

Posthumanist/ new material feminist imaginaries for higher education research and pedagogy

Professor Carol Taylor
Sheffield Hallam University

21st November 2017

C.A.Taylor@shu.ac.uk

[@CATaylorSHU](https://twitter.com/CATaylorSHU)

Today's presentation

- My analytical approach
- Posthumanism/ New material feminism –intro to some key concepts and shiftings
- Rethinking what higher education is 'for'
- Edu-crafting: posthumanist/ new material feminist activations in higher education pedagogy and research
- Thinking forwards



Concept as method

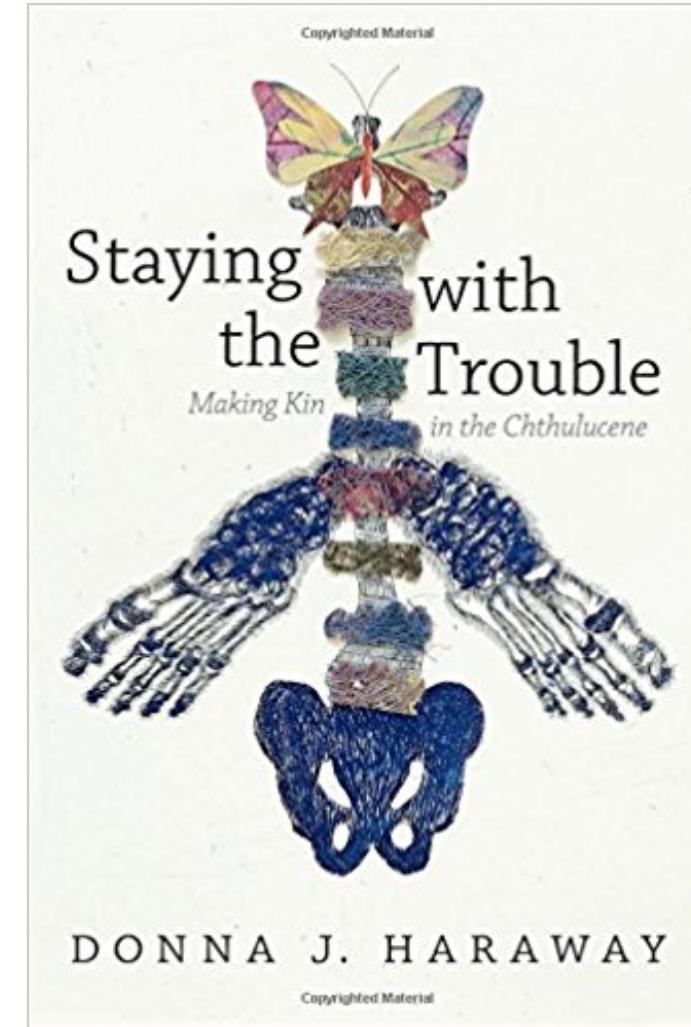
- Hillevi Lenz Taguchi (2016)
- 'The pedagogical process of learning *from and with* the concept'
- Concepts
 - Posthumanism/ NMF
 - Bildung

Gilles Deleuze
and Félix Guattari
The authors of ANTI-OEDIPUS

What Is
Philos-
ophy?

Speculative feminism

- Donna Haraway (2016)
- ‘Creative uncertainty’
- ‘Thinking beyond inherited categories and capacities’
- ‘Staying with the trouble’



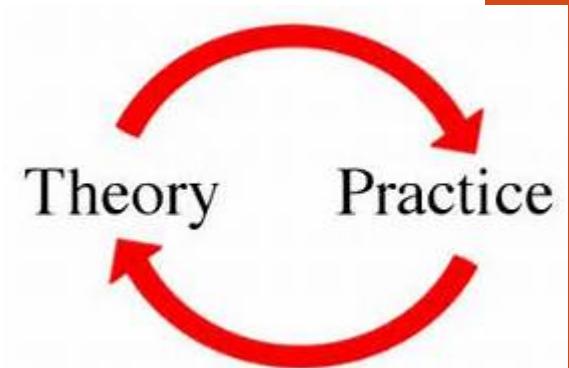
Affirmative critique

- Braidotti (2013) 'nomadic theory'
- Latour (2004) 'matters of concern'
- Taylor (2016) 'close encounters of a more generous kind'



Recasting theory/ practice

- Barad (2012) *On Touching, the Inhuman that therefore I am*
- Theorizing, a form of experimenting, is about being in touch. What keeps theories alive and lively is being responsible and responsive to the world's patternings and murmurings. Doing theory requires being open to the world's aliveness, **allowing oneself to be lured by curiosity, surprise, and wonder**. Theories are not mere metaphysical pronouncements on the world from some presumed position of exteriority. Theories are living and breathing reconfigurings of the world. The world theorizes as well as experiments with itself. Figuring, reconfiguring.

