DECENTERING THE RESEARCHER IN INTIMATE SCHOLARSHIP

ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ON TEACHING

Series Editor: Volumes 1−11: Jere Brophy
Volumes 12−29: Stefinee Pinnegar

Recent Volumes:

DECENTERING THE RESEARCHER IN INTIMATE SCHOLARSHIP: CRITICAL POSTHUMAN METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION

EDITED BY

KATHRYN STROM
California State University, USA

TAMMY MILLS
University of Maine, USA

ALAN OVENS
University of Auckland, New Zealand

Reprints and permissions service
Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

ISOQAR
REGISTERED

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This book is dedicated to Peg Winkelman, an amazing mentor and educational leader who lives the 'and.'

This page intentionally left blank

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF FIGURES

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF TABLES

This page intentionally left blank

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Kathryn Strom	California State University, USA
Tammy Mills	University of Maine, USA
Alan Ovens	University of Auckland, New Zealand
Stephanie Arnott	University of Ottawa, Canada
David Ball	Independent Researcher, Rotherham, UK
Francis Bangou	University of Ottawa, Canada
Rosi Braidotti	Utrecht University, The Netherlands
Jordan Corson	Columbia University, USA
Kimberly J. Frazier-Booth	Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA, USA
Shiva Hassan-Zarabadi	UCL Institute of Education, UK
Mats Hordvik	Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway
Radha Iyer	Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Tricia M. Kress	Molloy College, USA
Maggie MacLure	Manchester Metropolitan University, UK
Ann MacPhail	University of Limerick, Republic of Ireland
Adrian D. Martin	New Jersey City University, USA
Michael Peters	Beijing Normal University, China
Jessica Ringrose	UCL Institute of Education, UK
Lars Tore Ronglan	Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway
Brandon L. Sams	Iowa State University, USA
Tara Schwitzman	Columbia University, USA
Kay Sidebottom	University of Leeds, UK

Deborah Tannehill	University of Limerick, Republic of Ireland
Chau Vu	Louisiana State University, USA
Maria Wallace	Millsaps College, USA
Jay Wamsted	Benjamin E. Mays High School, USA

INTRODUCTION: DECENTERING THE RESEARCHER IN INTIMATE SCHOLARSHIP

Kathryn Strom, Tammy Mills and Alan Ovens

ABSTRACT

In this volume, we ask what happens when the researcher in forms of intimate scholarship is decentered − no longer the focus, but merely one part of an entangled material-discursive formation collectively producing the "results" of the inquiry. In the midst of the current ontological turn in qualitative research, we argue that this form of scholarship offers the opportunity to address directly the question of the post-human subject and generate thinking for the field of qualitative research more broadly. In particular, chapters in this volume highlight ways that researchers of teaching and teacher education practices can advance conversations and knowledge in education while exploring theories with an ontological view of the world as fundamentally multiple, dynamic, fluid, and co-constituted by entangled material and discursive forces. Authors "put to work" post-human, nonlinear, and multiplistic theories and concepts to disrupt and decenter the "I" or researcher-subject in self-focused methodologies, and/or to analyze knowledge and practice as co-produced by multiplicities of human/material and incorporeal elements in which the self is but one temporally "individuated" or "subjectivized" component. In the introduction, we provide brief discussions of intimate scholarship and post-human perspectives, followed by an orientation to the content of the this book.

Keywords: Intimate scholarship; post-human; materialism; self-study; autoethnography; subjectivity

In the 1980s, responding to critiques of post-modernist-inspired qualitative research that produced a "crisis of confidence" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011), a number of scholars advocated for methodologies that positioned the "self" more centrally in their inquiry, as a way to practically connect the individual to broader societal and cultural transformation (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001). This type of research, also known as "intimate scholarship" (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2015), focuses on the production and performance of knowledge/practice, forms of expression that give voice to situated ways of knowing, and the complex relation of the self to larger processes of change. As we use it here, "intimate scholarship" refers to qualitative methodology directly engaging the personal experience, knowledge, and/or practices of the researcher(s) as the focus of inquiry. Such methodological approaches include self-study of professional practices, autoethnography, life history, and narrative inquiry (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2015). However, any such methodology risks the self becoming the sole focus of the research, conflating "self" with forms of psychological research on the individual/subjectivity, and/or privileging individual rationality over emergent activity within socio-material relations and collectives.

