

Editorial: Feminism(s) and the ‘Posts’: Towards New Educational Imaginaries and Hopeful Renewals

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Beginnings of a sort: Beginnings and/as ongoing

For feminists, working in/with the ‘posts’ is, always has been, and must be, a collective and collaborative endeavour. Increasingly, post-inquiry involves taking seriously multiplicities of humans, nonhumans, more-than-and-other-than-humans, multispecies, and natureculture entities, including viral, microbial, elemental and atmospheric relationalities. The individual papers in this Special Issue, this editorial, and the Special Issue as a whole attest to this imperative pull to the collective-collaborative in seeking to explore the entangled relations of/between feminisms and the ‘posts’. As a collaborative-collective multiplicity, the Special Issue interrogates what these entangled relations offer for reconfiguring gender and education research, theory, pedagogic practice, activism and praxis.

The papers herein speak into current concerns and debates around genders, identities and sexualities; into the renewal of feminism as a contemporary political praxis; into the proliferation of feminisms; and into the changing and contested complications of the theoretical and methodological terrain that constitutes what have come to be referred to (for convenience, but perhaps also in an excluding academic shorthand which itself needs to be decomposed) as the

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‘posts’. The Special Issue aims to register the multiplicities, divergences and contentions which characterise this moment of the ‘posts’ and how they inform and influence gender and education, as well as looking forward to new educational imaginaries that current debates may enable or activate.

Authors were invited to work with questions such as:

- How can feminisms and the ‘posts’ work in research to explore educational practices? What does such research do/produce/generate? What force does it have? What problematics does it entail – how does it gain traction in such inhospitable times?
- How can feminisms and the ‘posts’ be crafted as activist in enabling feminist goals to be put into educational practice?
- In what ways does working with feminisms and the ‘posts’ in gender and education enable us to move beyond disciplinary boundaries? How does this work provide (or require) new interdisciplinary research or new modes of transdisciplinary praxis? How do these ways of working offer new political imaginaries for education?
- What are the opportunities for those working in feminisms and the ‘posts’ to mobilise across borders and boundaries to enable and influence educational change at various levels and scales?

- What alliances or frictions are there between gender, education, feminisms and the ‘posts’ and recent work in Black feminisms, Indigenous histories and cosmologies and Trans* feminisms?
- How does work in feminisms and the ‘posts’ differ across generations; what does inter-generational work help us create in crafting new departures for gender and education?; how do debates and concerns become re-inflected and mutate, and what consequences does this have for theory and praxis on gender and education?
- In what ways can work in gender, education, feminisms and the ‘posts’ contest the damages caused by increasing bio-/necropolitical fascist politics and their intertwined systems?
- How does care appear and materialize in work in gender, education, feminism and the ‘posts’? How does care come to matter in pedagogy?

These questions provided a catalyst for many other questions that authors might wish to engage with. What materialised is rich, varied and multiplicitous.

Authors in this Special Issue take a capacious approach to feminisms and the ‘posts’. They conceptualise feminisms as plural, pragmatic and political – as a knowing-thinking-feeling-doing oriented to social and educational change for gendered-racialised-sexualized-dis/abled bodies. This is allied to an equally capacious understanding of the ‘posts’ as encompassing

posthumanism, post-structuralism, post-qualitative inquiry, post-colonialism and post-foundational philosophies. Working at the intersections of feminisms, the ‘posts’, gender and education, offers scope to oppose dualistic, hierarchical and anthropocentric categories, and (most importantly) to consider ways to re-imagine and enact the matterings of theory-practice-praxis in nomadic, rhizomatic, care-full, creative, ethically affirmative and relational ways. Such work is deeply political in ways which promise to be potentially transformative for gender and education

Part of the impetus for this Special Issue came from a desire to explore what has happened since the 2013 *Gender and Education* Special Issue, *Material Feminisms: New Directions for Education* (Taylor & Iverson, 2013) was published. This earlier Special Issue caught a moment in which new theories, including new material feminisms, posthumanism, actor network theory, complexity theory, science and technology studies, material culture studies, Deleuzian philosophy and post-qualitative research, to name just some of the main strands, were calling us to reappraise what counts as knowledge and to re-examine education, not in terms of individualised acts of cognition, bounded bodies, and performative outcomes but, instead, in the possibilities of flows, mobilities, multiplicities, assemblages, materialities and processes. Now (in 2024), as then, we are interested in how theoretical formations provide new analytical tools to reconfigure co-constitutive materialities, relations and practices in conceptualisations and understanding of gender and education and how this widens the scope for feminist theory, praxis and activism.

Now, as then, we remain interested in the transdisciplinary, post-disciplinary, multi- and inter-disciplinary work that is being done and can be done in feminisms and the ‘posts’ to dissolve the pulls into disciplinary confines (and binaries) that constrict bodies, concepts and practices. Then, we proceeded with caution in defining the ‘newness’ of new materialism, and recognised new materialisms’ entangled genealogies. In the now, we continue to proceed with caution and care while at the same time proposing that work in the proliferating fields of the ‘posts’ (can) continue to form a counter-movement to the violences, destructions and body-mind-soul-numbing stultifications of education-as-business-as-usual in this time-space of ongoing war and genocide, putrid far-right politics, and, it seems, incessantly increasing violence against women.

