Editorial: Postqualitative Curations and Creations

Introduction

This special issue of *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology* offers a series of curations¹ and creations from emergent scholars within the equally emergent field of postqualitative research. In this moment, it could be argued that postqualitative inquiry is a promise—a question—a hint of the many things that research might become. Or perhaps all of these things at once and also many others. There are, it seems at times, infinite possibilities. As St. Pierre (2011) expressed, "My desire is for post inquiry to remain *unstable* as we create different articulations, assemblages, becomings, mash-ups of inquiry given the entanglement that emerges in our different projects" (p. 623).

Importantly, postqualitative inquiry is a relatively new phenomenon in research. Following a handbook chapter that appeared less than a decade ago (St. Pierre, 2011), postqualitative inquiry since has continued to proliferate (e.g., Lather & St. Pierre, 2013; St. Pierre, 2013, 2014; St. Pierre, Jackson, & Mazzei, 2016). Though it is a recent turn, it now has existed long enough so that it is not simply an additional way of thinking, but, for some of us, the *first* way of thinking. We encountered research differently from the beginning as postqualitative inquiry provided openings for our 'untraining' (St. Pierre, 2016). When you begin by learning methodology without methodology (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016) as it is being written, for example, something unexpected is bound to happen. The contributions in this special issue are part of that something unexpected: they stem from the ideas, curiosities, conversations, and experimentations that, for the editors and authors, continue to unfold. Our movements here are works in progress, and, as such, are not intended to provide a representative snapshot of what postqualitative inquiry is or who is doing precisely what. Rather, the issue might be thought as a collection of moving images, artifacts, affects, and vignettes, much like Ernest Hemingway's depictions of 1920s Paris in *A Moveable Feast*.

In *A Moveable Feast,* Hemingway (1964/1996) begins 'The People of the Seine' with the simple observation that, "There were many ways of walking down to the river from the top of the rue Cardinal Lemoine where we lived" (p. 37). And perhaps this is, in a sense, what we are doing here: finding many ways of walking down to the river from where we live—in this case, our current intellectual residence in postqualitative inquiry. We may take different paths as we approach the river, and we also may enter and exit at different locations at different points in time. But we are, in these ways, walking together. As he describes:

I would walk along the quais when I had finished work or when I was trying to think something out. It was easier to think if I was walking and doing something or seeing people doing something or seeing people doing something that they understood. (p. 38)

Although we do not claim to understand—for we are also still trying to think things out—we continue to think and do together. Like Hemingway, we are walking with other writers in a delightful and exciting time and find ourselves here, now, together. Yet, unlike Hemingway, we are not ex-pats who have chosen to leave one country for another. (Or at least not yet.) We have not made a scholarly change of

address from, say, traditional methodological procedures to the provocations of postqualitative research. These are not relocations; they are initial beginnings.

They have been beginnings, though, that have intentionally left rules by the wayside. As a result, many questions linger regarding what postqualitative inquiry is and how it might be done. We believe this is ideal and hope that postgualitative research continues to remain adventurously open and evolve with sense of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that begins and begins again (Foucault, 1990). At the same time, though, there are two things that we do not wish to suggest. The first involves the misconception that anything goes in postqualitative inquiry. It does not. We draw a sharp methodological distinction between 'make it as you go, as you need it' and 'do whatever you want.' The former is contingent, situational, and ethical; it also is responsive and responsible. The latter potentially fosters nihilisms that do nothing either for or with our more-than-human world. In these ways, there is a contrast between 1) troubling something in the hopes of making it better and 2) undermining something simply because it can or might be done. We situate ourselves firmly within the first line of thinking, both with regard to the ways in which postqualitative research pushes against qualitative research and with regard to the ways in which qualitative research pushes back. This brings us to the second thing we do not wish to suggest, and that is that postqualitative inquiry has yet to reach its full potential. We argue strongly that it has not. We suggest that postqualitative inquiry also has the (largely unrealized) capacity to act in a morethan-human world that demands a more-than ethical and political responsibility to it. Postqualitative inquiry may not be perfect, but at this moment in time, we think it still has potential.

