

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR - SPECIAL ISSUE: PERFORMATIVE AND RELATIONAL ONTOLOGIES IN EDUCATION

Dear SFU Educational Review community,

Before I move forward in this editorial letter, I would like to acknowledge the work of the editorial team of SFU Educational Review: Dr. Poh Tan as the editor in-chief and Daniel Ferraz as the managing editor. Without them and their hard work there would be no special issue. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Suzanne Smythe and Dr. Ann Chinnery, professors in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, who collaborated with their expertise to provide support and guidance. This was a team effort indeed.

Last year, during an executive meeting of the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, which I attended as part of Educational Review Journal editorial team, Dr. Peter Liljedahl suggested that Ed Review should make a special issue on *new materiality*, given the recent Seminar on New Materiality in Education: “What’s the Matter with Education” that took place during Spring 2018. The idea immediately began taking shape and I could already ‘see’ the special issue. Of course, from the virtuality of that picture to the actualization of this issue ‘riding’ the learning-curve has been both, challenging and exciting.

In post-humanist and new materialist theories, the human is decentered, and the performative and relational ontology of the world is emphasized. Thus, our conceptualization of reality, or how our world works, shifts from trying to understand how things *are* to embracing the *becoming* of the world. Within this conceptualization of the world, we set as the aim for this special issue to create a collective of educational work that engages with performative and relational ontological theories, and in so doing asks new questions, and creates different narratives. Thus, the journal’s aim was to showcase scholarly work that disrupts the *status quo* and the ‘taken for granted’ in educational practice and research triggering new imaginaries and, as Haraway (2016) would say, creating new worlding speculations.

In the Western tradition of thought, relational and performative ontological theories are most often approached through post-humanist or new materialist theories. The idea to not solely focus on posthumanism or new materialism but on performative and relational ontologies was an attempt at not excluding research and inquiries that work within this paradigm but either might be difficult to locate within or predates posthumanism or new materiality, such as indigenous studies and traditions of thought.

We have divided the diverse scholarship featured in this issue, in four sections: invited papers, interviews, articles, and a last section where we feature an art-film complemented with its article. In the first section, we are privileged to present an anchor paper from Dr. Iris van der Tuin, Professor of Theory of Cultural Inquiry and Director of the School of Liberal Arts at Utrecht University. The anchor paper is accompanied by two invited responses. Dr. Suzanne Smythe, Associate Professor in Adult Literacy and Adult Education and Dr. Nathalie Sinclair, Professor of Mathematics Education and Canada Research Chair in Tangible Mathematics Learning, both at Simon Fraser University provide the first response and Dr. Aisha Ravindran, doctoral candidate, at Simon Fraser University and English Lecturer at University of British Columbia Okanagan provides the second. These papers thoughtfully question our research practices within our current algorithmic condition and offer the field some possibilities in concepts such as unkinning and making kin, blurring of borders and divisive lines, and conditions of possibility and speculation modulated in relation to our local conditions.

The second section features two interviews, one with Dr. Van der Tuin and the other with Dr. Elizabeth De Freitas, Professor in the Education and Social Research Institute and co-director of the Biosocial Laboratory for Research on Learning and Behavior, at Manchester Metropolitan. The interviews took place as part of the “What’s the matter with education? Faculty seminar in new materiality”, which focused on new materialism in relation to the field of educational research and were carried out by doctoral students who participated in the seminar. The interview with Dr. Van der Tuin, discusses three main topics: how new materialism is being used in educational research, Van der Tuin’s work surrounding “Generational Feminism,” and the idea of “sexual difference” in the construction of gender. The interview with Dr. de Freitas, centres around issues in pedagogy, identity, ethics, responsibility, and assessment practices.

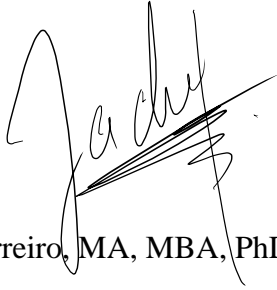
The third section presents two articles that theorize about the materiality of learning. Dr. Cher Hill, Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University, discusses her child’s tantrums through new materiality theories, which reconfigure them as a “*doing* of emotions” rather than acts of defiance, and how this new understanding echoes in the educational field. In her paper, Dr. Jamouchi, interdisciplinary artist, researcher, and associate professor in Arts and Crafts at the Oslo Metropolitan University, draws from Barad’s performative ontology and re-turns to engage diffractively with felting wool as she bypasses, in her teaching, taken for granted dichotomies between subject-object and theory-practice.

In the last section, the journal is excited to present its first inquiry in the form of an Art Film accompanied by its complementary written article from Sandeep Glover, doctoral student at Simon Fraser University, where she questions the gap between oneself and the Other and encourages us to think in relational terms.

Today, almost a year after I first envisioned this special issue, we are delighted to present this collection of great and diverse scholarship to the education community. Please keep in mind that this is a dialogue, as such, we welcome further discussions from our readers.

I hope you will enjoy reading these articles as much as I have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacky Barreiro', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jacky Barreiro, MA, MBA, PhD '19

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