It is nightfall in 2020 and The Clash drones over the central monitors... "London calling to the faraway towns... now that war is declared and battle come down."

Smile, you're on 2020 Tell-Lie-Vision and every Slim Shady, Jr. you meet looks ominously white and passes any retinal exam that Scotland Yard and the Omni-Global Surveillance Network (OGSN) deploy. It is 2020 and we now recognize that “they” were in “our” classes and on our subways all along. How could “we” know? "London calling to the underworld... come out of the cupboard, all you boys and girls."

The machine in classroom seven is conspicuously preconscious. It’s actually a kiosk but they call it the machine. There are two needles on the gauge, mimicking analog conditions. The code governs parameters, but in reality there is no limit. Maybe it’s eleven. But when a needle hits the right number on the gauge the teacher turns off the machine. And then that’s it. Everything pauses. Security sweeps through and it’s the same thing, everyday. The needles revert to four and she trips the machine back on. It’s useless she thinks but is nonetheless grateful to at least have a kiosk, sluggish or not. It ain’t what they promised but then again, nothing is. When they installed the machine in classroom seven it merely cast a shadow on the past (Willeford, 1963/1973). "London calling..."

"The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel... Friday night on the Ninsei. He passed yakitori stands and massage parlours, a franchised coffee shop called Beautiful Girl, the electronic thunder of an arcade. He stepped out of the way to let a dark-suited sarariman by, spotting the Mitsubishi-Genentech logo tattooed across the back of the man's right hand" (Gibson, 1984, pp. 3, 10). United States patent number 5,945,577 gave Advanced Cell Technologies, Genentech and Syngenta a monopoly in the early 2010s and Mitsubishi's robots were perfectly
sized for the biotech implants. Property rights claims on just 12,000 gene sequences control the fate of this new era of cyborgs and capitorgs. Once you’re jacked in, you can’t tell the wannabe pures from the borgs, bots and droids. But it doesn’t matter. You’re not going to get an honest answer anyhow.

All the pirate cloners, hackers, downloaders and freeloaders are making a mockery of the lawyers and legal counsellors. They swarm on each node and propagate every crime imaginable. "The Unknown Minor"— remember her or him?— is still at large and dropped a bombshell in the copyright wars of 2017 by cracking and releasing the code to The Subliminal Anarchist’s Cookbook. Recall that the SAC, which accounted for the collapse and demolition of the global psyche, was rescinded and outlawed in 2016 when the Depression Matrix Squad busted a ring of juveniles sabotaging master security feeds in Amsterdam, Johannesburg and Toronto. This was what they call terminator knowledge. It was about that time when they installed the machine in classroom seven. It is now 2020 and the conceptual safety nets we once cherished have all but failed. Rosy as they sounded, they rang hollow…

As Lyotard feared, albeit with more general reference to the status of knowledge, lifelong learning, the darling of educators for three decades grew corrupt and increasingly commodified. She lasted but a generation (James & Petrina, under review). All those redeemers— the arts, humanities, religions, sciences and technologies— tasted power, caved in and sold out. The merchants of knowledge were little more than pawns of promise, prophet and progress.

Those quaint, inflated hopes were hitched onto that grand fiction of sustainable economic growth, which we now realize was bad psychology at best. The neocons, with their "Project for the New American Century," deferred the depression into the future for two decades but then it hit, not suddenly but hard, in 2011. The grind of the economy to that moment was excruciating. We look back with amazement, wondering why we were so gullible and impulsive as we climbed and matched personal debt with national debt, pound for pound, yen for yen, dollar for dollar. Kondratieff analysts predicted the depression but there was not much anyone wanted to do. There is no one left to blame, as most of the spin-doctors comfortably spun their way out of the mess, retiring to the gated compounds on the islands and in the southwestern United States. Rethinking a collapsed world economy is no small feat and only Africa is in a position to offer anti-capitalist options to global economics. Remarkably, although it is what Rachel Carson anticipated, and Lovelock predicted, Gaia is ascendent with the Earth recovering and there are reports of the Amazon choking off roads, abandoned timber trucks and backhoes, reminiscent of the jungle's stranglehold on ancient temples in Tibet. It is nevertheless very hot and biohazards threaten corporate food supplies.

In retrospect, we look back to the decade of the 2000s as the Second Age of Madness. But this hardly captures the fix we made on the future. It’s now the fix we are in…
Welcome to the Special Issue

So, what happens when you are frightened by educational insights? What happens when Artificial Educational Insights (AEI) collide with a common sense of fear? What happens when we realize that all those prophets of hope were purveyors of doom—when the merchants of knowledge were a conspiracy? When sex is all that is left to sell? When sexed up reports and educational systems fail? Or when the world changes, and you know it, and the sacred suddenly became profane? What do we do when habitat is artifact, organic is synthetic and the bankrupt but delusion-saturated arts, humanities, religions, sciences, and technologies misled us? When no one cares? When out of balance is forever? When we've crossed the boundary—all boundaries? When you are past the last post? When you are a part of it, you wished for it, and it happened? When what is left is not what is right? When you wake up to realize that maybe it mattered. These insights—these artificial educational insights—of today prefigure the machine in classroom seven, circa 2020...

