

# Post-qualitative mo(ve)ments: Concluding remarks on methodological response-abilities and being wounded by thought

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## Abstract

*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 clôtüre 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 toward 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.*

Key words: response-ability; responsibility; ethics; closure; post-qualitative methodology

## Post-qualitative mo(ve)ments: Concluding remarks on methodological response-abilities and being wounded by thought

This 'beginning,' like all beginnings, is always already threaded through with anticipation of where it is going but will never simply reach and of a past that has yet to come. It is not merely that the future and the past are not 'there' and never sit still, but that the present is not simply here-now. Multiply heterogeneous iterations all: past, present, and future, not in a relation of linear unfolding, but threaded through one another in a nonlinear unfolding of spacetime-mattering, a topology that defies any suggestion of a smooth continuous manifold. (Barad, 2010, p. 244)

Upon receiving an invitation to conclude this special issue, I was confounded: how might I go about “closing” a special issue whose theory-practices resist, refuse, and (re)open the (fore)closure of methodology?<sup>1</sup> With their respective curatorial impulses, transversely cramped writings, voraciously promiscuous readings, bleeding prosthetic assemblages, e/scapes, and memory work, the collection of articles herein differentially engage in “an iterative (re)opening up to, an enabling of responsiveness” (Barad, 2010, p. 265) toward educational research methodology’s co-constitutive (yet oft taken-for-granted or ignored) potentialities and processes. Working within, against, and beyond educational research methodology (Lather, 2016), these texts provide a “fresh idea of thought” (Deleuze, 1994) and are “not in a relation of linear unfolding, but threaded through one another” (Barad, 2010, p. 244). As such, the very act of reading *here-now* is invariably co-constituted by “multiply heterogenous iterations” of *there-thens* whose arrival cannot be (wholly) defined nor denied. Entangled with this closing is the scene of address; I endeavor to respond to you—a reader who I may never come to (fully) know, yet comes to constitute what can (not) be said (Butler, 2005). These entangled texts and textualities, beings and becomings, critically inhabit methodology as a plane of immanence (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007) or a spacetime-mattering (Barad, 2007, 2010) that account for the ways in which the actual is co-constituted by infinite virtualities; even when the call of that which is yet-to-come is not intelligible as such (Spivak, 1988). How could I, would I, answer in a way that does not foreclose the space of answer-ability and the possibility of spaces beyond (Barad, 2010; Spivak, 1994)?

Even after drafting this closing text (as the temporality of reading and writing is forever askew; see Spivak, 1976), I remain unsure as to where I could and would “begin” to respond to methodological re(con)figurations that “caus[e] trouble for the very notion of ‘from the beginning’” (Barad, 2010, p. 245). However, such is a facet of doing and becoming post-qualitative (see St. Pierre, 2011). Within and through the various entangled research processes, we often encounter snags, eruptions, and explosions, alongside infinite precocious, precious, and pernicious moments. Conventional qualitative research processes work to tuck away and tidy up these loose threads, both giving the appearance that they were never amiss and naturalizing their missing. However, post-qualitative research methodologies invite us to account for and be accountable to the world’s ongoing becoming (see Higgins, Madden, Berard, Lenz-Kothe, & Nordstrom, 2017). We might ask, then, what does it mean to consider excessive becoming as pedagogy? Furthermore, what might excessive becoming in relationship to methodology teach and how might related learnings inform processes of concluding?

Here, one concept and re(con)figuration I turned to is that of *mo(ve)ment*. Within the space of educational research methodologies, Davies and Gannon (2009) describe mo(ve)ment as the “doubled action... of dwelling in and on particular moments of being, and of movement toward, or openness to, new possibilities both of seeing and of being” (p. 9). Mo(ve)ment invites treating a phenomena as simultaneously both a moment and movement while refusing that they become one-and-the-same: “one is too few, two is too many” (Barad, 2010, p. 251). This might entail taking a moment and attempting to perceive its co-constitutive movement (e.g., discourse, materiality, intensity, flow, (re)signification, etc.) or finding and attending to a node (i.e., a time, a place or space, a human or other-than-human, a concept, etc.) within such movement. These mo(ve)ments are often telling (and deserve to be told): they are moments in which we learn, fumble, succeed (and more often than not fail), or even get stuck.