Rapid Reconfigurations

Postqualitative inquiry is a field that continues to develop rapidly. Not only have there been many, many articles written about it, related fields such as posthumanism and the 'new' materialisms have emerged at the same time. We find some aspects of this work to be necessary and invigorating, while admitting that we now approach other aspects of this work with much more caution. Yet, we attempt to be generative regardless of whether we are pointing to what has been helpful or whether we are humbly suggesting future considerations and directions for the field. For however much postqualitative inquiry has been our initial start, it also is a label that others have been quicker to place on us than we have been to claim. It may seem strange, then, that we began this introduction by locating ourselves within postqualitative research or, for that matter, that we are even editing a special issue on this topic. We think so, too, and have gone back and forth about this. In part, this is because postqualitative research is far from settled. In fact, it can be quite unsettling, even—and especially—for those of us who are thought to do it.

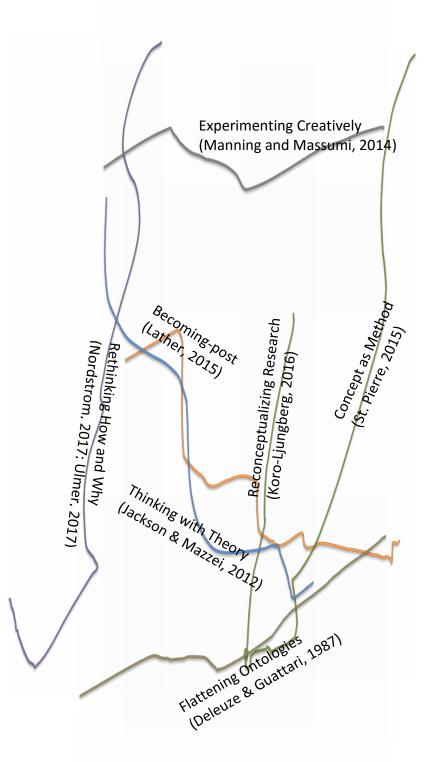
So rather than smooth this introduction over and pretend that postqualitative research is one thing or that we feel one way about it, we allow the introduction to go back and forth, too. We share this uncertainty because we think it is important. After all, uncertainty, or at least the opportunity for less certainty, is said to be a hallmark of postqualitative inquiry (Lather, 2015). There are others, we suggest, which we detail below in what we view as the larger assemblage of postqualitative research.

Assembling Together

We situate postqualitative research as an agentic assemblage that spurs further versions of postqualitative research. This is not unlike Colebrook's (2002) conceptualization of literary theory as a social process, in which "Social institutes or 'social machines' as Deleuze and Guattari describe them, are collective extensions or 'assemblages' that extend experience" (p. 81). As more and more researchers engage in postqualitative research from the unique politics of their places (e.g., departments, institutions, and countries), ideas about postqualitative research are formed as these researchers make

connections with the existing lines (or literature) of postqualitative research. Different imaginaries and realms of postqualitative research are generated as researchers get to work on these lines. These imaginaries and realms constitute the assemblage of postqualitative research, a body of research that refuses normalization and categorization.

At the same time, however, we acknowledge that postqualitative research may appear as an indistinguishable assemblage or entanglement for some readers. The lines within may be clearer to those have spent time with postqualitative research, but less clear to those who may have come across this special issue and are perhaps curious. We suggest that several considerations have emerged over the last decade that can provide a helpful—yet flexible—framing for postqualitative inquiries. Because contributors within this special issue have taken up all of these considerations, we outline them below to situate pieces that follow. We made the following graphic to illustrate how each consideration is not a singular way of doing postqualitative research (See Figure 1). Rather, each consideration carries with it ideas from other considerations. These considerations become further entangled as researchers put them to work in their own projects. Together, they move and flow to constitute a postqualitative assemblage.



