



MIDWINTER ZOOMFEST 2021

Disembodied philosophies and theories

ONLINE PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Fri, 27 August 2021, 10am – 12pm AEST, 12pm - 2pm NZST

Welcome



Associate Professor Marek Tesar
University of Auckland
PESA President



Dr Sonja Arndt
University of Melbourne
Zoomfest Organising Committee

Keynotes

Associate Professor Carl Mika *University of Waikato*

THE PROBLEM OF EMBODIMENT FOR THE MAORI ACADEMIC

In my presentation, I speculate on some issues around embodiment for the Maori academic. From a Maori perspective, to discuss embodiment calls for addressing the non-human realm as much as the human: thus, the notion that the non-human is sovereign informs much of this presentation.



Carl Mika is Maori of the Tuhourangi iwi, and is an associate professor in the Division of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand. Previously, he worked as a criminal and Treaty of Waitangi lawyer, librarian, and research contracts manager. He now works almost entirely in the area of Maori thought/philosophy, with a particular focus on its revitalisation within a colonised reality. Committed to investigating indigenous notions of holism, Carl is currently working on the Maori concepts of nothingness and darkness in response to an Enlightenment focus on clarity, and is speculating on how they can form the backdrop of academic expression. He is interested in current debates on crossovers between Maori thought/philosophy, education and science. He is Co-Director of Centre for Global Studies, University of Waikato.

Professor Liz Jackson *The Education University of Hong Kong*

While freedom has been the subject of abstract philosophical discussion, what freedom has to do with the body and the real world have become pressing concerns during our pandemic. Across western societies whether expectations about vaccines and masks infringe upon personal freedom have become contentious topics. A neoliberal conception prevails in the United States, which dismisses the idea of freedom as capabilities and related duties of care. In Hong Kong, this neoliberal framing is uncommon. In this presentation I use the United States and Hong Kong as examples to explore freedom in liberalism, Confucianism, and Taoism, linking freedom to self-other relations as bodily experiences in the real world.



Liz Jackson is Professor of International Education at the Education University of Hong Kong. She is the immediate past president of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia and the former director of the Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong. She is also Deputy Editor for Educational Philosophy and Theory. Her recent authored books include Contesting Education and Identity in Hong Kong (Routledge, 2021), Beyond Virtue: The Politics of Educating Emotions (Cambridge University Press, 2020), and Questioning Allegiance: Resituating Civic Education (Routledge, 2019). Her current research is focused on comparative views of emotions and virtues in philosophy and education.

Presentations

The apparent other and embodiment

Moderator: Rachel Buchanan

Andrew Madjar

The ethical significance of 'being seen'

Patricia Ong

Literary mirrors of contrasts: Representations and negotiation of conflict between notions of self and other

Georgina Tuari Stewart

Letters to Editors

The embodied way

Moderator: Marek Tesar

Bruce Haynes

Embodied trust

John Cripps Clark & Nikolay Veresov

The journey from Hegel via Ilyenkov to Vygotsky: The dialectics of development and education

Tamara Borovica & Hanne Tjersland

Embodied identity, mindful movement and social change - what can transformative awareness of embodiment of identity bring into the mindful movement field?

World horizons and embodiment

Moderator: Daniella Forster

Amy Sojot

Spinoza and The Thing: Disembodied joy and posthuman pedagogies amidst the pandemic