Even though every ‘beginning’ spacetime coordinates (conventionally referred to as separate and

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<sup>1</sup> I borrow the use of “foreclosure” here from Spivak (1999) to signal instantiated pre-emergence of meaning. In other words, foreclosure signals the ways in which the language we possess (also possesses us and) sometimes appears as already fully formed, signifying stable semiotic and ontological locations which resist (re)opening due to their naturalization before the fact.

separable history and geography; see Barad, 2010; Deleuze & Parnet, 2007) cannot be torn asunder from their co-constitutive otherness, this inquiry (like all inquiries) must begin some-where and some-time (and be given over to some-one; Butler, 2005). Inspired by mo(ve)ment, I begin where I am stuck: in concluding this very special issue amidst resisting and refusing the “rage for unity” (Spivak, 1976) that oft accompanies such a task. That is, tidying up untimely and disorderly loose ends to achieve the closure typically presumed of a “clean” conclusion. In turn, I move toward an open-ended conclusion whose possible possibilities also reside in (and beyond) what may have been and what may yet be actualized. Toward this end, the open-ended conclusion explores two parts and processes. The first addresses the metaphysics of *clôture* whose double(d) mo(ve)ment as *closure* (verb) and *enclosure* (noun) always already comes to bear on concluding and conclusions like a dressing on the wound that is thought. The second explores the lived concept of response-ability as engaged practice of (re)opening the lines of closure (beyond knowledge already known) to respond to and enact responsibility for that which precedes us and is to-come.

### **Concluding, the *clôture* of metaphysics, and being wounded by thought (Or, a longwinded cautionary note on closure)**

A conclusion is conventionally (and often conveniently) the end or finish of a given task, event, or process. It often synthesizes what has already come in order to provide what Latour (2004) cheekily refers to as a “summary of the argument (for readers in a hurry...)” (p. 231). While conclusions hold the potentiality for a differential engagement with that which has preceded it, they can also work to (fore)close the possible possibilities of meaning-making. However, as opening comments signaled, in post-qualitative times the very possibility of closure repeatedly comes into question. Be it the putting to work of Deleuze’s notion of the rhizome that, “has neither beginning nor end, origin nor destination; it is always in the middle” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 263) or Barad’s (2007) “agential cuts” that do not dismiss closure, but radically call out its ongoing and iterative re(con)figurings. Of course, addressing questions of closure is not entirely new either; addressing the stratification and sedimentation of linguistic concepts and categories has been a longstanding project of post-structural feminist methodologies (see Lather, 2007; St. Pierre, 2000, 2011). Labouring deconstruction, many of the concepts that come to constitute qualitative methodology (e.g., voice, data, agency, reflexivity) have been worked within and against by placing them in relation to their absent presences or co-constitutive exteriority (see Spivak, 1993). Such (more-than-)binary deconstruction does not exclude the dichotomy of introduction and conclusion: as Spivak (1976) states in her *Translator’s Preface to Derrida’s Of Grammatology*, “each act of reading the ‘text’ is a preface to the next” (p. xii). Just as there is no originary text (see Derrida, 1976), there can also be no terminal form of textuality. What then becomes of conclusions?

Ever more confused as to what a conclusion *is* alongside logics that refuse presence, I recognize that I would be remiss to even attempt a “conclusion” (or more appropriately, in light of mo(ve)ments, a *concluding*) that did not (also) attempt to respond to how closure (fore)closes the ways in which this conclusion is always already an introduction, a supplement that escapes the structure which may be unintelligible as such and yet-to-come. On deconstructively working within and against the closure of textuality, Spivak (1976) states:

As [Derrida] develops the notion of the joyful [i.e., play-full] yet laborious strategy of rewriting the old language – a language, incidentally, we must know well – Derrida mentions the “cloture” of metaphysics. We must know that we are within the “cloture” of

metaphysics, even as we attempt to undo it. It would be an historicist mistake to represent this "closure" of metaphysics as simply the temporal finishing-point of metaphysics. It is also the metaphysical desire to make the end coincide with the means, create an enclosure, make the definition coincide with the defined, the "father" with the "son"; within the logic of identity to balance the equation, close the circle. Our language reflects this desire. And so it is from within this language that we must attempt an "opening." (Spivak, 1976, p. xx)