We offer the following descriptions primarily to those who want to know more, are attempting to do it on their own, or are simply trying to make a bit more sense of it all. We recognize that entering any field can be difficult, particularly one that seems to progress at faster and faster rates; our aim is to be helpful to those who are beginning. Though we appreciate the dangers of trying to explain any field in a review that purports to tell even a limited part of its own history, we are more concerned with the dangers of taking up inquiry methodologies without considering how and why they came to exist. So in taking this risk, we do not claim to provide a comprehensive view of the field. Postqualitative inquiry is many things at once, and our take may differ from what our own students, peers, mentors, and colleagues elsewhere might express. It is always changing, and we may already be (and likely already are) behind.

Thinking with theories. In 2012, Jackson and Mazzei published the book, *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research: Viewing Data Across Multiple Perspectives.* It quickly reshaped the field. In this text, the authors draw from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) 'plugging in' to consider one set of data through multiple theoretical and conceptual frames. In taking up the philosophical writings of Barad, Spivak, Derrida, Foucault, and Butler, the authors provide useful summaries of these theorists and their respective concepts. In considering how data might be then thought and analyzed through multiple theoretical perspectives, Jackson and Mazzei illustrate the possibilities of thinking with theory

Becoming post–. One theoretical idea that continues to hold influence within post-inquiry is that of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). It permeates much of postqualitative research. Becoming has as much to do with what is done, however, as what is undone. As Lather (2015) states, postqualitative research in an undoing that occurs as "the passage of qualitative research beyond itself moves it deeper into complication and accountability to complexity and the political value of not being so sure" (p. 107). In this way, becoming is imbued with uncertainty. Rather than attempt to hold aspects of life as fixed (as if this were either possible or desirable), becoming holds open speculative and generative futures. It allows us to consider what we might attempt next in inquiry, and, in the process, what we might think and who and how we might become.

Flattening ontologies. No doubt, Deleuze and Guattari's (1980; 1987; 1994) theories have been critical to postqualitative research. For example, their 'logic of the and' (1987) further disrupts the stability of the verb "to be." When ontology is supple and contingent and expanding rather than immobile and stagnant, inquiries can—in a Deleuzian sense—become experimental. Whitehead's (1978) procedural ontology and Manning and Massumi's (2014) research-creations similarly encourage methodological experimentations. In doing this work, researchers increasingly experiment in assemblages and study how they function, not what they mean. This then enables researchers to creatively combine different aspects of an assemblage to produce different affects and effects.

Turning to concepts as method. In 2015a, St. Pierre argued for using "theory(ies) and/or the concept(s) ... instead of a pre-determined research method" (p. 90). Rather than relying on formulaic steps to guide how parts of a study might unfold (ex., research question, methods, analysis, etc.), concept as method turns to theory as the primary design element. Studies then focus upon how a particular theory or theoretical concept lives in the world. This extends into how humans and nonhumans are both produced by it and are producing different iterations of that theory or concept.

Experimenting creatively. Through their work with SenseLab, Manning and Massumi (2014) experiment creatively through research-creations, or "an exploratory openness in this activity of producing new modes of thought and action" (p. 90). Based in speculative pragmatism, research-creations practice an imminent critique, invent techniques, study relations, and play with affective tendencies. In doing so, Manning and Massumi advocate enabling constraints, or ways to enable experiences through techniques. These techniques aim not only to produce affects and create different relations, but to make different thoughts and actions become possible. This has led to increasing opportunities for infusions from arts-based research, as well as a proliferation of creative experimental works in the posts-.

Reconceptualizing research. Reconceptualizing research is another hallmark of postqualitative research. Sometimes this charge is explicitly stated, such as in the scope and title of this journal, *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology*, or in the title of the creative and experimental book, *Reconceptualizing Research Methodology: Methodologies without Methodology* (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). Sometimes it is less explicitly stated. Here, questions that re-envision data (e.g., Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013) and analysis (e.g., St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014) come to mind. Significantly, many reconceptualizations intra-act (Barad, 2007) with the lines mentioned above to generate different conceptualizations of research, what they look like in practice, and what they produce. Thinking with theory, becoming post–, flattening ontologies, experimenting creatively, and reconceptualizing research are not discrete practices.

