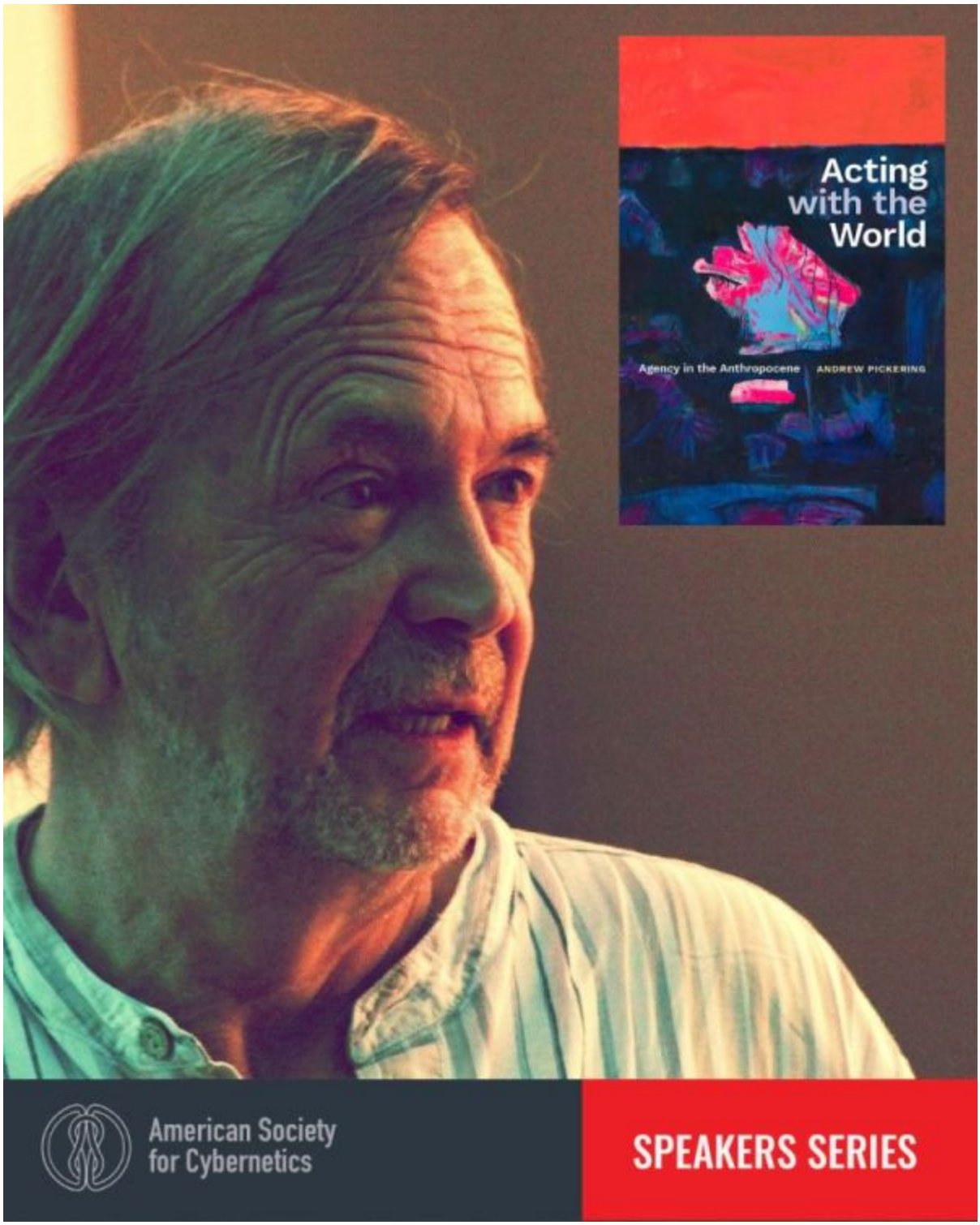
ANDREW PICKERING – ACTING WITH THE WORLD





