

## Editor's introduction: research as mediation

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I open this first issue of 2019 on a joyous note, which speaks about work that is rarely acknowledged, as well as why this work is so important to me and to our authors.

It was sent to me as an e-mail from Israeli researcher and bioethicist Baruch Velan, whose article appears in the issue, shortly after we corresponded about the second round of revisions that produced his final draft. He has, of course, given me permission to reprint this:

Dear Mariaelena,

I have been around for a while (I am 72 years old) and have had various experiences with publishing. The interaction with you was by far the best I had. You are probably aware of the notable criticism that is being directed nowadays toward the institution of peer reviewed publishing (rightfully). In your work as an editor, you are reinstituting trust in the scientific publishing system. You have demonstrated that the real aim here to create a fruitful interaction between authors editors and reviewers for the advent of science. For me personally, this was a new learning experience in a field that I am new to (not trivial at my age) and I am grateful for this.

I will be glad to assist the Journal in the future, my real expertise is in the field of vaccinology (public-authority interactions).

Baruch

Thank you, Baruch. And thank you to the authors who continue to submit work to *QRMH*, and who work so patiently to attend to reviewers' careful and often feedback and to my additional requests for revisions. Sometimes, if we are lucky, this opens up conversations (on Skype and phone!) that editors of more established journals would not have the luxury to have.

In contemplating the connections between the five studies in this issue, and especially in considering the multimodal approach taken by Johnson *et al.*,<sup>1</sup> I cannot but attend to the fact that communication is mediation. This means that identities, health, healthcare, experiences, learning, stigma, practices (some of the subject matter taken up by the scholars in this issue) are accomplishments of language, voices, writing, bodies, gestures, in space/time continuums, and technologies in much the same way as telephones, Twitter, and the computers from which we type our comments in support communities. They are resources for doing things together.<sup>2</sup> For making, unmaking, remaking the universe we inhabit.

Our theoretical approaches are also mediation, for there is no view from nowhere,<sup>3</sup> no pure seeing, and therefore we are not free from interpreting our data and making other speakers into subjects of study and what they tell us into data and those data into written texts to be circulated in conversation (or at least we hope).

This is but brief introduction to five excellent pieces that deal with diverse topics: how Instagram connects and thus pragmatically constitutes the experiences of women who undergo *in-vitro* fertilization; how the experiential learning model is involved in students' understanding of coursework in ethics;<sup>4</sup> the stigma and marginalization that low-income women in rural communities in the MidWest endure with respect to their weight;<sup>5</sup> the collaboration between researchers and practitioners recommended by Britt and Englebert<sup>6</sup> to overcome stigma experienced by patients suffering from IBD and finally, Velan and Pinchas-Mizrachi's<sup>7</sup> phenomenologically informed examination of the psychological challenges of transition from the Orthodox Jewish community into a novel social context. I invite our readers as much as the authors to consider how the experiences (including their own as researchers) are always mediated by communication, and how this consideration may allow for technologies of metacommunication and new spaces for conversation. Perhaps this brief commentary is a start.

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