Rene Novak

The immersive virtual online avatar society

Morimichi Kato

Embodying the environment: Ritual, techné, and Japanese shrines

Final address



Associate Professor Marek Tesar
University of Auckland
PESA President

About the presentations

SPINOZA AND THE THING: DISEMBODIED JOY AND POSTHUMAN PEDAGOGIES AMIDST THE PANDEMIC

Amy Sojot, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

From viral variants to faces on laptop screens in the current Zoomcene, what makes a body in the ongoing global pandemic? If we rethink the body, then we should revisit the body's feelings. A neoliberal focus on well-being, including related expressions of joy and satisfaction, existed prior to the pandemic. For example, consumerist "treat yourself" self-care suggests that an individual can purchase fulfilment through products and self-help courses. However, I contend that the pandemic's bodily disconnection shifted habits of well-being. Some began baking bread to feel the comforting joy of tactile sensations while others sought satisfaction and sense-making through the eerie contemporary parallels of dystopian movies. In this paper I explore two themes from the call (expression and its possible materiality; disconnection and fragmentation) by using the extraterrestrial creature from John Carpenter's 1982 cult classic film, *The Thing*, to contemplate joy. Inspired by posthuman theoretical approaches that view the monstrous as affirmative rather than pathological, I turn to an uncanny reading of Baruch Spinoza's joy and Alfred North Whitehead's satisfaction to consider the creature's striving tenacity. By engaging with Spinoza and Whitehead, I seek to—in the spirit of *The Thing*—flesh out shifting discourses of disembodied joy and embodied satisfaction amidst the pandemic. Especially for posthuman pedagogies, reconsidering joy as mutable can resist the tendency to foreclose possibilities resulting from neoliberalism's narrow definitions of bodily well-being.



Amy Sojot is a PhD candidate in Educational Foundations at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her research engages interdisciplinary approaches to rework assumptions about sensation, experience, and pedagogy through aesthetics, politics, pop-cultural critique, and philosophical inquiry.

THE ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF 'BEING SEEN'

Andrew Madjar, University of Auckland

The current pandemic has greatly interrupted the ways that we are physically present in teaching. Prior to the pandemic, we took it for granted that teaching involved both seeing others as well as being-seen in our own corporeal presence. Now, we find that our presence is mediated through a lens and a screen. So, this pandemic has created an opportunity to consider the significance of our embodiment, or disembodiment, in the life of teaching.

In my presentation, I want to take up this opportunity by reflecting on the ethical significance of being-seen. To do so, I will present an anecdote from a teacher that describes her lived experience of being-seen. In the first half of my presentation, I will describe the significance that being-seen has on the teacher's reason for action. In the second-half, I will further explore this phenomenon through Charles Taylor's discussion of shame. I will argue that being-seen is ethically significant because it provides a hermeneutical provocation. The experience of being-seen helps us to articulate, and consequently re-evaluate, our understandings of who we are and how we should live alongside students.



Andrew Madjar was a primary school teacher in New Zealand for 10 years and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Auckland. He is secretary of PESA and is Editorial Administrator for ACCESS: Contemporary Issues in Education. His current research explores moral uncertainty in the lives of teachers. His research uses hermeneutic and phenomenological philosophy to develop understandings of pedagogy and practice that are grounded in lived experience.

EMBODIED TRUST

Bruce Haynes

Embodied trust is part of my view of 'encompassing trust' that also incorporates embedded trust, enactive trust and extended trust. To see education and schooling from the point of view of trust (rather than truth) may open up possibilities for productive change in the way we bring up children and conduct our affairs.



Retired after 34 years in teacher education. Held a number of positions in PESA. Awarded Fellow PESA and Fellow PES. Been researching the connection between trust and education for the past 15 years.

THE JOURNEY FROM HEGEL VIA ILYENKOV TO VYGOTSKY: THE DIALECTICS OF DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

John Cripps Clark, Deakin University

Nikolay Veresov, Monash University

Hegel's dialectics, as a method of cognition, is a system of interrelated and interconnected concepts, such as movement, contradiction, opposites, quantity, quality, metamorphosis, and sublation to grasp the objective process of development. Ilyenkov focused on bringing dialectics to the field of psychology, describing the emergence of human psychic functions not an instinctive motion but a formation that requires ontogenetic development of socially formed, culturally mediated functions.

Vygotsky sought to open the path to scientific study and reconceptualise development theoretically through the dialectical method. For him, the dialectical method was the only adequate method of disclosing psychological development: "The process of child development is subject to its own, internal laws. It proceeds as a dialectical process of self-movement" (Vygotsky, 2001, 154).