In such contexts, how and where might/do the ‘posts’ offer the potential for new educational imaginaries and hope-full renewals? As a larger international editorial team, along with our authors in this Special Issue collection, we thought about this question deeply and widely in various collaborative gatherings: initially at a symposium at the European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry in 2022, then in various virtual meetings, and finally in relation to the work for this Special Issue. As the work on this project unfolded; as we received abstracts, then full papers, as the Editorial team reviewed papers (along with our many other reviewers – thank you all!), reviewed revisions of papers, and Jayne and I managed the journal process on behalf of the broader editorial collective, we decided to craft a collaborative Editorial response to the key questions and concerns that drive the Special Issue.

One configuration of the editorial collective (Carol, Jayne, Evelien, Weili, Vivienne and Camilla) pondered our entanglements with ‘the posts’ and what working in/with the posts has

enabled – and continues to enable – for us in terms of theory, praxis and methodology (Andersen, 2019; Andersen & Nordstrom, 2022; Bozalek, 2022; Bozalek et al., 2021; Fairchild et al., 2022; Gannon, Pasley & Osgood, 2024, forthcoming; Geerts, 2019; Geerts & Carstens, 2019, 2024; Hogarth et al., 2022; Newfield, Bozalek & Romano, 2023; Osgood & Robinson, 2019; Osgood et al., 2020; Strom, Ringrose, Osgood & Renold, 2019; Taylor & Benozzo, 2024; Zhao & Kuby, 2021; Zhao & Popkewitz, 2022; Zhao, 2024). We considered the ways in which 'the posts' are important to the field of feminisms, gender and educational research; and how we see 'the posts' providing new educational imaginaries & hope-full renewals. Our contributions are crafted as a co-creative assemblage in attunement with the collaborative knowledge-making practices that working in/with the posts entail and in line with the collaborative posthuman feminist ethic we instantiated with this Special Issue.

Working in/with the 'posts'

The 'posts' open generative pathways to philosophical engagements

(the creation of concepts)

theoretical enticements

(transdisciplinary urgings to bring theories together in dissonance and resonance)

methodological experimentations

(inventings and experiments to re-think research practices)

enactments and doings

(practical politics of the everyday).

The 'posts' are a resonating field of entangled lines of flight

in-forming, enfolding, mutating

releasing-realising new materializations of thinking-doing-being

attentive to life's movements

The posts' theory-method/ological-praxis entanglements produce multiplicitous becomings

(Zarabadi et al., 2019)

Up-ending presumptions about the divisibility of the self into

academic worker bee

(the 'workplace me')

AND the leisure/home

(non-work) 'me'

divisibilities founded in masculinist, colonialist notions of the bounded and sovereign self

The posts' becomings orientate to passionate investments

a politics of knowledge entangled in everyday living

contesting individualistic, performative and competitive metrics

(Taylor, 2020).

The posts have changed my whole orientation to the world.

I used to think that through political 'ethics of care'

I understood relational ontology

but I didn't at all

still believing that humans or even non-human entities pre-existed their relationships.

A major shift in worldview

to really understand

relationships are primary

subjects and objects only come into being through relationships.

It changes the doing of

scholarship, pedagogy, research, writing and reading

It provides a way out of identity politics

into performative ways of being/becoming in the world

not about individual or even group or institutional identities.



Figure 1 Markings untitled (Carol A. Taylor, 2024)

THE 'POSTS' roughly register an intellectual effort that problematizes the ethico-onto-epistemic conditions, legitimacies, and boundaries of (Western) modernity as a form of coloniality.

THE 'POSTS' contest the atomistic, dualistic, hierarchical, and anthropocentric categories that construe and construct subjectivities and agencies (human and nonhuman), language, nature, power relation, and knowledge (re)production.

THE 'POSTS' critique representational modes of signification.

THE 'POSTS' break apart modern grammar, urging instead other expressive modes, such as Chinese "wind-teaching" as in a Yijing hexagram, which offer an alternative meaning-making mode and being to Western modernity imagination.

THE 'POSTS' provides a philosophical-methodological-practical orientation for us to start anew, imploding what we otherwise naturalize as "normative/normalized" modern categories of gender, mind, body, matter, things, cognition, affect, teachers/teaching, students/learning, hierarchical power.

How are racialized ontologies part of research and pedagogical practices that "we" are entangled with?

How are racialized environments embodied by various multilayered and porous bodies?

What are "we" in the process of becoming?

Together are "we" in these challenges,
not as one and not as same.

What else might "we" become?

What are "we" capable of becoming?

(Braidotti, 2019, 2022; Jackson, 2020)



Figure 2 Photo of A3 sheet with text stuck on with coloured tape. The image is processed with coal from a local artist, the remains of watercolour, birch leaves, chicken feathers, Aronia berries, and Red clover collected from a garden.

