

Alfresco Dining and Reinvigorated Acquaintance: Editorial, Volume 8, Part 1

Gareth J Johnson

Institute of Advanced Study, University of Warwick, UK

Correspondence: gareth.johnson@warwick.ac.uk

Twitter: [@llordllama](https://twitter.com/llordllama)

ORCID: [0000-0003-3953-6155](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3953-6155)



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Reason is a complex type of instinct that has not yet formed completely. This implies that instinctual behavior is always purposeful and natural. A million years from now our instinct will have matured and we will stop making the mistakes that are probably integral to reason. And then, if something should change in the universe, we will all become extinct - precisely because we will have forgotten how to make mistakes, that is, to try various approaches not stipulated by an inflexible program of permitted alternatives. (Strugatsky & Strugatsky, 2012)

Introduction

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of *Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*. As eagle-eyed readers will have spotted, there was less time between our preceding issue and this one, given we are publishing in our traditional late-October slot. This issue, as always, we are delighted to bring once again a selection of new thinking and insights, drawn from emerging scholars from across the disciplinary spectrum.

Ensnared Within the (Covid) Zone

That I am writing this editorial during the seventh calendar month of Covid-19 related restrictions in the UK and with the increasing imposition of stringent lockdown conditions arising, seem tragically, a semi-inevitability to observers of human nature. The theme of lockdown and the concomitant social restrictions have rarely been far from my professional and personal thoughts during this time and I am sure the same is sure for our readership too. I have lost count of how often video or email interactions with colleagues around the globe have diverged from the salient topic to address how participants are currently coping in all aspects of their lives. Nevertheless, despite the varying, if understandable, levels of generalised anxiety frequently encountered in these conversations, I am pleased to report the entire *Exchanges* editorial team has continued to perform their work on the title throughout this period with aplomb, dedication and even enthusiasm. My editorial hat is very much doffed in recognition of their continued efforts as a result.

The Editorial Board has also been taking opportunities to speak with one another face-to-face, albeit online, more frequently too. This is a positive shift for our operational ethos, and one I am hopeful we will continue to employ even as, when, life returns to a greater semblance of normality. I am sure like many other currently distributed colleagues, collaborators and co-investigators we shall emerge from this pandemic having forged stronger interpersonal bonds alongside a potentially reinvigorated distributed work dynamic. There is, as the aphorism goes, nothing like a shared crisis to bring people closer together. Hence, I am pleased, if not exactly able to express delight, that we have gained these minor social benefits from this ongoing global challenge.

Naturally, *Exchanges* has also sought to continue and develop the conversations we enjoy with our readers and contributors, despite currently being at a greater geographic remove from them all. This is as well, given one of the most enjoyable aspect of leading this title is the opportunity it affords the editors to spend time discussing research, publishing and the wide, wide world of the academy with scholars near and far. Thankfully, in recent months I have continued to enjoy numerous and occasionally lengthy conversations with potential authors. While not all of these chats will lead to submissions, more's the pity from an editorial perspective, nevertheless, the intellectual exchange from them each always stimulates. I look forward to hosting a few more of these conversations as we rush headlong through the final months of 2020, so drop me a line if you would like to have a conversation over a coffee or similar beverage. Perhaps even one day soon one enjoyed in person, in comfortable internal surrounds, rather than hosted at a measure of physical distance in the great outdoors.

Conversational Sediments

If you've been fortunate to experience one of my conference talks or presentations about the journal in the past few years, you may have been struck by the curiosity of the title's twin core objectives.¹ Yes, in keeping with our journal format, one of these is to enable an interdisciplinary discourse though encouraging 'intellectual exchange and debate across research communities' (**Exchanges, 2020a**). It is, however, our secondary goal which raises more eyebrows and prompts much discussion with audiences: to provide an 'accessible and supportive environment' through which contributors can 'develop superior academic writing and publishing skills.' (**ibid**) Where part of this goal is achieved through our editorial activities, *Exchanges* also makes contributions to various researcher training and development initiatives at Warwick, and occasionally our partner institutions too. I was fortunate recently to be invited to deliver a session about the journal as part of Warwick's Institute of Advanced

Study's acclaimed Accolade programme (Johnson, 2020). Unlike previous sessions, the online environment lent itself to facilitating of an 'Ask Me Anything' session, which I am pleased to report was well received by and engaged audience.