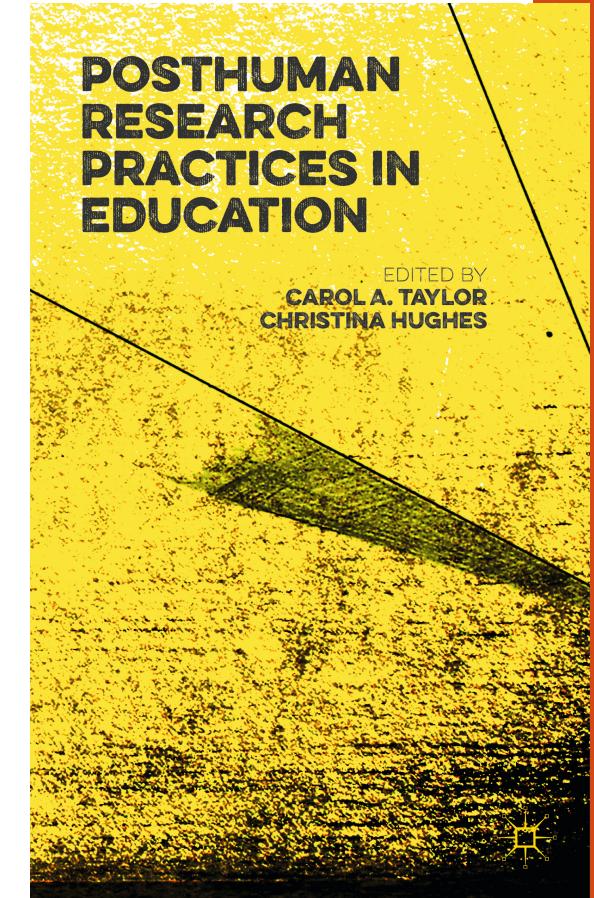


What is posthumanism?

- Animal studies; material realism; ‘new’ material feminism; affect theory; process philosophy; assemblage theory; queer theory; speculative realism; thing theory; actor network theory; the nonhuman; the new empiricism; posthuman (dishuman) disability studies; object-oriented ontology, alien phenomenology, ecological relationality, decolonial and indigenous theories, plus others ...

What is posthumanism?

- A mobile term
- A constellation
- A ‘reaction’ to Humanism (Wolfe, 2010)
- Different starting points for being, thinking and doing
- An activation of new practices characterised by heterogeneity, multiplicity, profusion, transdisciplinarity
- Chapter 1: Edu-crafting a Cacophonous Ecology: Posthumanist Research Practices for Education



Posthumanism and ontology

- Makes a shift from a consciousness-based, cognitive, interiorized, phenomenological view of experience to a materialist, relational, co-constitutive, affective, vitalist, corporeal notion of experience which foregrounds entanglement

Posthumanism and epistemology

It breaks open the individualized, rational and binary representational logics on which the Cartesian knowing subject and his (sic) knowledge-making practices rest; it displaces views which seek 'truth about' and 'power over' by forms of immanent, embodied and embedded knowing-in-being which better attend to indeterminacy, uncontrollability, excess, flow, dynamics, multiplicity, and happenstance.

Posthumanism and ethics

Barad: 'every intra-action matters'

Haraway – response-ability

Bennett: ethics is about response to/
within assemblages one finds oneself
participating in

Context – Measurement, Metrics, Outputs and Performatives in HE

- UK
 - REF: Research Exercise Framework
 - TEF: Teaching Excellence Framework
 - Myriad institutional measures and metrics
 - Academics' public profile metrics e.g. citations, ResearchGate, Academia.edu



Massumi – An affective politics of resistance

‘Structured in the sense of being tailored to the singularity of this event, and improvised, taking the desires and expertise of the events particular participants into account’ (Manning and Massumi, 2014: 92).

Edu- crafting

DIY, low cost,
low-fi

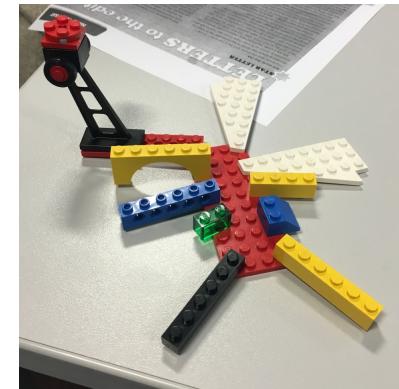
What happens
if?