As Derrida (1976) offers, we are always already within the *clôture* of metaphysics<sup>2</sup>, to which there is no outside (see also Kirby, 2011). Derrida (1976) nonetheless offers that metaphysics are both the process and product of *clôture*: at once being an enclosure and a *closing*. This double(d) normative mo(ve)ment can never be wholly separated from "the metaphysical desire to make the end coincide with the means" (Spivak, 1976, p. xx). For example, within classical representational logics, knowledge (i.e., epistemology) is meant to mirror being (i.e., ontology) without an accounting for the ways in which they come to co-constitute one another in their ongoing becoming (see Barad, 2007). In other words, the *closing* is naturalized, rendering the process an *absent presence* whose partial erasure (but irreducible presence) gives the appearance of stable, unitary, separate, and separable epistemological and ontological units. As the *clôture* of metaphysics is always already entangled within educational research methodology, there is an ongoing need to account for and be accountable to how this entanglement is produced, as well as to what it produces, and what is produceable within and against it. If we are to (re)open educational research methodology to its otherness that is yet-to-come, "it is from within this language that we must attempt an 'opening'" (Spivak, 1976, p. xx): to "to make a new word is to run the risk of forgetting the problem or believing it to be solved" (p. xv) through reproducing the problem elsewhere, albeit differently.

Yet, even if and when we fail to disrupt and displace concepts and categories that (co-)constitute educational research methodology, deconstruction happens (see Derrida, 1988)<sup>3</sup>. The *clôture* of metaphysics could never (fully) suture over the possibilities beyond the moments and movements of conventional closure. Each and every text (including non-semiotic textuality beyond language, such as Nature; see Latour, 2004; Kirby, 2011) is forever partially open to its otherness, even if the fabric of (un)intelligibility is so taught that rupture seems an impossibility. Thinking with Derrida's (1976) linguistic subversiveness, Spivak (1976) suggests that such im/possibility is the very condition of thought:

Any act of reading is besieged and delivered by the precariousness of intertextuality... heavy-handedness cannot punctuate an entire text where 'penser' (to think) carries within itself and points at 'panser' (to dress a wound); for does not thinking seek forever to clamp a dressing over the gaping and violent wound of the impossibility of thought? (Spivak, 1976, p. lxxxvi)

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<sup>2</sup> In a nutshell, metaphysics is classically understood as a philosophy of *what is* (i.e., ontology) or the nature of Nature. This includes multiple concepts and enactments such as space, time, matter, causality, agency, identity, among others. However, as a science of presence (re)produces presence (e.g., Cartesianism); being is (not) a taken for granted (see Derrida, 1976). Rather, each and every moment (i.e., being) is also a movement (i.e., becomings, see Deleuze & Parnet, 2007). Furthermore, epistemology and ontology are never (fully) separable (see Barad, 2007). Metaphysics matters, but not strictly like that; post-qualitative engagement invites (re)consideration of the production of metaphysics and what it produces in turn.

<sup>3</sup> However, some deconstructive possibilities are more im/possible than others (see Barad, 2010).

As Spivak (1976) implicitly asks, how could any act of reading ever (not) achieve closure? The heavy-handedness of the metaphysics of *clôture* (totalizing, but never fully totalized) can never entirely foreclose the possibility of thought (*penser*) that confronts from outside the concepts, categories, and constructs that we hold and that hold us. This confrontation always retains the possibility of rupturing the *clôture* of metaphysics, leaving us wounded by thought (see also Britzmann, 2003; Lather, 2007) and (re)opened by that which is *to-come*. However, this potential is never fully achieved, “for does not thinking (i.e., *panser*) seek forever to clamp a dressing over the gaping and violent wound of the impossibility of thought” (Spivak, 1976, p. lxxxvi)? In other words, not all thought (re)opens: thought is, at once, both the possibility of thinking *anew* and thinking *again*. As poison and panacea, it is nonetheless necessary and unavoidable. Thinking, both *penser* and *panser*, are never disentangled from relationships to-come that vacillate between *becoming* and *unbecoming*, *being* and *non-being* beyond the *clôture* of metaphysics (see also Barad, 2012).

Then, what of my being stuck with conclusion (and this one in particular, as conclusions are always in relation)? As I make (partial) sense of it, a conclusion (as with an introduction) must always be open at both ends, provisional, and contingent. The conventional conclusionary task of *translating* text into the *context* of (a) conclusion does not necessitate its (whole) surrender to the context: a conclusion remains open to (its own) intertextuality, never (fully) achieving closure. It is, and must be, a mo(ve)ment of *being wounded by thought* and *(ad)dressing this wound*. As Davies and Gannon (2009) state, after Deleuze, it must be a pedagogical space that is neither too striated nor smooth, as a space that is *too smooth* can often be differently paralyzing or problematic (e.g., as a “humanist progressivist fantasy of pedagogical space” [p. 78]). The methodological mo(ve)ment within and against the metaphysics of *clôture* (i.e., as double(d) *closure* [verb] and *enclosure* [noun]) is always already within and beyond; but what does it mean to respond to, as well as (re)open the norms of responsiveness toward, that which lies beyond?