While modesty prevents me expanding on the answers to the questions posed, they were invaluable points of feedback from our potential contributor audience. One of the great, as yet unrealised, goals I have for the journal is to engage in more empirical evaluative work with our contributor and readership communities. Hence, these sort of, sentence case, exchanges are always invaluable in helping us to understand how, where and why the journal should be positioned in the future. It won't surprise you to hear these topics also feed into our planning for future issues and calls for contributions, as well as helping shape our online guidance too. I believe our contributors play a vital part in influencing the kind of journal we become in the future, alongside my own aspirations and that of our publishing hosts. Certainly, I welcome any thoughts along these lines at any time.

In part though, our *The Exchanges Discourse* podcast is also helping to build on our researcher developmental goal, through creating a library of first-hand opinion and insight suitable for new authors from their peers and experienced scholars. Given *Exchanges* mission has always been to enable new voices within interdisciplinary discourse, unsurprisingly my intention has always been to also incorporate a diversity of voices relating to academic publishing in the podcast. Hence, I'm thrilled we have a number of guest speakers lined up to appear in future episodes through to the end of 2020 and beyond: although I'm always keen for more. This is not to say regular listeners won't continue to hear my own melodic tones, but incorporating additional speakers helps the podcast avoid devolving into a monologue on the trials and tribulations of editorial life.

Naturally, that is unless listener feedback fervently demands it: something which I strongly doubt will occur.

I am pleased to note, as of writing, we have just released our seventh episode with more scheduled to follow in November 2020. So, if you have yet to listen, why not give it a try. You will find episodes hosted on various podcasting platforms globally.ⁱⁱ

All of which diversionary reflection takes us tangentially to the point at which we should turn our focus to the disparate voices contained within the articles within this latest issue of *Exchanges*.

Articles

In this issue, myself and the Editorial Board are once more gratified to present a selection of peer-reviewed articles on topics across a range of disciplines to our reader community. Interestingly, two clear themes of language acquisition and creativity seem strongly represented in works contained in this issue.

This time our first article comes from Hongming Fan and considers the part role-play can contribute within language teaching to enhance Chinese university students grasp of English. In this case study, entitled *The Implementation and Challenges of using Role-Play to Improve Chinese University Students' English Communicative Competence*, Fan seeks to evaluate if deploying role-play-based teaching offers authentic educational benefits or not. The study concludes that while advantages exist, clearly there are factors which can mitigate or enhance the educational impact of this approach. As such there are lessons to be appreciated by any language teachers seeking to utilise role playing approaches within their instructional wheelhouse ([1](#)).

Our next piece, entitled *Fitting In and Fighting Out* is by Urmee Chakma, and continues the theme through considering the challenges faced by non-native English speaking teachers working in English as a second language teaching (ESL). Chakma's study found ESL teachers' personal educational journeys, linguistic traditions and cultural backgrounds contributed to significant impacts on their pedagogical approaches, which often diverged from 'traditional' delivery paradigms. ESL teachers who highlighted and embraced their own linguistic 'outsider' status within their teaching practice, were seen to inspire other 'non-native' students' language learning within a classroom setting. Consequently, embracing and exposing, rather than homogenising and concealing, ESL teachers personal diversity and experiences is suggested as being beneficial in language teaching ([19](#)).

We change direction with our next piece from Mark Readman, inspired by our call last year for articles on the themes of *falsehoods, misinterpretations and factual divergence*. In an article entitled *The Comforting Nonsense of Creativity*, Readman's focuses specifically on unpacking and critiquing Jonah Lehrer's 2012 book *How Creativity Works*, through deploying discourse analysis of the literature utilised by Lehrer in establishing his own thesis. Readman's assessment serves to expose the axioms which underlie Lehrer's postulations, consequentially challenging the veracity of its assertions on how creativity functions. Nevertheless, Readman generously concludes there may yet be some crumbs of emotional comfort and insight contained within Lehrer's work, even if this requires a willing suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader ([40](#)).

From books on creativity, we turn to graphical literature, in a piece from an author associated with Warwick's Institute of Advanced Study. In *Figures of Thought in Marjane Satrapi's Persepolis and Riad Sattouf's The Arab of the Future*, Doro Wiese adopts 'Deleuze and Guattari's ideas on art's inventive function'. Wiese utilises this lens to scrutinize the two aforementioned titular graphic narratives with particular attention on concepts of truthfulness. The article suggests both of these graphical literature authors have purposefully undermined the anticipated 'autobiographical pact' with the reader as part of their narrative. Wiese also considers efforts in both works to represent a collective, rather than solely singular, narrative experience. Seemingly each authors' goal is to progress to a more complex engagement with their readership, challenging their preconceptions, thinking and perceptions (57).

