to eat and those who want to kill and eat them. **For humans, survival and reproduction depend on negotiating their way within the complicated social systems that humans create, which include culture.** Money works that system. **Having money enables the individual to use the system, to get the system to dispense what the individual needs** and wants. For example, whereas birds and fish and bears get their food from the natural environment around them, humans tend to get their food from the social system, which these days includes grocery stores, restaurants, and pizza delivery companies. When was the last time you got your food the way a bear or bird does, by finding a living thing in the world around you and then killing and eating it? Yes, **we get our food from the social system (the culture), but to do that requires money.** Sometimes, to be sure, one can get food without money, such as by getting invited to someone's home for dinner (although the host probably spent money on the dinner), or by letting one's [parents](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/parenting) make dinner (though they probably used money). For the most part, however, to get food from the social system, you need money. **Money is thus a resource that contains a remarkable kind power to influence the social system.** The social system recognizes its power and value and responds to it. Money is thus not like a physical tool, but in a sense it is an all-purpose social tool.

**When you’re affirming you’re endorsing the idea that we can place ourselves on an equal ontological level with nonhuman objects, this is key because objects start on the ideological plane. In other words, it’s not just about the money, the mindset behind affirming endorses good ideology. Hughes 08:**

Joe Hughes “Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation” Oct 19, 2008.

It is well established in the current literature on Deleuze that **actualization is the movement from virtual to actual, but the relation of this to *objects* is rarely elaborated.** Indeed, the fact that **this is a move between two states of ‘the object’ —the object in the Idea and the actual object**—is rarely emphasized, because more attention is often paid to the examples—mostly biological—that Deleuze uses to describe the process. From the beginning of the Ideas chapter **Deleuze draws a strong correlation between Ideas and things,** especially when he takes the Kantian notion of the Idea out of the supersensible and, following Kant’s lead in *The Critique of Judgment*, puts it at the heart of the sensible in the form of a positive indeterminacy or as a ‘focus or horizon within perception’. Following this transposition, I want to suggest here that **the Deleuzian Idea is the form that any concrete object takes before we fully recognize or know what that object is. In the Idea, the object itself becomes a problem for thought.** Progressive determination would then be nothing more than the progressive determination of a concrete object of perception

**To be clear, we are in a time of massive sensitivity and a longterm solution to global issues is needed. Issues of the environment and how we relate to the world can only be solved by a flat ontology which provides a good relationship with the world. Affirming a living wage affirms the concept of flat ontology by saying we can be ontologically dependent, and thus not superior too, a nonhuman object. This endorsement of ideology is necessary to produce real world shifts because ideas shape reality.**

**Part 3 is Stacks on Stacks of Ontology**

**The resolution is a question of a course of action thus ontology comes first. We cannot have a coherent debate about the nature of political claims without first engaging in an ontological investigation because the best way to resolve conflicting claims is by analyzing them on an ontological level. Bryant 12:**

[Levi R. Bryant, September 15, 2012, On Ontology, larval subjects <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/09/15/on-ontology/>]

To be clear, the distinction between politics and ontology does not entail that an ontology cannot be contaminated by particular ideological and political biases. Just as Stephen J. Gould, in The Mismeasure of Man, shows how the so-called “sciences” of eugenics and IQ testing are pervaded by unfounded ideological assumptions that thoroughly distorted the research, we can subject any ontology to an ideological critique to discern whether its claims are grounded in genuinely ontological reasons, or whether the ontology is a pseudo-ontology designed to ontologize a particular ideology (e.g., naturalize it). However, **the aim here** shouldn’t be to show that “everything is ideology and that ontology should be banished tout court“, but to **[is to] produce better ontology. If** the **ideology critic doesn’t endorse this** aim then **he’ll** find himself **[be] caught in a** vicious **circle because his position will** itself **be yet one more** ideological **position leaving us without** the **means of deciding** why we should attend to **his claims** anymore than we attend **to other claims**.While **ontology** doesn’t entail any particular politics, it **can show that the** ontological **assumptions of** a particular **politics are mistaken.** If it is true that **every politics presupposes an ontology**– even if only in a non-reflective way –then it is also true that the **ontologies upon which these politics are based can be mistaken**. Racism is a good example. **Racism is** based on **the idea that humanity is composed of** difference **species,** each of which has a particular essence that ineluctably makes individuals of that species behave in particular ways, **such that some** of these species **are better** than the others. **These are ontological claims** about the types of things that exist; in this case, those things being types of humans and why they live and act as they do. **If it can be shown that this ontology is false, then racism finds that it is without ontological support**. While we might be interested in this particular issue for political and ethical reasons insofar as we hold that people should be treated equally and that discrimination is wrong, the critique we develop here is ontological and based on ontological reasons. It’s a contestation of what is and what is not. Given that most of us in both our personal and social lives are concerned with being being a certain way, what value, then, does ontology have?**Ontology has value** insofar **as it is difficult to form being in the way we aim for if we do not have a knowledge of what being is and what entities are active in assemblages.  Without** some basic **knowledge of this, it is unlikely that our** futural **aims will amount to much**.  For example, in the case of the social ontology that sees society as composed of beliefs, norms, contracts, ideologies, etc., it is unlikely that this ontology will get very far in forming the just society it envisions if it ignores the role that nonhuman, material entities play in the social assemblages from which we suffer.