## Toward response-ability in/as educational research methodologies

This exploration pursues responsiveness toward that which lays beyond the differentially situated ways of being and becoming post-qualitative methodologists encountering educational research. Post-qualitative methodologists are answerable to questions that could never precipitate an answer in any singular sense (see Spivak, 1994). Nonetheless they proceed, allowing themselves to being wounded by (the impossibility of) thought and (ad)dressing this wound. In making sense of and with the ways in which the preceding texts re(con)figure the possible possibilities of responsiveness within, against, and beyond the *clôture* of metaphysics, I am drawn toward the concept of *response-ability*. In my recent scholarship that methodologically (re)worked the norms of inclusion/exclusion with respect to Indigenous ways-of-knowing-in-being in science education (e.g., Higgins, 2016), I continuously encountered this concept across multiple registers of theory-practice (e.g., post-colonial theory; Spivak, 1994).

In short, response-ability is not solely or simply the taking up of responsibility (which precedes being; see Barad, 2010), but also labouring the iterative (re)opening of responsiveness toward the potentiality of perceiving and differently enacting possibilities and problematics within the distributive relations that we inherit and that constitute our being and becoming. In the subsections that follow, I sketch out and expand upon differential characteristics of what it might mean to take up (and/or be taken up by) the responsibility of responsiveness: response-ability as necessary homework, as (not) hearing the call of the other, and as account-ability toward co-constitutive relationality.

**Response-ability as necessary homework.** Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, 2010), whose work centers Western modern educational and institutional responsibility toward Indigenous ways-of-knowing-in-being,

defines this Derridean double(d) meaning of response-ability as “an ability to respond, to respond to the world beyond oneself, as well as a willingness to recognize its existence” (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 39). In other words, the ability to respond is deeply tied to and a form of ethical responsibility. Yet, to take up such responsibility, one needs to be able to respond; but the grid of intelligibility does not always make permissible or possible the perception to the forms of responsibility to which we are called (e.g., an institute of higher education’s recognition of the Indigenous lands upon which their institutions are built and acknowledgment of these lands as sentient and longstanding places of teaching and learning onto themselves often lays beyond the register of response, but not outside of responsibility). More often than not, the possibility of being-in-relation is always already present should one engage in the ‘homework’ required to cultivate such response-ability:

Doing homework is an ongoing practice that includes learning as much as possible about the area where the academic takes risks. However, familiarizing oneself with areas one knows little about still amounts to hegemonic practice if we do not engage in the “home” part of the homework. (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 117)

It is for this reason that she highlights that the practice of taking risks must take place where it is potentially riskiest: “homework starts from where we are” (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 117). Starting from where we are can take many meanings: home as cultural, disciplinary, geographical, historical, among others. Homework carries with it the irreducible risk of threatening the closure of identity (as self-sameness). Such excessive becoming is oft pedagogically dizzying: rupturing who we are, what we know, and what we do.

Importantly, Kuokkanen (2010) highlights that the homework of response-ability must also rupture the mo(ve)ment of closure through which the Other is conceivable:

What is more, ‘starting from here’ involves a subtle but radical shift from ‘knowing the other’ to learning, and more specifically, learning to receive. Rather than assuming the possibility of knowing the other, we need to learn to think in a fundamentally different way.... [W]e need to draw a difference, however provisional, between knowing and learning. (Kuokkanen, 2010, p. 68–69)

As Kuokkanen (2010) suggests, knowledge is a double bind: it is required for enacting responsibility toward the other and yet it can also act as a form of resistance to knowing the other. Knowledge can act as a mo(ve)ment of closure which reproduce the norms, forces, and flows through which the other comes to be other. One cannot be wounded by thought (penser) if the wound is already (ad)dressed (panser); responding to world beyond oneself requires that the world not be (fore)closed prior its encounter (see also Spivak, 1999). To engage in the homework of response-ability is to engage in the necessary (re)opening the possibility of being wounded by thought by addressing the ways in which the multiplicity of “home” in homework is (fore)closed to its (co-)constitutive otherness.