In this volume, we ask what happens when the researcher in forms of intimate scholarship is decentered − no longer the focus, but merely one part of an entangled material-discursive formation collectively producing the "results" of the inquiry (Barad, 2007). In the midst of the current ontological turn in qualitative research (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013), we argue that this form of scholarship offers the opportunity to address directly the question of the posthuman subject (Braidotti, 2013) and generate thinking for the field of qualitative research more broadly. In particular, chapters in this volume highlight ways that researchers of teaching and teacher education practices can advance conversations and knowledge in education while exploring theories with an ontological view of the world as fundamentally multiple, dynamic, fluid, and co-constituted by entangled material and discursive forces. Authors "put to work" post-human, nonlinear, and multiplistic theories and concepts (Strom & Martin, 2017) to disrupt and decenter the "I" or researcher-subject in self-focused methodologies, and/or to analyze knowledge and practice as co-produced by multiplicities of human/material and incorporeal elements in which the self is but one temporally "individuated" or "subjectivized" component. Below, we provide brief discussions of intimate scholarship and post-human perspectives, followed by an orientation to the content of the balance of this book.

INTIMATE SCHOLARSHIP

Intimate scholarship is an orientation to inquiry that takes up Maxine Greene's (1995) call for seeing the particularities and intricacies in the lives of those who are deeply entangled in educational settings, particularly in the sense that the interactions and activity at this fine-grained level is contingent to how education becomes enacted in those settings. Building on this, Hamilton, Pinnegar, and Davey (2016) define intimate scholarship as "work conducted from an ontological orientation developed in a coming-to-know process that emerges in and is

authorized through dialogue" (p. 183). A key point here is that intimate scholarship provides an alternative to large-scale, multisite studies that use standardised forms of measurement as a way of knowing and studying educational work. In contrast, intimate scholarship enables a sensitivity to the relational and temporal aspects of how meanings, practices and identities emerge in educational settings. As Hamilton and Pinnegar (2015) point out, by valuing the particular, acknowledging the relational, using dialogue as a means for coming-to-know, and respecting the embodied ways of enacting practice, intimate scholarship provides a way to plug into and engage with educational phenomena that often remain hidden or ignored in other forms of research.

Such scholarship is intimate because it always involves the researcher's own understandings of themselves and their experiences in relation to those they educate. It assumes a subjective, relational stance that foregrounds research findings as local knowledge emerging from, and unique to, the richness, dynamism and interactivity that is particular to the research setting. Such a stance becomes ontological, since it works to excavate the affects that networks of power relations have in forming the material, conceptual and social realities of educators' lived experiences. Indeed, utilizing more intimate methodologies, such as S-STEP, memory work, narrative, action research, autoethnography, or reflective inquiry, allows researchers to engage with the messy, tacit, embodied, relational and contingent elements of educators work and workplace settings that are overlooked or ignored in other forms of research.

Intimate scholarship is an excellent entrypoint for decentered thinking because it already blurs a very entrenched binary − that of researcher/researched − and troubles taken-for-granted ideas about objectivity and researcher distance. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, researchers can occupy a range of positions in respect to intimate scholarship. Some have constructed an element of intimate scholarship within a more traditional study (see Iyer, this volume), while others embraced methods like self-study (see Horvik, et al., this volume) and autoethnography (see Wamsted, this volume). Still others created their own assemblages with hybrid methodologies, such as Kress and Frazier's use of co/autoethnography (Coia & Taylor, 2009) or Corson and Schwitzman's mash-up of autoethnography and literature review. Collectively, such work provides examples of researchers engaged with decentering the self within the assemblages and relations that constitute their lives and work as educators.

POST-HUMAN MATERIALIST INTIMATE SCHOLARSHIP

The chapters in this book take up a range of perspectives that fall under an umbrella of post-human materialisms (e.g., Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Haraway, 2016). A transdisciplinary shift in thinking, post-human materialisms challenges both Eurocentric rational humanism, on the one hand, and social constructionism, on the other (Braidotti, 2013). Eurocentric rational humanism, or the notion that the world exists in static, separate, essentialist, neutral categories that can be studied objectively, represents outdated, simplistic thinking that has, through its cultural hegemony, served a

White supremacist, heteropatriarchal status quo (Braidotti, 2013). In contrast, social constructionism understands everything as socially, culturally, and/or linguistically constructed. However, as Barad (2007) notes, there *is* a "there" there − it is just an entangled one. Post-human materialist perspectives explicitly bring back in the material (MacLure, 2017), but in a complex way that recognizes that we/our world are not transcendent and objective, nor completely constructed, but rather are a mixture of the two: material and discursive elements co-constitute us and our realities (Barad, 2007).