Finally, we return to the creative fields to conclude the issue with a piece by Yaron Meron, entitled *Re-performing Design*. This article engages with a topic arguably underrepresented in the academy, principally due to difficulties in researching its practitioners: graphic designers. Meron examines the use of dramaturgy as an empirical tool to explore professional graphic designer's perceptions of their stakeholders (clients). Fascinatingly, the scripts from these interview engagements were then employed as performance workshops by actors, serving in turn to permit obfuscated, unexpected elements of their designers' narratives and experience to be exposed anew. The hope is the outcomes from this work can be used to inform similar explorations of other creative practice domains and communities (70).

Surprisingly, this issue we there are no conversations or critical review articles to share with you all. I would suggest this is a pity, as these are frequently very popular with many of our readers, going on our access and download metrics. Hence, I'd like to challenge anyone thinking about taking the plunge to step forward, perhaps in response to our calls below, contributing one of these pieces for next issue!

Corrections

While *Exchanges* strive for accuracy in all our publications, the possibility of the occasional error remains. Following notification and discussion with its author, we have made a very minor typographical correction to a previously published article (Lu, 2019). Our thanks to the author for pointing out the error, and their patience as we resolved it. Details of the pre-corrected text are retained in an errata to the manuscript within the journal, for historical record.

Call for Papers: AI – Panic or Panacea?

Since emotions are few and reasons many, the behavior of a crowd can be more easily predicted than the behavior of one person can. And that, in turn, means that if laws are to be developed that enable the current of history to be predicted, then one must deal with large populations, the larger the better. That might itself be the First Law of Psychohistory, the key to the study of Humanics. (Asimov, 1985)

The issue of intelligence lies at the heart of the scholarly lifeworld, although for much of history a topic focussed around a singular, human construct. Today though, algorithms, deep learning and artificial intelligence have emerged into the everyday world. From the seemingly trivial, to battling the pandemic or even fighting our future wars (**Bode, 2020; Kane, 2020; Teo & Dobson, 2020**), applications of algorithmic intelligence are increasingly shaping critical decisions and policy helping meet emerging challenges. Should we be celebrating the transition to a more ‘automated’ workplace, freeing humankind from waged-labour exploitative drudgery or does it represent an existential threat to the livelihood of millions (**Kurzgesagt, 2017**)?

Some would argue humanity has cause to fear the unchecked rise of the machines in our society. For example, the recent examination debacle in the UK undoubtedly lays still sharp in the minds of many British students and their parents (**Hao, 2020; Tolhurst, 2020**) as an example of a misapplied technological aid. Other cautionary tales of unfettered algorithm use abound in fields as diverse as space imaging and earth observation, through to the evaluation of immigration applicants or ‘future crime’ prediction (**Ferguson, 2017; McDonald, 2020; Marchisio & Smith, 2019**). Is the era of the *Minority Report* a new era of safety to be trumpeted or a greater force for oppression and fear?

Conversely, many assert artificial intelligence, machine learning and algorithms offer humanity a brave new world of opportunity, advancement and potential achievement. Deployed in the service of humanity algorithmic intelligence could help us better plan for future building and habitation needs, predict cataclysmic acts of nature or even more efficiently discover curative treatments (**Decherchi & Cavalli, 2020; Macaulay, 2020; Quach, 2020; Sun et al, 2020**). Thus, the artificially intelligent enabled future may be a far brighter one than some currently anticipate. Where, if anywhere, does ‘the truth’ lay?