The double-bind of (not-)knowing (from “home”) required of working toward hospitably receiving what lay beyond from within is not only productively multiplicitous but also, as Derrida (1976) reminds, an inescapable and necessary condition:

The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible and effective, nor can they take active aim, except by inhabiting those structures. Inhabiting them *in a certain way*, because one always inhabits, and all the more when one does not suspect it. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the

strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally, that is to say without being able to isolate their elements and atoms, the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work. (p. 24, emphasis added)

There is no outside of “where we are,” only the differential ability to respond to the relationality and responsibility that precede and shape us through critical yet risky inhabitation of these relationships *in a certain way*: active engagement with the norms that structurally and invariably shape our becoming “all the more when one does not suspect it” (Derrida, 1976, p. 24). The tenuous path of critical inhabitation requires, as Kuokkanen (2007) reminds, “subtlety and responsibility” as “proceeding in any other way would eventually backfire and merely too tight[ly] reinforce existing structures and discourse [through]... ‘irresponsibilizing destruction’” (p. xx).

***Response-ability as (not) hearing the call of the other.*** Like Kuokkanen, Spivak (1994) suggests that heeding and ethically responding to a call of otherness is premised upon the ability to respond. This call, she argues, often lays beyond the differential registers we employ to make sense of and with the world:

It is that all action is undertaken in response to a call (or something that seems to us to resemble a call) that cannot be grasped as such. Response here involves not only ‘respond to,’ as in ‘give an answer to,’ but also the related situations of ‘answering to,’ as in being responsible for a name (this brings up the question of the relationship between being responsible for/to ourselves and for/to others); of being answerable for ... It is also, when it is possible for the other to be face-to-face, the task and lesson of attending to her response so that it can draw forth one's own. (Spivak, 1994, p. 22)

For Spivak (1994), responsibility in its multiplicity calls upon the ability to respond in the mo(ve)ment, to take responsibility for the (inevitable) inability to (fully) respond, and to continuously be responsible toward the very (im)possibility of responding to the other whose experiences, ways-of-knowing, and ways-of-being sit outside of the register of what know and what we can know. The ability to respond is always, partial, situated, and contingent; “there can be no assumption that ‘pure’ responsibility can appear, unstructured and unstaged.” (Spivak, 1994, p. 45). Spivak (1988) reminds that the other to whom response is granted is “irretrievably heterogeneous” (p. 284) and hence “non-narrativisable” (p. 284); that which is to-come can never (fully) be known as it is always already within the co-constitutive exteriority of that which can be known and responded to.

Importantly, in making sense of what it means to engage in the homework of response-ability, Spivak (1994) offers an important cautionary note on working toward heeding the call of the other. Notably that response must not be a suturing over, subsuming, or sublation of otherness by requiring its (re)articulation through the norms of intelligibility (see also Spivak, 1988). As Spivak (1993) elaborates, requiring such (re)articulation is inevitably tied to (re)producing the other as the (required) shadow of a (hegemonic) self:

the wholly other, le tout-autre, cannot be served or samed. It is not susceptible to ipseité or mêmeté. The face of the wholly-other is without a name. The “other” that we

narrativize or grasp consolidates the self, through a kind of *stade du miroir* [Mirror stage<sup>4</sup>]. (p. 238)

In turn, the work of attempting to heed that which lays beyond recognition and recognizability is always already fraught with contradiction; *penser* and *panser* are inevitably entangled with that which is to-come. Stated otherwise, for Spivak, Kuokkanen's provisional distinction between knowing the other and learning from them is porous and forever interlinked; learning from the other is irreducibly co-constituted by knowing the other and its potential problematics (and should be vigilantly approached as such). However, working with purpose, but without guarantee, is par for the course when it comes to such enactments of response-ability: "the philosophy of [deconstruction] cannot be used to ward off accountability, answerability, responsibility... It can only ever be a reminder of its open-ended and irreducible risk" (Spivak, 1994, p. 27). While working toward (partial) recognition of that beyond our (distributed) registers, the need to remain hyper-vigilant persists. For example, the very frames through which recognition can occur are differential articulations of the very logics that produce the call from beyond that "cannot be grasped as such" (Spivak, 1994, p. 22). Yet, in working toward impossibility, the norms of what possibilities are possible are open to becoming otherwise (see also Barad, 2010).

***Response-ability as account-ability toward co-constitutive relationality.*** Extending Spivak's line of thought that response-ability is an engagement within the space of im/possibility, Barad (2010) re(con)figures response-ability as the double(d) process of enabling responsiveness to enact the responsibilities which precede and produce the "I" of responsibility:

Responsibility is not an obligation that the subject chooses but rather an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness. Responsibility is not a calculation to be performed. It is a relation always already integral to the world's ongoing intra-active becoming and not-becoming. It is an iterative (re)opening up to, an enabling of responsiveness. Not through the realization of some existing possibility, but through the iterative reworking of im/possibility, an ongoing rupturing, a cross-cutting of topological reconfiguring of the space of [response-ability]. (Barad, 2010, p. 265)

As Barad (2010) suggests, the theory-practice-ethics of response-ability never achieves the calculable prescriptivity of conventional conceptions of responsibility. Rather, Barad's response-ability, "require[s]/inspire[s] a new sense of a-count-ability, a new arithmetic, a new calculus" in which "one is too few, two is too many" (p. 251). Binaries break down yet never achieve sameness; differentials (come to) matter, materialize (see also Deleuze, 1994). In turn, response-ability must always be an iterative process without *an* origin that enfolds and unfolds *here-now* and *there-then*, which it always accounts for and is accountable to.