This ontological shift also takes on human-centric, and human supremacist, ways of seeing the world (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016). Rather than viewing ourselves as autonomous actors with complete control over our environment and non-human others, we are in composition with them, just one element on a natureculture continuum, a part of a larger multiplicity of *human-and*. This shifts our understanding of reality away from a dualistic perspective and moves it toward a radically monistic, or immanent, one (Braidotti, 2013) − that is, everything is connected and all together, no above or below, nothing transcendent, just one plane of matter capable of transforming itself into endless collective arrangements (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). While "monism" might imply a return to the one, *difference* is actually the defining feature of these collective arrangements that make up the world. Describing the simultaneity of connectivity and difference, Braidotti (2017, p. 23) explains that it is a matter of, "We-are-all-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and-the-same!"

Decentering the researcher in intimate scholarship as a practice entails the explicit displacement of the humanist/anthropocentric "I," as well as the shift described above that moves from "either/or" dualist paradigm to an immanent one of "and, and, and." This is a move away from focusing on bounded individuals and toward connected, shifting multiplicities. In addition, the practice of decentering the researcher involves simultaneously providing an accounting of the researcher and connecting her up to multiple human and non-human others outside the embodied self. Within heterogeneous assemblages of *human-and*, an essential part of the work of educational researchers is practicing a politics of location (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 1988) − that is, explicitly situating oneself within specific earthly locations, historic and present moments in time, and systems of power. It is only by doing so that we can avoid a return to the transcendent by specifically honoring our material, temporal, and sociopolitical ties that form the position from which we speak/research. Intimate scholarship provides a methodology by which to pursue this politics of location, of situating and connecting oneself up. Importantly, however, when bringing a post-human perspective to intimate scholarship the emphasis must be on looking outward, not inward (Braidotti, this volume). In other words, we must not dwell on the individual teacher-researcher, but on her connections to alterity, the teacher-researcher-in-relation-to.

The chapters in this book take up these ideas in educational research in varying ways. In the first chapter, Adrian examines how the self, whether positioned as researcher or participant, is always enmeshed as part of the research assemblage. Using research he conducted on mainstream teachers of English learners, he examines how the research process worked to position the researcher, participants, and

findings as mutually constituted elements in an enmeshed entanglement of discursive processes, material contexts, animate bodies, social norms and practices. Adrian brings a sensitivity to how discourse, materiality, context, and positionality enable affective productions that shape the research assemblage itself, drawing attention to the self as affective, rather than agentic, and as affecting and being affected.

Next, Francis Bangou and Stephanie Arnott open a space for thinking differently about the intricacy and changeability of becoming an online teacher educator for second language (L2) learners. Together they sought to illustrate what could happen when teacher educators and researchers become "intimate" with the various elements of a research and/or a teaching and learning agencement. The empirical material was collected as part of a study on a mentoring experience between the authors as one was preparing to teach an online graduate course in second language education to in-service teachers Using Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of agencements, rhizome, affect, becoming, desire, and experimentation, opportunities to disturb and transform online L2 teacher education emerged as they experiment with(in) the writing of the chapter. Indeed, as their writing demonstrates, both authors experience becoming teacher as an evolving process of transformations affecting and affected by various, unpredictable human, nonhuman, tangible, and not tangible elements.

In the third chapter, Jordan Corson and Tara Schitzmann work at the juncture of autoethnography and the doctoral convention of the literature review, hybridizing these methods to theorize the monstrous figuration of the "good" doctoral student from a feminist post-human perspective. As they critically reflect on their experiences being made, while resisting being made, into this monster, they also push at the boundaries of acceptable scholarly practice. At moments in the text, Jordan and Tara make visible some of the rigid rules of academic writing and flout them, thereby fracturing the "good" doctoral student-subject. By doing so, they disrupt the normalized experience of reading a scholarly book chapter and invite the reader to critique and probematize these often-invisible rules that produce us and our work in particular ways.