Rethinking how and why. More recently, we (Susan and Jasmine) have begun to consider how and why we go about postqualitative and other forms of inquiry. To be transparent about the ways in which approach our own practices, we tentatively include two here: *antimethodology* (Nordstrom, 2017) and *Slow methodologies* (Ulmer, 2017).

The first emerged when Susan published, "Antimethodology: Postqualitative Generative Conventions" (2017). Extending the threads above and drawing from the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, she argues for an inventive and responsive methodology to the assemblages in which researchers find themselves. She returns to events from previous research about 11 family history genealogists and the objects they use to construct their ancestors; she then puts habits and concepts in a line of continuous variation such that each habit and concept carries with it a history, present iterations, and possible futures. She asks that researchers consider the history of habits and concepts of research that are never apart from how they manifest in research projects. In its effect, antimethodology is a verb, it is a doing, a practice, an exercise of strategy, and so on. It is ongoing practice that attends to the history and politics of research through generative conventions.

The second—Slow methodologies—suggest generative ways to respond to more recent challenges in research. Namely, Jasmine (2017) describes how adopting a Slow ontology (or a Slow sense of being) enables researchers to reconsider how and why they go about producing scholarship in an era that demands speed. She identifies writing as a potential site of creative intervention—one that might be explored within a broader Slow philosophy (Honoré, 2004). She argues that when scholars pause to rethink how they choose to perform and live research, they might begin to think and write in ways that are more attuned and responsive to their more-than-human surroundings. This involves a different set of priorities than producing scholarship simply for its own sake. It is in Slowing down that researchers might work toward the spaces in which they desire, while also contributing to a better world. Like antimethodology, this is generative work.

Taken together, these are a few of the threads that have emerged within the postqualitative assemblage. Thinking with theories, becoming post–, flattening ontologies, turning to concepts as method, experimenting creatively, reconceptualizing research, and rethinking how and why are the lines to which postqualitative scholars often return. The contributions that follow both work within, and extend beyond, these lines and threads—postqualitative research indeed is an assemblage that continues to become.

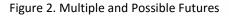
Preview of Contributions

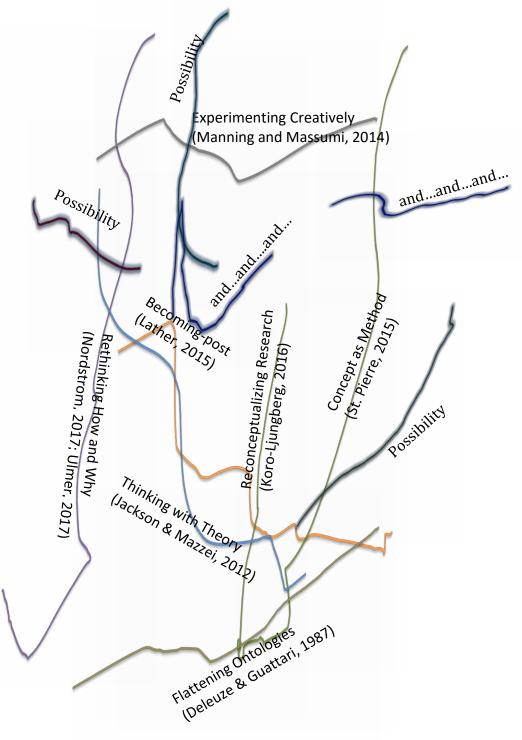
This special issue emerges from a series of panels at the 2016 International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. They were a year in the making. In collaboration with Marc Higgins (whose remarks follow the contributions), the editors organized multiple panels for early career scholars. Energized by the cuttingedge work being done by so many of our friends and colleagues, we hoped to connect and expand these networks so that emergent postqualitative researchers might be in closer dialogue with one another—so that we might think together, write together, and move together as we wondered what it is that postqualitative research is becoming and what we might have to offer within it. Our aims were modest as we invited individuals from across the globe to participate in panels about postqualitative research at the 2016 congress. Unsure as to the levels of interest we would receive, we were surprised when one panel soon became four. Each took up a different focus: curations, creations, writings, and doings. These panels included early career scholars in Norway, Finland, Canada, New Zealand, and from across the United States.² We are grateful to all of the participants in those symposia, particularly to those whose works are featured here (see Appendix).