As response-ability "is a relation always integral to the world's ongoing intra-active becoming and not-becoming" (Barad, 2010, p. 265), one significant location in which conventional "a-count-ability" breaks

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<sup>4</sup> The mirror stage, drawing from Lacanian psycho-analytics, is when the Imaginary we hold dialectically (in)takes the Real, (re)producing cuts which prevent the wholly other from being anything more than what can already be known. In other words, (fore)closed and contained.



down, and is important to be on the lookout for always already occurring mo(ve)ment, is in considering agents of response-ability:

There are no individual agents of change. Responsibility is not ours alone. And yet our responsibility is greater than it would be if it were ours alone. Responsibility entails an ongoing responsiveness to the entanglement of self and other, here and there, now and then.... Our (intra)actions matter – each one reconfigures the world in its becoming – and yet they never leave us; they are sedimented into our becoming, they become us. And yet even in our becoming there is no ‘I’ separate from the intra-active becoming of the world. (Barad, 2007, p. 394)

Responsibility is not simply a moral imperative that an individual chooses to take up, as “there is no discrete ‘I’ that precedes its actions” (p. 394). Rather, responsibility is an ethico-onto-epistemological enactment that shapes and is shaped by our relational “being-of-the-world” marked by a distinction from being-in-the-world<sup>5</sup>. This distinction is significant. The self, the ‘I’ of responsibility, does not come to be without an ‘other’ (whose ontological separability also breaks down through entanglements). These co-constitutive entanglements, as Barad (2010) states, “are relations of obligation” as “the constitution of an ‘other’, entails an indebtedness to the ‘other’, who is irreducibly and materially bound to, threaded through, the ‘self’” (p. 265). Responsibility is the inheritance of the other to whom we are with/in co-constitutive yet iterative relationality. This is regardless of whether the ‘I’ of responsibility can or does respond (through its distributed network of agency; Barad, 2007); yet responsibility desires response-ability.

The ability to respond, response-ability, is distributed across natural-cultural relations; more specifically through the intra-actions and patterns of difference that matter (see Barad, 2010). Response-ability then becomes a process of accounting for and being accountable to the intra-active phenomena that constitute ‘self’ and ‘other’. Even though responsibility is shared by many, such a responsibility is not diffused and made lesser through its distribution but rather enhanced by it.<sup>6</sup>

Offering a differing register of responsibility, and ability to respond, response-ability in these three forms—as necessary homework, as (not) hearing the call of the other, and as account-ability toward co-constitutive relationality—provides resources toward working (but never fully achieving) beyond the metaphysics of clôture. Response-abilities invite us to call into question the oft-naturalized epistemological and ontological norms that shape our ability to engage with the “home” of homework, such as the subject(ification) of educational research; they ask us to not (too easily) make intelligible that which lay beyond our registers, and they call us to recognize naturalcultural registers and our responsibility to what lays beyond is not ours alone (without it being made lesser).

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<sup>5</sup> Barad’s notion of being-of-the-world is a response to Heidegger’s being-in-the-world that necessitates an ‘I’. The latter precedes the relationship with the world, inevitably masking the conditions of emergence for the ‘I’ that notably comes to be because there is a world from which it was never separated or separable (see Barad, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Butler (2005), along similar lines rhetorically asks the following: “Does the postulation of a subject who is not self-grounding, that is, whose conditions of emergence can never be fully account for, undermine the possibility of responsibility and, in particular, of giving an account of oneself?” (p. 19). Where it is the common assumption that one must “know oneself” (as a stable, containable, and individualistic subject) in order to be morally responsible, Butler (2005) suggests that ethics can only emerge because the ‘I’ of ethics. This ‘I’ only emerges with/in relation; a self-contained self becomes a source of “‘moral narcissism’ whose pleasure resides in its ability to transcend the concrete world that conditions its actions and is affected by them” (p. 105). Relation begets and precedes responsibility; knowledge of a partially knowable self is nonetheless knowledge upon which one can act.