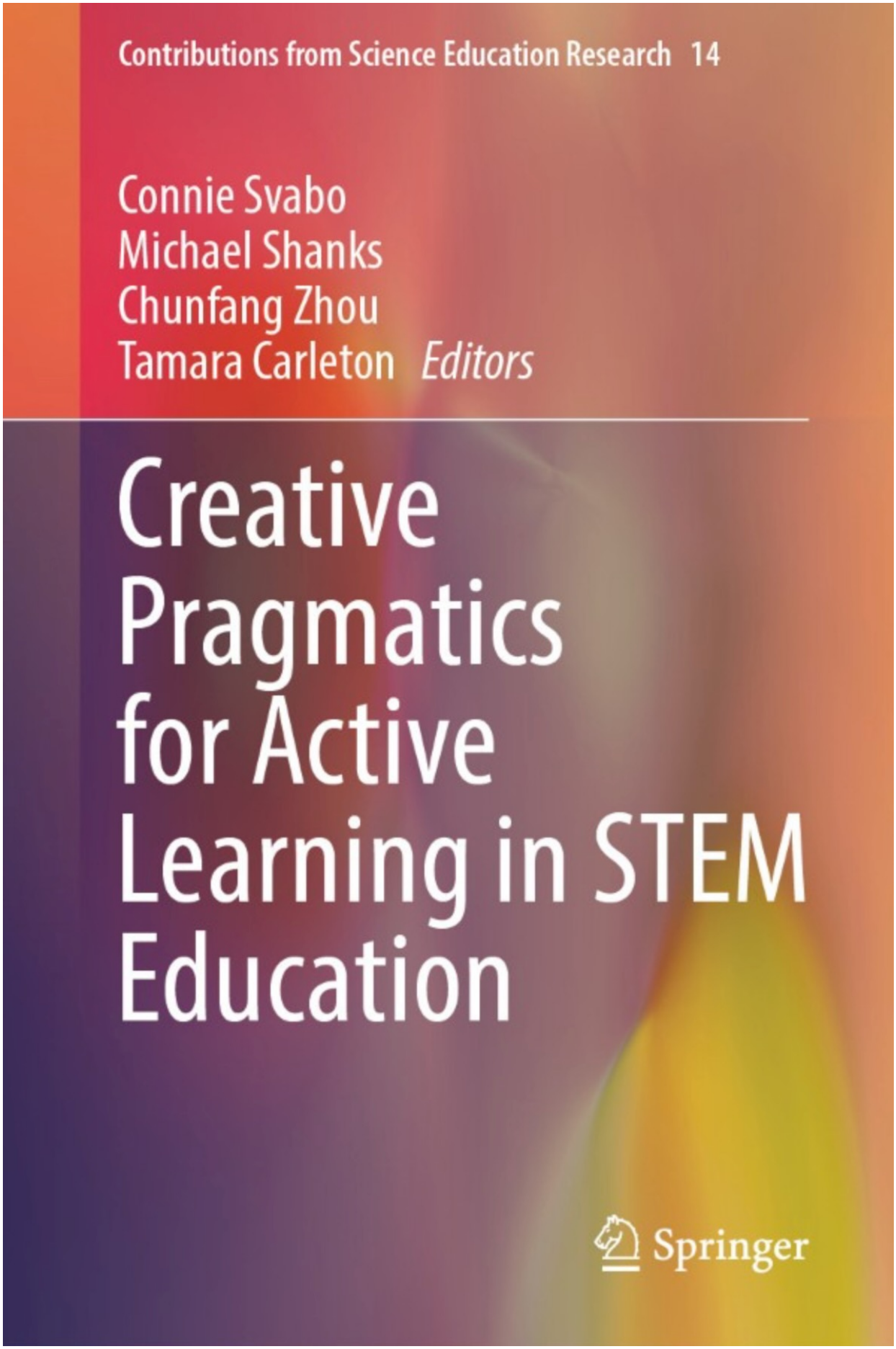
In a complex world of uncertainty, precarity, risk, and trouble, how do we conceive and teach science?

I got to read Andrew Pickering's new book today – *Acting with the World* [Link]. I have long admired his philosophically-informed studies of scientific practice. With such elegant and compelling clarity he makes the case for a sustainable science to be founded on a balanced, symmetrical relationship with what we seek to know. In contrast to our usual practice of acting-on the world, Andrew proposes a performance model for knowledge where one **acts-with** human, nonhuman and more-than-human agencies. And he has great case studies to show just what he means and what this entails – flood control on the Mississippi River, ecosystem restoration on the Colorado River, the Room for the River project and rewilding in the Netherlands, natural farming in Japan, Aboriginal fire techniques in Australia, and Amazonian shamanism.

Just back in May [Link] I was recalling a conversation over 20 years ago with Lew Binford about archaeological science. We agreed that the key was to conceive of science as process, as constructing, building, engineering, *creating* knowledge. I summarized this by saying that archaeologists tell stories *with* the past, rather than *of* the past. This is exactly Andrew's point. Rather than working *on* the past, archaeologists work *with* what remains. This critically shifts attention to what we do and away from what one might claim to represent – the past.

This point is also the basis for our just published edited collection *Creative Pragmatics for Active Learning in STEM Education* [Link], as I mentioned in that posting in May. And I was delighted to see that Andrew ends his book by recommending ours as the model for how to teach this kind of science – acting-with-the-world.

(The project for a creative pragmatics has its foundations in Stanford's design programs and in the projects and classes run through my studio/lab [Link], my research group *Foresight and Innovation* [Link] and Connie Svabo's research center at University Southern Denmark [Link]).


Contributions from Science Education Research 14
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