The examples of postqualitative research that follow seek to demonstrate both the depth and breadth of early career scholars from a variety of institutions and backgrounds. Massey (2005) wrote:

Place is always different. Each is unique, and constantly productive of the new. The negotiation will always be an invention; there will be need for judgment, learning, improvisation; there will be no simply portable rules. Rather it is the unique, the emergence of the conflictual new, which throws up the necessity for the political. (p. 162)

Each scholar's home institution and geographic location shapes a different new—a different postqualitative inquiry. Each author negotiates their particular place with its own political negotiations that create different versions of postqualitative research. In particular, it is through video, sound, art, images, and text that contributors work to open up perceived boundaries rather than create them. In so doing, we hope that the work of this issue contributes to the assemblage we call postqualitative research and that we might make multiple futures of postqualitative research (see Figure 2).





Curations and Creations

In particular, this special issue explores the possibilities of a postqualitative assemblage on two fronts: **curations** and **creations**. With regard to the latter—creations—we draw from Erin Manning's and Brian Massumi's work (2014) on research-creations. Research-creations, or theoretical practices, actively

embody and create philosophical concepts within the dynamic and creative realms of postqualitative educational research. With regard to the former—curations—we draw from the works of Brooke Hofsess, a contributor in this special issue. We think this title with her work, who elsewhere describes curatorial impulses (Hofsess, 2015) and has inspired us to think curatorially here. These impulses reflect larger trends in arts-based, multi-modal, digital, and postqualitative work that curate the many images, sounds, and texts that float through our daily lives. In this issue, Hofsess continues with Thiele to set up conditions of possibility of inquiry in a study with pre-service teachers. As writer-artists-curators-creators, the contributors to this issue curate and create throughout.

We crafted this special issue with several aims in mind. Following Gerrard, Rudolph, and Sripakash (2017), we attempted to attend to the politics of knowledge production. The issue's focus on early career scholars aims to create the beginnings of a community that might organically support and sustain not only the scholars within the issue, but, moving forward, other emerging scholars, as well. By featuring early career scholars, we provide authors with much needed publications for applications, tenure and promotion, and so on. Contributors are working to support the postqualitative research assemblage as they are working toward futures yet-to-come.

Second, we attempted to make a serious editorial effort to be inclusive of multiple iterations of postqualitative work as previously described. Each contribution takes up the threads of postqualitative research differently. Consequently, a multiplicity of productions of knowledge moves through this special issue. We hope that, in these ways, the special issue engages "a more affirmative approach to critical theory" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 237).

For example, Franklin artfully negotiates her subjectivity within the academy and postqualitative research. Her contribution experiments with how different combinations of literary, musical, and theoretical texts create the different subject positions that she continuously negotiates. Rantala's contribution uses video and sounds to recompose a conservative religious revival movement in Finland; she creates different subjectivities from which to think through and with the women of this movement. Piotrowski puts to work Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) minor literature to create a writing practice that diagrams and moves among disciplines. Guyotte recomposes herself as becoming-post as she intra-acts with post-theories. Hofsess and Thiele extend curatorial impulses of recomposing subjectivities to teacher education candidates in their classrooms. Ulmer, Nordstrom, and Tesar's explore everyday nonhuman and human scapes that create the backdrop for different thoughts and possibilities. Higgins' coda articulates a response-ability to the history of methodology and toward a more just future-to-come.