After yet another crisis-laden annus horribilis, in which neo-imperialist and genocidal settler colonial wars have alternated with unseen planetary environmental destruction, ranging from global warming-propelled rising sea levels, droughts, and heatwaves to ongoing deforestation and ever-increasing levels of air pollution (Robinson 2023), it is hard to cherish hope for better, socio-politically and environmentally just times and pedagogies.

Living in what could be best labelled as ‘post’-driven crisis times – a state of polycrisis (Allouche et al. 2023) characterised by mutually reinforcing post-capitalist, post-pandemic, and post-truth elements – contemporary critical theory and pedagogies need the philosophical revitalisation offered by critical posthumanist and new materialist philosophies and pedagogies. These may - just may - help us create a more grounded, ‘hope-full’ imaginary and world, while simultaneously “staying with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) of the here and now, without getting

fully dragged into the “negative affective economy” (Braidotti 2020, 465) of despair this polycrisis reckoning almost automatically brings about.

How might the human-decentring nature of post-philosophies help us draw an affirmative blueprint for a fairer multispecies future-to-come?



Figure 3 Polycrisis (Evelien Geerts, 2024)



Figure 4 Polycrisis & the ‘Posts-’ (Evelien Geerts, 2024)

By feeding Canva’s Magic Media™’s AI sets of concepts used in this reflection piece, and then diffracting all the generated images, these two co-created collages came into being. They help us zoom in on two issues: 1) the importance of acknowledging the imaginative potential of (re-)visualising crises and ways out of them (‘hope-full futures’), and 2) our over-reliance on

technology and generative AI tools while tackling contemporary polycrises; tools that are causing such an increase in carbon emissions that they are adding to the ongoing destruction of the planet ('despair'). The images effective in-betweenness that characterises these Anthropocenic "mixed-up times" (Haraway 2016, 1) quite well ...

In refusing this potentially deadening state, working in-with the 'posts' keeps alive hopes and practices for education to be and become a more sustainably collaborative space of possibilities for human and nonhuman kin alike. This is not utopian thinking. It is a lively and everyday doing which enacts modalities of Living Theory (Taylor et al, 2024, forthcoming)., which aim at a more capacious, inclusive and affirmative sense of what educational research can be and become when we deploy situated and passionately engaged research practices of curiosity, attentiveness, care and kindness. For these reasons, the posts enable (require?) that we encounter, engage and work with others of all kinds – and try to do so without presuppositions regarding means or ends. It is hard work, joyful work, painful and affirmative work; it is work which brings us together into new collectivities that sometimes generate painful un-ease but more often produce alchemy. This, we think, is what Donna Haraway (2016) meant by 'staying with the trouble', and what Francois Verges (2021) called 'revolution as daily work' – work which is animated by a feminist praxis of co-creative relationality (Cranham et al, 2024).

This makes ‘the posts’ particularly helpful to the field of feminisms, gender and educational research: they challenge dualisms, alerting us to how difference is not abject but affirmative, allowing us to understand exteriority from within. Barad’s agential realism as a post-philosophy reads queer theory through quantum physics, illuminating the value of a non-essentialist view which eschews fixed entities with inherent characteristics. The ‘posts’ have helped to open feminist educational research to the more-than, the not-yet thought, to the neurodiverse, to doing theory differently. The posts have foregrounded dynamic indeterminism which is ontological (there is no givenness or there are no inherent properties) rather than uncertainty which is epistemological (there is givenness but we don’t know whether a state of affairs is or is not). This has major implications for educational research offering scope to re-imagine and enact theory-practice-praxis in nomadic, rhizomatic, care-full, creative, affirmative and relational ways, hopefully out of the modernity-colonality trap and trope.



Figure 5 Sticky(k)notes and diffractive praxis

The 'posts' can provide new educational imaginaries through experimentation. In the posts, each new research project invites new experimentations, new and risky thinkings and doings: collaborative working across disciplines, thinking-with water, thinking-with plants, thinking with the world, opens us to ecocosmologies. Thinking about temporal and spatial diffraction - how the past can be reconfigured and the future is always already here in the present - provides a more expansive vision of the entanglement of space and time. 'The posts' have provided alternatives to destructive forms of critique through immanent critique by dwelling within and diffraction, discerning what new insights can be developed by reading things through each other rather than against each other. Indeterminacy and its inflection to radical openness generates possibilities for radical hospitality, working against tired old critique and sitting back and doing nothing but picking holes in someone's argument. In their focus on a justice-to-come, the 'posts' teach us that ethics is an embodied, ethical and political pursuit which is never ending. We can never rest on our laurels and imagine that justice has arrived.

In gathering together a collection of 19 papers readers can bear witness to how authors enthusiastically grappled with the unanswerable questions that were offered as generative provocations outlined earlier in this editorial. Collectively the work in this Special Issue is both provocative and creative as it gestures towards hopeful renewals in the field of gender and education. The wild variations and rich diversity in how authors approached their engagements with the posts to contemplate how else gender and education might be encountered is indeed hopeful - whilst also endlessly troubling. The collection provides the foundation for further deep and care-full contemplation of where we are, how we got here, and where else the field might venture in pursuit of more liveable worlds.



Figure 6 Flights (P. B. Allan, 2024).

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