## ‘Closing’ the text (toward more response-able post-qualitative research without stating “enough already!”)

To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that “we” *are*, to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving toward what is to-come. Responsibility is by necessity an asymmetrical relation/doing, an enactment, a matter of *différance*, of *intra-action*, in which no one/ no thing is given in advance or ever remains the same. Only in this ongoing responsibility to the entangled other, without dismissal (without “enough already!”), is there the possibility of justice-to-come. (Barad, 2010, p. 264–265, emphasis in original)

As this text and, through entanglement, this special issue draws a close (but hopefully not a closing marked by the mo(ve)ment of (en)closure), I ask again (as it is all-the-more pressing), how might I go about “closing” a special issue whose theory-practices works to resist, refuse, and (re)open the (fore)closure of methodology? At best, I have provided *an* answer herein, *a* response that is partial, situated, and contingent. Yet, this “closing” addresses the ghostly future presence of you—the reader to whom this text is addressed and whom I may never (fully) know (and may never have known) but who comes to constitute what can (not) be articulated—whose presence may be forever deferred and yet-to-come (Butler, 2005). Even if there were to be no reader, the virtual possibility of a reader-to-come brings with it a relationality of inheritance: “each ‘individual’ is made up of all possible histories of *virtual* intra-actions with all others” (Barad, 2012, p. 15, emphasis added).

The task set out herein could never (fully) be one of providing answers, but rather endeavours to engage in answer-ability; a task all of us engaging in post-qualitative are called to. “The call is a gift, but the response is, unavoidably, an exchange-effect. This is the stimulus of a persistent critique” (Spivak, 1994, p. 45); here, the stimulus is a call to examine the past of qualitative research that is inevitably inherited. In this post-qualitative moment, we attempt a movement within, against, and beyond its possibilities to which we are indebted, as well as the problematics we inherit: qualitative research’s absent presences, its (co-)constitutive exclusions and exteriorities, its periphery, as well as its ruins. Such persistent critique is to engage with the type of questioning that we are all called into doing through post-qualitative research. For example, how are we un/able to respond to the world and importantly justice-to-come? What is it that lies (wholly) beyond the closure of onto-epistemic recognisability, yet whose absent presence nonetheless comes to co-constitute *being* and *becoming*? Whose and what calls of otherness could not and still “cannot be grasped as such” (Spivak, 1994, p. 22)? What relations of inheritance and indebtedness continue to not be acted upon because, while recognized as such, are deemed lesser or irrelevant? What forms of ongoing responsibility to the entangled other are wholly other to (post-)qualitative research in education such that they do not register within a (post-)qualitative imaginary? What can (post-)qualitative research not bear to hear and how might this (fore)closed relation to alterity yet-to-be-acknowledged-as-such as well as alterity itself become call, stimulus, and gift that might (re)open the space of responsiveness toward its responsibilities that precede knowing, being, and knowing-in-being? The mo(ve)ment of post-qualitative research in education inherits its historicities: both actual and virtual. Our responsibilities from prior turns (e.g., linguistic, discursive, ethical) are not lesser as we enter the ontological turn; rather, they are re(con)figured and renewed. The past pasts that have been passed over (as addressed to another, a qualitative research cannon who could not or would

not hear) are still open to a futurity in which they will have mattered (in both senses of the word).

For example, the turn to materiality does not excuse us previous cultural politics; it invites engagement differently. As we are called into differentially thinking with and enacting the “politics of Nature” (Latour, 2004), I would be remiss if I were not to mention (as but a possible possibility) the very ground beneath our feet. This common omission, as well as the related call to acknowledge land and our responsibilities in relation, is underscored by Kuokkanen (2010) and a wide body of Indigenous scholars and their allies: “if it is literally the ground beneath our feet, why is it so difficult to acknowledge it?” (2010, p. 67). If the task of post-qualitative research is to set out and find new ways to account for and be accountable to the absent presences of the world’s ongoing naturalcultural becoming toward justice-to-come, the task is irreducibly entangled with/in the peoples, places, protocols, and practices which have sustained, (re)generated, and balanced ecologies of relationships since time immemorial. Amidst multiple Cartesian cuts that (fore)close response-ability, what might it not only mean to recognize the places within and upon which we teach and learn; but also the Indigenous peoples who have shaped and been shaped by this anthropogenic Land?