As Braidotti (2012) wrote, "Subjectivity is rather a process ontology of auto-poiesis or self-styling, which involves complex and continuous negotiations with dominant norms and values and hence also multiple forms of accountability" (p. 31). Each of the authors in this issue engage in such a self-styling from their particular places and the politics of those places but also the politics of postqualitative research. When Susan and Jasmine listened to the presentations and read submissions, the proliferation of subjectivities became difficult to ignore. In particular, Franklin's piece articulates a self-styling subject with novels, poetry, literature from the postqualitative assemblage, and other entities. With her piece and others, negotiations of self and research (for are they ever separate?) come to the fore. A vulnerability pulsates throughout the issue as these scholars negotiate the politics of their place and the politics of the postqualitative assemblage. From these negotiations, creative versions of postqualitative research manifest in the assemblage.

The creative versions presented in this special issue create and curate examples of postqualitative research that might add dimensions to the assemblage of postqualitative literature. We hope they will serve as an invitation to readers of all familiarities with postqualitative research. Postqualitative research is an assemblage—a moving and shifting entity that has multiple dimensions. We invite readers to find an entryway (any entryway will do) and engage with these dimensions to see what they might create and curate in their own postqualitative practices.

Susan Nordstrom, <u>Susan.Nordstrom@gmail.com</u> University of Memphis

Jasmine Ulmer, <u>Jasmine.Ulmer@wayne.edu</u> Wayne State University

Editors

Appendix (Abstracts)

Possibilities and the Unintended and Unanticipated Postqualitative Researcher

Asilia Franklin-Phipps, University of Oregon

Inspired by Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1973), this paper thinks through the use (broadly imagined) of literary texts experimentally read beside and through theoretical texts in order to prompt unexpected thinking. This approach places literature besides traditional research texts, rather than subordinate to such texts. The thinking and doing that occurs in relation to the tangle of texts, literary and otherwise, is already happening, even though often unrecognized. Differently attending to the jumble created by the multitude of texts that make up our reading lives, might snag us in ways that open paths to new ways of thinking, resulting in novel approaches, or tangles of approaches, to post qualitative research. While literary texts, are what is of interest here, the argument might extend to film, art and other cultural texts not usually imagined as directly related to post qualitative inquiry.

Maternal Mo(ve)ments in Memory Work

Teija Rantala, University of Helsinki

with various (re)collected images and experiences of the already-passed present.

The purpose of the video piece 'Maternal Mo(ve)ments in Memory Work' is to approach the production of collective and memory work data through its sounds, affects, and mo(ve)ments (Davies & Gannon, 2006, 2012). In order to question the construction of memory as a 'singular entity' and build an understanding of memory as the collective production of mo(ve)ments, I have combined the extracts of memory work recordings and collaborative writings

with 'snapshots' of theory on memory and affect on the video display. The video piece begins by presenting the 'excerpts' of memory work recordings and their transcripts. Another set of memory work transcripts follows these, also providing writings and recorded expressions of the memory work encounters. The piece ends with 'snapshots' of theoretical insights on the presented data. The oral articulations/'voices' on the video are of women in my family and the written articulations are of Laestadian women in my study. Working within these 'passages,' the viewer/listener/reader is also invited to join into the production.

Pause/Play: Curating as Living/Aesthetic Analysis

Brooke Hofsess, Appalachian State University Jaye Thiel, University of Georgia

What might become if teachers were asked to view themselves as curators? And, in turn, in what ways might curatorial work draw attention to how analytic spaces are continuously created as teachers and teacher educators

dog



move through pedagogical and research processes? This paper extends an invitation for readers to engage with curatorial impulses (Hofsess, 2015, 2016, forthcoming) and co-curatorial moments (Thiel, forthcoming) as living/aesthetic analysis by remixing a series of constructs and technologies explored by a cohort of preservice teachers. Finding inspiration in Nordstrom's (2017) antimethodology, the authors grapple with how curating might set up "conditions of possibility" (Barad, 2007) that offer a new way to engage in the theoretical work of

qualitative inquiry—a way that begins to invite the student, the art material, the political, the affectual, etc., into the entanglement of theorizing from the start because they were always, already there to begin with.