This means that any risk of morality means that we would have a higher order obligation to understand ontology. It is the only way we can divulge between what we as humans should do on a fundamental level.

The linear cause and affect manner debate is structured around is surrounded by educational complexities that leave no clear purpose of what debate is for. Only by understanding the complexity and multitude of variables that affect educational activities such as debate can we access any type of forward seeking norms creation. This requires a clear conception of ontology. **Kincheloe 2**

[Kincheloe, Joe L. "On to the next level: Continuing the conceptualization of the bricolage." *Qualitative Inquiry* 11.3 (2005): 323-350.]

Indeed, a complex social, cultural, and **educational analysis is aware** that **a specific set of variables does not lead to the same outcomes in some linear cause-and-effect manner.** Scholars in such an analysis transcend reductionistic assumptions such [that] as only one entity can inhabit the same locale at the same time. In a complex ontology, patriarchy can coexist in the same time and space with religion, socioeconomic class, gender, sexuality, geographic place, and a plethora of other social dynamics.In such a context, **the notion of causality** and the nature of social interconnections **become far more complex concepts and processes to research.** With this complexity in mind, T. R. Young and James Yarbrough (1993) argued that the way researchers discursively define a social phenomenon produces the form the notion takes. Using class as an example, Young and Yarbrough (1993) argued that it is possible to define it as a lifestyle, a function of formal education, a manifestation of one’s father’s occupation, or one’s relationship to the means of production. Class as a social structure looks very different depending on what definition we choose. A sociology or a cultural studies of **complexity understands that there is no final source of authority to** which researchers can **appeal for a** validated **definition.** Such uncertainty, bricoleurs recognize, is a key aspect of the human condition of being-in-the-world—a complex ontology. Operating in this situation, bricoleurs employ “any means necessary,” as many methods as possible to make their way through a world of diverse meanings—not to mention becoming researchers of such a world. These diverse meanings continuously circulate through language, common sense, worldviews, ideologies, and discourses, always operating to tacitly shape the act of meaning making. **Any** social, cultural, psychological, or **educational science of complexity takes these dynamics into account.** No research act or interpretive task begins on virgin territory. Countless acts of meaning making have already shaped the terrain that researchers explore. In this context, bricoleurs need as much help as they can get to negotiate their way through such overwhelming complexity. This is why we develop the bricolage in the first place: **Complexity demands** a wider definition of ***research* that** would **include[s] modes of** philosophical **inquiry that account for** these epistemological and **ontological dynamics.** On the landscape of complexity, **I am lost** as a researcher **if I do not possess an** epistemological and **ontological map to help me understand the nature of the territory I am exploring. To produce** research that providesthick description and **a glimpse of what could be, I need** epistemological and **ontological insights that alert me to the** multidimensional, socially constructed, polyvocal, ever-changing, **fractal-based nature of the social world.** Such insights hold profound implications for research methods (Bridges, 1997; Lutz, Jones, & Kendall, 1997; McLeod, 2000). In this complex context, it becomes even more obvious that learning the bricolage is a lifelong process.