As Métis and feminist scholar Zoe Todd (2016) suggests of the ontological turn, “ontology” might come to be “just another word for colonialism” if those taking this turn cannot come to realize the uneven and unequal relationship between Indigenous and Western relational ontologies. Indigenous ways-of-knowing-in-being are often subsumed, sublated, and sutured over by the posts, despite their theoretical trajectories differing. It is not a simple question of lack of Indigenous scholars or scholarship that focus on ontology (and its entanglements), with the (multiplicitous) work of scholars like Vanessa Watts, Kim Tallbear, Zoe Todd, Leanne Simpson, Megan Bang, Oscar Kawagley, Vine Deloria, Gregory Cajete, Michael Marker, Richard Atleo, Vanessa Andreotti, amidst many others who are not named here. Rather, it may well have to do with the academy’s ability to respond, or its response-ability to the relations in which it already finds itself.

Of these entangled relations, which require a new “a-count-ability” (Barad, 2010), (neo)colonial logics cannot be understated in *whose* relational ontologies come to count (as well as how): Indigenous peoples continue to be positioned as the abject other within interlocking binaries of theory/practice, civilized/primitive, and subject/object, amidst others. Further, the in/ability to take Indigenous thought (as) seriously cannot be wholly separated from settler ontological insecurities. Pasts desired as already ‘past’ (e.g., the taking of lands through a double(d) Doctrine of Discovery [e.g., *Dum Diversas* and *Romanus Pontifex*] and Occupation [e.g., *terra nullius*]) and (possible and preferable) futures-to-come (e.g., Indigenous peoples’ and their allies’ desire to repatriate the places that sustain them and that they sustain) haunt (as absent presences) an overcoded settler futurity. Such a settler futurity is either naively optimistic (e.g., ‘healed’ Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations without substantive (verses symbolic) restitution and reparation) or dystopic (e.g., Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations are doomed and/or Indigenous peoples and cultures destined to ‘vanish’) in which no present enactment will materialize another futurity. Response-ability here might entail learning to receive the gift of Indigenous ways-of-knowing-in-being, while working against knowing the other as a form of “colonial containment—whether arrogant or benevolent” [Kuokkanen, 2010, p. 70]—and (re)opening the (neo-)colonial systems that render them other (see also Spivak, 1994, 1999). It might also entail generously and generatively (re)reading Indigenous scholars/hip already passed over by qualitative research (but whose potentiality haunts a future to-come), and/or accounting for and being accountable to the norms of intelligibility to which Indigenous scholarship must (to some degree or forego recognizability; see Spivak, 1988, 1994) conform to.

Consideration of land is but one possible possibility for (re)opening the space of response-ability of post-qualitative research in education by working within, against, and beyond the multiple ways in which the

metaphysics of clôtüre manifest: a project that is endlessly proliferating. Such work inspires and requires creative and critical dispositions and dispositifs, ways-of-knowing, and ways-of-being. The manuscripts that precede this one demonstrate what it means to be wounded by (the impossibility of) thought, to think with new connections and connectivities that lay beyond the grid of intelligibility, in the reception of otherness without the (en)closing in or out from moves of in/commensurability and sameness/difference. They enact (rather than take or are given) responsibility for what is differentially inherited (Barad, 2010) and do the (home)work of not only learning of areas where academics take risks (Kuokkanen, 2007), but also negotiate perils and possibilities themselves. To take such risks, as Barad (2010) suggests, is to also risk oneself (or at least the ontological security that oneself could ever be singular, separate, or separable) through (learning to) receive the worlds ongoing becoming as pedagogy and being im/possibly wounded by thought.

Responsibility always precedes yet is never separate or separable from our coming-to-knowing-in-being, the past, the present, and the future, the virtual and the actual, and an infinity of other humans, other-than-humans, and more-than-humans to whom we are indebted. Significantly, the space of response-ability from which we can account for and be accountable to these responsibilities is highly productive as it invites and requires us to consider that which shapes our very ability to (not) respond, such as some of the aforementioned knowings generated through this inquiry. Yet, the space of response-ability is ever in need of an ongoing (re)opening as the conditions that shape our ability to respond are always already on the move (Barad, 2010; Kuokkanen, 2007, 2010). Potentialities often vacillate between possibility and impossibility (see Barad, 2010, 2012) — a reality that we must continue to confront as multiplicitous differing, problematic, and irreducibly co-constituted vectors of power continue to shape “what counts” as (and in) research (for whom, for what end, and through what means). Post-qualitative methodology must continue becoming through the ongoing process of responding to near-infinite mo(ve)ments and reworking the norms of im/possibility toward altering the possible possibilities for justice-to-come, without saying “enough already!”

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