Encountering Bodies, Prosthetics, and Bleeding: A Rhizomatic Arts-Based Inquiry

Kelly Guyotte, University of Alabama

Once a resolute constructivist, new readings, new theories, new onto-epistemologies nudged me into an unfamiliar and frightening, yet familiar and generative, space during my first years on the tenure track. I found myself in an ambiguous and fluid space between the paradigms of interpretivist and deconstructionist posthuman and 'new' materialism theories, and turned to arts-based research to research-create and think-with new scholarship. This



paper, artmaking, and video of my artmaking entangle and provide lines of flight through art-text encounters with what became three interconnected concepts that emerged in and, thus, guide this inquiry: bodies, prosthetics, and bleeding. These concepts emerged as generative entanglements of becoming different through artful doing. Inspired by the concept of rhizomatic assemblage, this work seeks to move through various openings, creating various slippages between bodies (of writing, of making, of images) to explore what artistic research-creation might become through postqualitative inquiry.

Writing E/scapes

Jasmine Ulmer, Wayne State University Susan Nordstrom, University of Memphis Marek Tesar, University of Auckland



scape.

¹ a brief 'escape or means of escape'

- ² 'a scenic view, whether of sea, land, or sky'
- ³ 'in its various senses'
- ⁴ 'a long flower-stalk rising directly from the root or rhizome'
- ⁵ a theoretical approach to writing

Figure credit: Museo Nacional de Historia Natural de Buenos Aires (c. 1911–1923)

Writing in Cramped Spaces

Marcelina Piotrowski, University of British Columbia

This conceptual paper focuses on *writing in cramped spaces* of the thousand disciplinary plateaus. It inquiries into the cramped conditions that enable the production of a new language through spacing-making. Taking up Deleuze and Guattari's use of the phrase 'cramped spaces' in their discussion on Franz Kafka's minor literature, this paper offers ways to think about writing in spatial terms. It suggests that postqualitative writing that tries to dislocate from disciplinary plateaus, moves beyond drawing on multiple disciplines, towards disciplinary deterritorializations, diagramming, and rummaging. The paper draws on philosophy, literature, medicine, geography, ecology, and art, to draw a series of lines with which to think about writing in cramped spaces.

Postqualitative Mo(ve)ments: Concluding Remarks on Methodological Response-abilities and Being Wounded by Thought

Marc Higgins, University of Alberta

Post-qualitative research methodologies require us to work within, against, and beyond our methodological inheritance to respond to the world's ongoing becoming. It is our responsibility; yet do we have the ability to respond to that which is beyond and yet-to-come? This article begins by asking this question of the process it engages in: concluding. Following an exploration entangled practices of textual closure, (fore)closure, and the clôture of metaphysics, the article expands outward through the relation between closure and responsibility. Specifically, the lived concept of *response-ability* as an engaged practice of (re)opening the lines of closure (beyond knowledge already known) to respond to and enact responsibility for that which is not-yet and/or to-come. Drawing from Kuokkanen, Spivak, and Barad, response-ability is explored respectively as necessary homework, as (not) hearing the call of the other, and as account-ability towards co-constitutive relationality. The article concludes with further lines of questioning as to what it might mean to responsibly inherit (post-)qualitative methodological pasts and futurities.

Footnotes

² We are most grateful for the reviewers of this special issue. We appreciate the time and effort they put into each of their reviews and how these reviews pushed these contributions to new levels. We also would like to extend a warm wave of gratitude to the *RERM* editorial team, Jayne Osgood, Camilla Andersen, and Ann Merete Otterstad. Their support for this special issue and their mentoring through the special issue process has been tremendous, and has made this special issue possible.

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¹ As we explain later in the article, the title of this special issue draws from the arts-based curations of Brooke Hofsess (2015). In pairing the notion of curation with that of creation, the title further draws from the research-creations of Erin Manning and Brian Massumi (2014).

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