Experimentation

Edu-crafting 1: Walking-with pedagogy



Edu-crafting 2: Happiness and Doctoral Journey-ings



Edu-crafting 3: SF with Donna Haraway



Edu-crafting 4: Gaining speed with bags

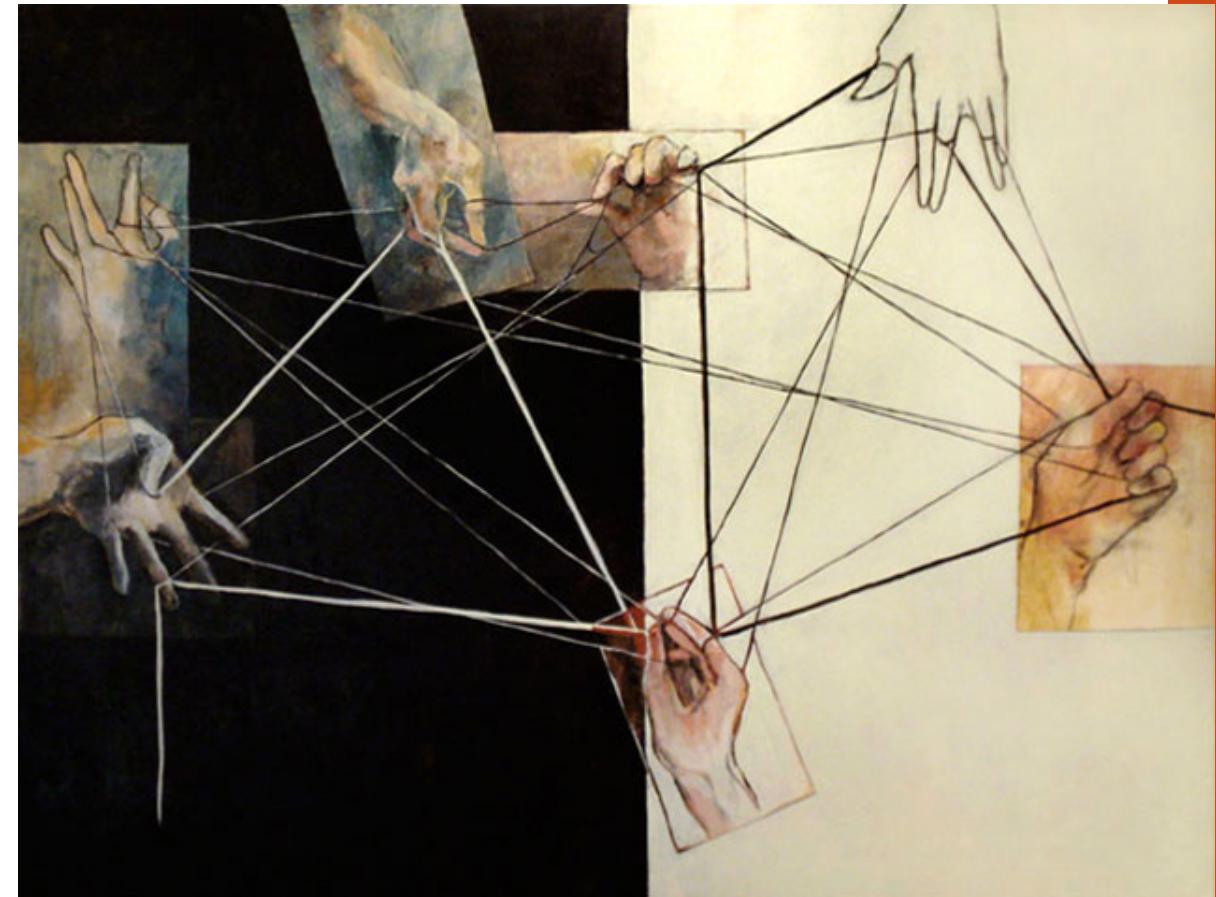


Edu-crafting 5: A speculative pragmatics of play in higher education

C. A. Taylor (2017) For Hermann: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. Or, what my dog has taught me about a post-personal academic life. In: Riddle et al. *Producing Pleasure in the Contemporary University*.

Rethinking what higher education is *for*

- Ethico-onto-epistemology
- In-relation-with
- Ecological thinking-doing
- Response-ability



Thinking forwards ... Posthumanism and Utopian Method

- Staying with the trouble
- ‘Expressions of the desire for a better way of being or of living ... It is about the attempt not just to imagine but to make the world otherwise’ (Levitas, 2013: xiii)