For child psychology, this means a deeper understanding is possible: Only if we radically change our representation of child development and take into account that it is a complex dialectical process that is characterized by a complex periodicity, disproportion in the development of separate functions, metamorphoses or qualitative transformation of certain forms into others, a complex merging of the processes of evolution and involution, a complex crossing of external and internal factors, a complex process of overcoming difficulties and adapting (Vygotsky 1997, pp. 98–99)

Despite Vygotsky's popularity in educational, his dialectics is unexplored in our educational research and teaching practice.



John runs a cultural-historical & activity research reading group, AARE SIG: Sociocultural Activity Theory and four Asia-Pacific ISCAR-AARE Summer Schools. John researches: practical activities in primary teaching, online learning, school gardens, overseas professional experience, science games, Peirce, and STEM education.



Dr. Nikolay Veresov is an Associate Professor at Monash University. His area of interest is child development in the early years, philosophical foundations of psychology, cultural-historical theory and research methodology. He published 5 books and over 140 articles/book chapters available in 9 languages.

EMBODYING THE ENVIRONMENT: RITUAL, TECHNE, AND JAPANESE SHRINES

Morimichi Kato, Tohoku University

This paper is a response to the subtheme of the conference: Embodying the environment.

It consists of the following parts.

- 1) Nature can be considered as a community of knowledge, in which each living member, animal and plant, listens to the voice of the other, and responds to it.
- 2) Human being is a member of this community. Ritual is the oldest testimony of how human being observed the course of nature carefully and how he or she tried to respond to it. The dual character of listening and response gave ritual magical power.
- 3) The dual character of ritual was inherited by arts and sciences in later age. The Greek word, *techne* (crafts, arts, and sciences) was characterized by the dual aspect of *mimesis* and *poiesis*. *Techne* observes nature carefully and responds to it by bringing something new in the world.
- 4) This dual aspect of *mimesis* as *poiesis* underwent great transformation in modernity. Modern technology and science could flourish only after breaking the spell of nature. We are now entering the period in which we should reevaluate and resume the dual relationship with nature.
- 5) To foster the dual relationship with nature, it is important to protect the public space in which both humans and nature can prosper. National parks and home gardens can be understood in this light.
- 6) Traditionally, Shinto shrines have played a similar role in Japan. Even today, they have a potential to provide the place of encounter between humans and nature.



Morimichi Kato is emeritus professor of Tohoku University and a director of Philosophy of Education Society of Japan. He taught history and philosophy of education in Tohoku University and Sophia University in Japan. His main field of research concerns the reevaluation of humanistic traditions in East and West and environmental philosophy.

LITERARY MIRRORS OF CONTRASTS: REPRESENTATIONS AND NEGOTIATION OF CONFLICT BETWEEN NOTIONS OF SELF AND OTHER

Patricia Ong, University of Waikato

The concept of 'Otherness' or 'Othering' has been viewed as a dimension of defining the self. Critical discourse has come to refer to 'otherness' as that which digresses from what is accepted as the cultural norm, at times with ambiguous imageries of wildness and wilderness. Narratives of indigenous people, 'invisible' minorities, narratives of children with disabilities, newcomer and refugee narratives are a few instances of literary representations of otherness. New horizons are explored through fantasy and science fiction, dealing with strangeness and disruptions of traditional conception of time, space and identity. 'Otherness' is also found in literary representations as children develop an awareness and concomitant knowledge of growing out of 'being' a child. The emergent sense of the 'other' is one of the means by which children first become aware of those who are different. The presentation examines the discourse of 'Otherness' in the works of two well-known children's authors. It also examines how critical multiculturalism in children's literature can help to counter and negate harmful definitions of the 'Other' that are based on stereotypes that are discriminatory and stigmatizing. It concludes with a few points on the rationale of philosophy with children.



The author has recently completed her PhD at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She has been in the education field for more than two decades and she has a wide range of research interests including the 21st century curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogical approaches.