Peer-Reviewed Submissions

Hence, for the issue of *Exchanges* due for publication in Autumn 2021, we invite authors to submit original, exciting and insightful manuscripts for peer-reviewed publication consideration inspired by any aspect of this theme. We welcome papers written for a general academic audience

exploring or reviewing the science, application and implementation of machine learning, artificial intelligence or algorithms within a broader societal setting. We also welcome manuscript submissions from the humanities, arts and social sciences dealing with the ethics, perceptions, interpretations and representations of these issues too. While submissions are invited from all disciplinary perspectives, we would be especially pleased to receive manuscripts from previously under-represented fields or geographic regions within *Exchanges*.ⁱⁱⁱ

Critical Reflection & Conversation Submissions

First-time or early career authors may also wish to consider submitting either a critical reflection or conversational piece inspired or informed by these themes. Such pieces would serve to provide much needed background to the topic for a general academic audience. For example, critical considerations of the impacts, and especially those explicitly drawing on interdisciplinary methods, methodologies or insights, would be particularly welcome. Additionally, we would be delighted to consider conversational pieces. These augmented interviews could be with key figures, thinkers and workers within any area of AI, machine learning or algorithmic intelligence, or alternatively focus on those whose lives may have been reshaped through the deployment of these technological solutions. Critical reflections and conversations only undergo editorial review ahead of publication and hence are especially suitable for first-time or early career authors.

Deadlines

**Submission deadline for peer-reviewed articles:
1st May 2021**

**Submission deadline for conversations and critical reflections:
31st August February 2021**

All manuscripts should be submitted via our online journal portal, which will guide authors through the submission process.

exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/submission/wizard

The details of this call will also be available on *Exchanges'* site. Authors are encouraged to contact the Editor-in-Chief ahead of submission to discuss their article ideas or outlines: however, this is not a prerequisite for submission. Please see our author guidance for more information on writing for *Exchanges* (2020b).

Call for Papers: Open & Ongoing

Additionally, *Exchanges* welcomes submissions throughout the year on any subject, with no deadline, in addition to the above call. Manuscripts accepted as articles will be published in the next available issue of the journal. We therefore invite original, unpublished, manuscript contributions from researchers or practitioners based within any discipline, working anywhere globally, which fulfil our standard [article format requirements](#).

Open Call: No submission deadline

We are happy to consider research focussed or review articles which will undergo peer-review. We also welcome submissions of interviews with key scholars or critical reflections on important scholarly events, conferences or crucial new texts, each of which will undergo internal (editorial review) scrutiny only. More information on all of these article formats requirements are available in our author guidelines. Likewise, the Editor-in-Chief and Editorial Board members are happy to explore article ideas further with potential authors.

Submissions

As *Exchanges* has a core mission to support the development and dissemination of research by early career and post-graduate researchers, we are especially pleased to receive manuscripts from emerging scholars or first-time authors. All manuscripts should be submitted via our online journal portal, which will guide authors through the submission process.

exchanges.warwick.ac.uk/submission/wizard

Fees, Access & Author Rights

Exchanges is a diamond open access (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2013), scholar-led journal, which means there are no author fees or reader subscription charges. Authors also retain copyright over their work but grant the journal first rights of publication as a submission requirement.

Readership: Advice for Authors

As an interdisciplinary journal with a wide scholarly readership, authors should seek to write their manuscripts to be suitable for a general academic audience. Wherever possible, consideration should be given to unpack, delineate and expand on any potentially 'disciplinary niche' language, terms or acronyms used. Ideally, authors should seek to incorporate some element of interdisciplinary thinking or perspectives, or

outline the broader scholarly relevance of their work, within the manuscript.

Exchanges has an expressly multidisciplinary, global and largely academic readership, and as such, have strong interests in work which encompasses or straddles disciplinary boundaries. Manuscripts providing an introduction, overview or useful entry point to key disciplinary trends, discovery and discourse are often among the most frequently accessed publications in the journal. Therefore, prospective authors are strongly encouraged to consider tailoring their manuscripts, narrative, thought and analysis in a mode which addresses this broad audience. For interviews and critical reflections, authors are especially advised to highlight the importance of disciplinary discourse or interviewees' scholarly contributions to the global academy, society and the public at large.

Forthcoming Issues

The next issue of *Exchanges* is anticipated to be our second special issue volume, containing work celebrating and inspired by the Utopian Studies Society conference on *Utopia, Dystopia and Climate Change (USS, 2019)*. We hope to bring you this issue early in 2021. This volume will be followed by two further special issues, the first of which continues to be developed in collaboration with SOAS University of London and Oxford University and will focus on the theme of *fictional representations of nerds and loneliness*. Our other special issue will be drawing on the work of students and scholars who have been exploring the history and student experience relating to the arts faculty, in collaboration with the *Then and Now: Arts at Warwick* research project and exhibition (**Warwick, 2020**). These issues are tentatively scheduled for the first half of 2021, and I hope to be able to confirm the anticipated publication dates of each more precisely as we enter the new year.