Fourth, Mats Hordvik and colleagues draw insights from rhizomatic philosophy, focusing on the concept of assemblage, to engage with a research collective to investigate its function and production. Mats, a doctoral candidate who was researching his practice of teaching pre-service teachers, engaged with his two supervisors and his critical friend to analyze data from meetings conducted throughout a four-year period. Presenting two vignettes, they highlight the nonlinear and fundamentally relational process of this research assemblage, arguing that Mats' researcher-self was only one of multiple human and nonhuman components that together, jointly constructed knowledge for his thesis. The authors suggest that self-study researchers "make themselves into a rhizome," embracing a research stance of "coming into composition" where the researcher engages with a research assemblage to construct joint understanding of teaching and learning.

In Chapter 5, Chau Vu explores how authenticity and objectivity in autoethnography research are viewed from a new materialist perspective. She argues that, in terms of authenticity, new materialism suggests a non-representationalist voice, and therefore, researchers must give up the authority of their narrative

voice as a privileged source of knowledge with a valued property of authenticity. Chau suggests instead adopting a performative voice, which constructs a narrator interested in how their experiences constrain what they know and how they represent participants or themselves in their worlds. Writing autoethnographies from this perspective, Chau notes, is less a way of telling than a way of knowing in being. The chapter also engages with an agential-realist account of objectivity, which diverges from the traditional notion of the removed observer and instead offers an understanding of embodiment through specific material practices enacted between the subject and the object. She argues that this shift means being accountable and responsible as researchers, an understanding of objectivity that engenders a reconfiguring of data as diffractive phenomena and reliability as axiological intra-actions in what she calls an auto-*ethico*-ethnography.

Invoking images of the *Argo* and the roiling waters of the Mississippi, in the sixth chapter Jay Wamsted troubles the notion that simple stories "privilege the humanistic notion of the autonomous 'I'" by "mining narratives and discovering stereotypes lurking in entirely unknown spaces." In mining two of their narratives, Jay interrogates stories of race and cross-racial relationships, disrupts his stated identity, and seeks to uncover hidden racism. By using this autoethnographic methodology, Jay proposes a perspective of fluidity of rhizomatic assemblage of identity that tests the threads of the stories that house researchers and teacher educators as autonomous beings. Further, he provides scholars with narrative mining as a methodological tool that enables them to navigate the (re)telling a series of their stories. Wamsted points out that because most educators will encounter significant racial difference throughout their career, there is potential for the use of narrative mining to be used to for self-reflective introspection with the aim of improving cross-racial relationships.

In Chapter 7, Tricia Kress and Kimberly Frazier-Booth explore reflexivity as un/predictable to generate new possibilities and potential that are not bound by modernism's penchant toward structure and humanism's myopic self-awareness. Via co/autoethnography, Tricia and Kimberly present individual narratives illustrating their relationships with reflexivity in various spaces of their lives. By using various types of mirrors (e.g., classic mirror, interrogation mirror, window as mirror, water as mirror) as analytical devices, they illustrate reflexivity as embodied processes that emerge un/predictably as they traverse various geotemporal−political locations and engage with other human, nonhuman and material bodies. By recasting reflexivity as dynamic and fluid, the authors raise possibilities for spontaneously incorporating reflexivity into teaching−learning and research, thereby untethering critical reflection from modernist and humanist logics that attempt to corral reflection into discrete activities and truncate its potential for transforming praxis.

In Chapter 8, Radha Iyer uses self-study methodology and rhizomatic processes to explore whether difference and diversity could be experienced positively for culturally and linguistically diverse students and the academic teaching them within a structured and restrictive university context. Together with her students, Radha engaged in an ongoing process of examining multiple interconnections, negotiating various perspectives and learning nodes, and identifying her own nomadic positioning that enabled assemblages that led to the deterritoritalization

of norms, allowing her to view her students as developing from novice learners to active participants in their program. Radha discusses how this rhizomatic process allowed her to assist students in positively rupturing points in molar lines of university's structure. Her approach to decentering provides a point of entry for scholars interested in self-study to employ rhizomatic thinking to positively challenge binaries between teachers and students and disrupt restrictive forces of institutions.

Next, Brandon Sams offers a Deleuzian re-reading of his initial inquiry of, "how do teachers read literary texts they plan to teach?" Using post-human perspectives, Brandon and his co-collaborator, Steven employ the concept of naked and belated pedagogy to understand their experiences as researchers, teachers, and writers. They provide a rhizomatic analysis of their pedagogical methods, viewed through "prism of failure and disappointment." However, as they explain, this approach provides a more authentic view of education and becoming otherwise, resisting education discourses that favor certainty and linear narratives. Brandon and Steven discover that researching and writing disappointment may actually "begin a process of researching and teaching otherwise, where focusing on the can't-bear-to-know leads to the not-yet-thought".