THE IMMERSIVE VIRTUAL ONLINE AVATAR SOCIETY

Rene Novak, BestStart

This video presentation will endeavour to explain the emergence of the 'immersive virtual online avatar society' by drawing from experiences gained in virtual worlds, developed with a social multi-user VR software known as VRChat. I will philosophically interrogate defining properties of a society and elaborate on how these are explicated in digitally constructed online spaces. The presentation includes video recordings taken in VRChat that become windows to the cyber world through 'virtual eyes'. I will also investigate the social contract that was devised for this immersive virtual online society. This society harbours many occasional visitors, but also hosts some permanent virtual residents, who occupy virtual worlds most of their spare time and in some cases, time spent in virtual reality exceeds their time lived in reality. Important ontological and philosophical questions arise from this societal change, and some will be noted including if it precludes a new way of life for the post-human digital citizen and what does this mean for the future of education.



Dr. Rene Novak, has a strong passion for early childhood pedagogy and technology education. He is currently a Regional Professional Practice Leader for BestStart and is a published academic with his recently completed PhD thesis focusing on developing new methodologies to study the importance of play involving Virtual Reality, as a tool and a method.

LETTERS TO EDITORS

Georgina Tuari Stewart, Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

This presentation reflects on my recent encounter with academic racism involving a letter to the editor of a local academic scientific journal, published in response to a Special Issue on the theme of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in which my article was included. This episode involves several entangled questions of editorial ethics and the ethics of scholarship more generally, related to the intent and attitude of journals and their editors towards material dealing with Mātauranga Māori. Editors are at risk of wandering into the swampy debate between science and Māori knowledge, which is currently enjoying some prominence in public and social media, proving vexatious for local academic and scientific communities. In this presentation, I consider the role of a journal as host to the work it publishes, which makes the relationship between editors and authors somewhat like that between hosts and their guests. I am interested in the status of such letters, and the roles played by journals and editors, in relation to the dogged debates between science and Indigenous knowledge.



Georgina Tuari Stewart: Co-Editor, New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies-Te Hautaka Mātai Mātauranga o Aotearoa. Associate Editor, Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand and Educational Philosophy and Theory. Books: Māori Philosophy: Indigenous thinking from Aotearoa (Bloomsbury, 2020); Writing for Publication: Liminal Reflections for Academics (Springer, 2021).

EMBODIED IDENTITY, MINDFUL MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE - WHAT CAN TRANSFORMATIVE AWARENESS OF EMBODIMENT OF IDENTITY BRING INTO THE MINDFUL MOVEMENT FIELD?

Tamara Borovica, University of Melbourne

Hanne Tjersland, Universitat Jaume I, Castellón de la Plana, Spain.

This presentation focuses on the ways the intercultural body is present and understood in mindful movement and dance spaces. We, two academics who also practice and teach a movement meditation called Open Floor, explore how orientation towards more authentic diversity in this field can be supported by a practice of self-reflexivity in relation to our embodied identities. We follow Deleuze's notion of identity as created through processes of stratification (Deleuze and Guattari 2017), which are processes that tend to assign dualistic, fixed and often mutually excluding categories of identities onto individuals and groups. We explore how self-reflexivity can unfold a relational and empathic awareness of both the effects of stratification on bodies both similar to and different from ours, and for how there is always also a space beyond in which different possibilities can unfold. With this we seek to unfold a transformative both-and awareness (Murphy 2018) through which both the strata and what lies in-between, through and beyond can be engaged, lived and acknowledged. We propose that this both-and process can create a vital in-between space where creative tensions can manifest more authentic possibilities for richer diversity and inclusion in mindful movement practices and education.



Dr Tamara Borovica is researcher at the School of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. Tamara's doctoral thesis offered a creative exploration of the embodiment of womanhood, and was awarded Doctoral Research Award for best doctorate in the field of Philosophy of Education by Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne. Tamara's research focuses on embodiment, mental health, embodied and arts-based research methodologies, interdisciplinary and critical approaches to health, well-being and belonging.



Hanne Tjersland is a PhD Candidate in International Studies in Peace, Conflict and Development at the Universitat Jaume I, Castellón de la Plana, Spain. She focuses on arts-based and embodied approaches to peace education and conflict transformation, in particular theatre and Open Floor mindful dance and movement practice. In addition, she facilitates different groups, mostly in Europe, through her initiative Peace in Movement (www.peaceinmovement.com) where she uses theatre and Open Floor to explore and engage questions and dynamics of peace.