This special issue of Educational Insights brings together a range of scholars to explore various aspects of artificiality. Together, we explore how the artificial offers up fecundity or profundity, rejecting sensibilities that (still) disapprovingly dismiss the artificial as insincere or without spontaneity. The vast majority of the authors (of images, sound and text) are graduate students, who demonstrate the nuances and selectivity necessary for advanced scholarship in new media and technology. There are some technologies that we ought to reject, others to embrace and still others demand a poststructural approach.

In this issue, Soowook Kim analyzes these politics of technology, and challenges educators to wake up from the (p)ell of the proprietary and rethink their educational philosophies through open source. To be sure, Kim argues, open source is a political choice inasmuch as it is a technological choice. Jennifer Peterson reminds us that digital refers to the extremities of the body and juxtaposes this realization against the disembodied virtual and an increasingly anorexic body of the commons. Through c/a/t/ographic exploration of how teaching and technology collude to create to contain space, she asks whether the digital can account for this collusion and generate different forms of space. Although the commodification of fairy tales has a long history, Jason Wallin argues, it is only through cinematic representation that gender in these narratives is set in code and frame. As his students recognize, this current era of the virtual fairy tale amps up and signifies consumption as the only moral worthy of the story. David Blades and George Richardson question whether education is prepared to admit androids into the queue of assimilated and immigrated citizens. Even when androids pass our standards of citizenship, are we ethically prepared to accept their expertise and presence in the annals and halls of beings? Or, even if bots are given limited roles for mundane tasks such as counseling, as Karen Brennan asks, are we prepared to accept their insinuation into our everyday lives? To experiment with this question, Karen created a chatbot with which teachers can converse over their emotional labour. She theorizes the limits of her power to program and code these
interactions. Lauren Hall argues that the "tyranny of exclusionary thinking" underwrites oppression and war and provides four "rooms" for rethinking and meditating on exclusion. Her companion media, also featured in this issue, challenges those who visit these rooms to turn consciousness, spirituality and technology toward peace. Yoko Namita explores the ways that corporate media education materials threaten to commercialize media literacy. She analyzes Channel One's presence in American schools and asks whether inoculation against is now indoctrination for the corporate order. Juyun Kim and Stephen Petrina argue that gaming raises moral questions about artificial life (AL) rights and demonstrate various ways that The Sims players blur boundaries between AL and real life (RL). A-life dramas unfolding at this time are ultimately about increasingly blurred boundaries between humans and machines and, as such, offer rich opportunities for educators to explore ethics and responsibilities with their students.

We provide a "Reports from the Field" section that features work from UBC's Faculty of Education's Seeds initiative and a conversation over technology and literacy. In the Seeds report, teacher education students, graduate students and faculty dialogue over their experiences and journey technology in teacher education. Vetta Vratulis reports on her conversation with a colleague about the trials and tribulations of using various technologies for teaching literacy. The text section of the special issue concludes with reader's responses from Jiryung Ahn and Betty Rideout. Their conversation with McLuhan's The Medium is the Massage and Understanding Media helps us reinterpret these texts through current concerns and new media. Marcia Braundy's response to Sadie Plant's Zeros + Ones reminds of how completely interdependent is gender and the machine.

Feng introduces the balance of scholars and their productions in the Media (S(cr)een and Poetic Injustice sections, reminding us of the historical import of this special Artificial Educational Insights (AeI) issue at the turn of the century, coincident with the threshold of Third Millennial reservations, hopes and visions, wherein intermediate with the sense of decay are also hints of machinic birth. How might these early symbols of the posthuman condition that we theorize as virtual dystopia speak to future academics? How will the turn be understood, as captured in these fleeting synesthesia of images, when greenery yet punctuates antiquated urban skylines and everywhere are found vestigial traces of the past—as the first primitive forms of real virtuality blend in, to blur lines between illusion and reality? In what ways might this imagery be archived and linked in cybraries or interpreted by future masses? In our curricular notes to the future, we situate our readers within a lived context through phenomenological questions emanating from the always already that infuses the everyday past with questions of hermeneutical import.

We are grateful to the outstanding contributors of this issue and the provocative questions they raise for scholarship on new media and technology. Students from the New Media Research Lab, including Karen Brennan, Lauren Hall, Juyun Kim, Soowook Kim and Dai Kojima, were especially helpful in designing and formatting this issue. Jenny Arntzen, Don Krug and Martin Elliott were also quite helpful in this regard. We also thank Lynn Fels, Editor of Educational Insights, for her support in making Artificial Educational Insights happen.
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