In "Art as a 'Thing that Does'," Kay Sidebottom and David Ball take on the reflective work in which developing teachers entering the profession are required to engage, which typically takes the form of a written journal. Authors instead focus on experiences using creative methods for reflection, which they argue can lead to greater 'reflexivity' and connection of theory to practice. The two authors collaboratively inquire into Kay's teacher education practices and David's processes of reflection using creative artistic expression, examining the impact it might have on the teachers themselves, their resilience, and their ability to subvert the oppressions of the current education system. The chapter recounts the story of a year of experimentation through the coming together of a student-teacher artistic assemblage which pushed the boundaries of the traditional teacher training curriculum as well as formal notions of "research." Authors found that they moved in new configurations of "teacher-artist," "student-curator," and "audience-class" towards a notion of themselves as "cosmic artisans" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), eventually transporting their art from the private to public sphere to share with the world their painful, emergent and embodied experiences of "becoming teacher".

Maria Wallace offers a response to the first 10 chapters that also offers a becoming and writing-with them. Drawing on the intersections of feminist poststructuralism, posthumanism, and new material feminisms, Maria suggests that educational research can be seen as happening to worlds while also making worlds, which invites educational researchers to care for the ethical entanglement among the research, researcher, researched, and reader. Bringing diverse mo(ve)ments into conversation, Maria presents a minor sequence for decentering the educational researcher, such as destabilizing conventional data triangulation through "Talking Triads." This chapter begins to illuminate how textual presentations of becoming-minor inherently raise tensions between nonhuman structures (e.g., time, tradition, concepts, mirrors, literature) and the human experience of being-educational researcher.

The final four chapters in the book engage in dialogues with international post-human scholars who each offer their thoughts regarding the possibilities

and challenges of decentering the researcher in intimate scholarship. Rosi Braidotti, a renowned figure in critical post-human and feminist studies, offers an affirmative, immanent perspective that requires the researcher to be both politically located, grounded, and accountable while also connecting oneself up outward, rather than inward. Michael Peters, one of the field's preeminent educational philosophers, provides a discussion of the relational and evolving systems of thought that lead to the emergence of new movements, thinking and discourses, such as posthumanism. Maggie MacLure examines new materialist perspectives in relation to qualitative methodologies, providing insights regarding data analysis that attends to difference and imaging research as an encounter. Last, Jessica Ringrose and Shiva Zarabadi explore decentering the eye/I through Deleuzoguattarian concepts, including schizoanalysis, and argue that we must put these ideas to work in ways that make a difference in the world.

REFERENCES

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Braidotti, R. (2017). Posthuman, all too human: The memoirs and aspirations of a posthumanist. Paper presented at the Tanner Lectures, Yale University, March 2017. Retrieved from https://tannerlectures.utah.edu/Manuscript%20for%20Tanners%20Foundation%20Final%20Oct%201.pdf

Bullough, Jr., R. V., & Pinnegar, S. (2001). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. *Educational Researcher*, *30*(3), 13−21.

Coia, L., & Taylor, M. (2009). Co/autoethnography: Exploring our teaching selves collaboratively. In L. Fitzgerald, M. Heston, & D. Tidwell (Eds.), *Research methods for the self-study of practice* (pp. 3−16). Dordrecht: Springer.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *Capitalism and schizophrenia: A thousand plateaus*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical Social Research*, *12*(1), 273−290.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hamilton, M. L., & Pinnegar, S. (2015). *Knowing, becoming, doing as teacher educators: Identity, intimate scholarship, inquiry* (Vol. 26). Bingley: Emerald Publishing.

Hamilton, M. L., Pinnegar, S., & Davey, R. (2016). Intimate scholarship: An examination of identity and inquiry in the work of teacher educators. In J. Loughran & M. Hamilton (Eds.), *International handbook of teacher education* (pp. 181−237). Singapore: Springer.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist studies*, *14*(3), 575−599.

Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lather, P., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2013). Post-qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *26*(6), 629−633.

MacLure, M. (2017). Qualitative inquiry and the new materialisms: "A little of Dionysus's blood"? In N. Denzin & M. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in neoliberal times* (pp. 48−59). New York, NY: Routledge.

Strom, K., & Martin, A. (2017). Thinking with theory in an era of Trump. *Issues in Teacher Education*, *26*(3), 3−22.