The next regular issue of *Exchanges* is scheduled for spring 2021. While the deadline for article contributions has all but passed as we go to press, we will still be accepting critical reviews, essays or conversations (interviews) through into late March 2021. Hence, there is still plenty of time for readers to contribute to this issue, which will hopefully contain works inspired by our *Challenge and Opportunity* call for papers.

I hope too that when we meet again in these pages, we will all be in a far more agreeable position personally, socially and physically than we are today. Enjoy the issue.

Acknowledgements

As always, my thanks to our authors and reviewers for their vital intellectual labour contributions towards creating this issue. Without you, the ability to produce a quality-assured, peer-reviewed, scholar-led publication would quite simply not be possible. Thanks also to our reader community, who play a key role in developing the debates and insights raised in each issue. I hope you find this issue as valuable and informative as previous volumes.

Not every manuscript submitted for publication successfully transits our quality assurance processes. Consequently, like an iceberg, much editorial, reviewer and authorial labour hides below the surface of the volume you see before you. Hence, my particular thanks to everyone on the Editorial Board, for their efforts on all the pieces we consider, including the ones that sadly don't quite make the grade. I am also grateful to the Board for their professional input and comments, along with their dedication, focus and commitment they bring to producing this interdisciplinary research organ. I would like to particularly welcome our two newest Editorial Board Members **Dr Giulia Champion** and **Nora Castle**, who have graduated from our associate editor programme still keen to participate further with the title. I would also like to wish **Dr Marie Murphy**, who has stepped down from Board at this point, well in her future endeavours.

Practically, my thanks to Rob Talbot and Julie Robinson at the Warwick University Library, and Fiona O'Brien of the *Reinvention* journal for their continued guidance, technical insights and stimulating conversations. I'd also like to acknowledge the regular lockdown discussions between myself and the IAS' *John Burden* for acting as an invaluable sounding board and continuing ray of positivity during this remote working time.

Finally, my grateful thanks to our publisher, the [Institute of Advanced Study](#) at the University of Warwick for their ongoing financial and strategic backing for *Exchanges*.

Continuing the Conversation

Exchanges has a range of routes for keeping abreast of our latest news, developments and calls for papers. In-between issues in particular, you may wish to listen to our growing range of podcasts and blog posts, to continue the interdisciplinary exchange of experience which underlies our operations. Please do join in the conversation whenever and wherever you can, as we always value hearing the thoughts of our author and readership communities.

Editorial Blog: blogs.warwick.ac.uk/exchangesias/
Linked.In: www.linkedin.com/groups/12162247/
Podcast: anchor.fm/exchangesias
Twitter: [@ExchangesIAS](https://twitter.com/ExchangesIAS)

As Editor-in-Chief I am also pleased to discuss potential publications, collaborative opportunities or invites to talk further about *Exchanges* and our activities. Contact me via the email at the start, or via the social media platforms.

Editorial Board Members

Dr Gareth J Johnson, Managing Editor-in-chief, Institute of Advanced Study, University of Warwick

Nora Castle, English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick, UK

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Gareth has been the Editor-in-Chief of *Exchanges* since early 2018. Along with holding a doctorate in cultural academic publishing practices (Nottingham Trent), he also possesses various other degrees in biomedical technology (Sheffield Hallam), information management (Sheffield) and research practice (NTU). His varied career includes extensive experience in academic libraries, project management and applied research roles. Currently, he is also the Chief Operating Officer of the Mercian Collaboration academic library consortium, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. His professional and research interests focus on power-relationships within and evolution of scholarly academic publication practice, viewed from within social theory and political economic frameworks. He is an outspoken proponent for greater academic agency through scholar-led publishing, and an expert in distributed team management and effective communication practices.



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Endnotes

ⁱ I will be speaking at the *Munin Conference on Scholarly Publishing*, hosted remotely by UiT: The Arctic University of Norway, in mid-November 2020, should you want to hear me talk about the journal in the near future. Details of the event can be found here: <https://site.uit.no/muninconf/>.

ⁱⁱ You can find every episode of *The Exchanges Discourse* online on Anchor.fm, along with many other podcasting platforms around the world by searching for it by name. Comments, suggested topics or guests are always welcome via email. Listen to the episodes here: <https://anchor.fm/exchangesias>

ⁱⁱⁱ Please see our back issues for an idea of the areas and regions which have, to date, been less well represented within our pages.