

EDITORIAL

Special Issue: Postqualitative inquiry: Theory and practice in environmental education

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This Special Issue of *AJEE* is an assemblage of creative starting points for postqualitative inquiry. Mazzei (2021), after St. Pierre (2011), has described postqualitative inquiry in terms of direct groundings in theoretical/philosophical literature. The purpose of theory is to help us better understand our world as well as to lead us to informed action (Brookfield, 2005). ‘Postqualitative’ can be distilled by the phrase ‘thinking with theory’ (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, 2018) to encounter different ways that theory-based concepts can produce thought that happens ‘in the middle of things’. Inquiries are shaped in working concepts together within problems. Concepts help us to disentangle how we have come to think and see in certain ways, making it possible to see differently (Hart, 2014). Directly implicated are extant empirical and ethical applications of theory directly within philosophical positions, often associated with new materialist and posthumanist thinking. Such shiftings in theory/praxis are increasingly recognised within impending concerns about the value of a qualitative inquiry, complicated by bioethical and biopolitical issues of the Anthropocene and beyond.

The postqualitative turn offers researchers different spaces to reconsider what can count as research activity. Hargraves (2016) describes this new research process as seeking to explore how we might reconceptualise inquiry where researchers and participants become entangled as living assemblages in ways that disrupt and deterritorialise and that move beyond linguistic poststructuralist discursive thinking toward the material and matter of uninterpreted lived experience. ‘Thinking with’ does not simply apply to practice; it is emergent and immanent within practice. It is what Massumi (2014) calls ‘worlding’, as that which is occurring/becoming in the real world as part of new empirical practices, where ‘live’ data is not reduced to representation (i.e., themes construed by researchers). ‘Thinking with theory’ is engaged and increasingly captured within the actual dynamics of the realities of experiences. In essence, ‘postqualitative’ is agential realist inquiry overlain by concepts such as refrain, haecceity, rhizome and/or diffraction. Debates about the term postqualitative dissolve when there is no longer division between reality and representation and the subjectivity of the author. Agential realism, in essence, flattens what was assumed to be hierarchical, and perhaps even the need for the label ‘postqualitative.’

In many different ways, this Special Issue of the *AJEE* is intended to contribute to creative, ‘live’ explorations of questions that ‘bother’ participants and inquirers to the extent that they want to think differently about knowledge and to think about knowledge differently. Such thinking intentionally disrupts long standing and deeply entrenched assumptions of qualitative methodologies

and methods. The rationale for this ‘sea change’ from interpretive representations to realist framings, grounded within new empirics, new ethics, and new theory, is to locate new starting points for engaging the realities of the relational, material web of affects that characterise nomadic agential posthuman beings (Flint, 2021).

This Special Issue invites readers to raise serious questions about educational research. Readers have an opportunity to learn how environmental education (EE) researchers choose to engage, in many different ways, with agential realist assemblages that operate to destabilise/deterritorialise boundaries between participants and researchers. Readers will learn how researchers engage with mappings and movements within the complexities of ‘live’ action scenarios. In fact, this kind of inquiry is completely removed from interpretive descriptions and representations. Exploration of such realist methods may generate participant accounts of their experiences, actualised as effects and affects, within the intensities expressed by participants themselves. The researcher’s focus is on capturing ‘live’ materialities of human and nonhuman, participant/environment intra-actions in the production of different knowledge as ‘knowing differently’ (Lather, 2013, 2016). The reader’s/viewer’s focus is attuned to the dynamics of engagement that resist ‘editing out’ or the dismissing of tensions which tend toward critical imaginings of the potential of live inquiry that has shifted from representational research foundations (Carey & Benozzo, 2022).

Philosophical Underpinnings: Working within Philosophy

Elizabeth Grosz (2017) writes about this work in terms of an ‘immanent philosophy of presence’ within a theory of agential realism (Barad, 2007) that aligns immanence with realist accounts of affective relations and spectral entanglements of the kind proposed within increasingly diverse applications of new materialisms and posthumanisms. For example, Carsten’s (2018) inquiry in ‘cultivating a dark haecceity’ in ‘troubling notions of presence’ within the contexts of classrooms and curricula, cannot but be troubled, affected and transformed by realities of issues such as climate change. Postqualitative inquiry, grounded within new materialist and posthumanist perspectives, as well as reconceptualised empirics and ethics, encourages development of curriculum and instruction practices that venture well beyond liberal humanities-based educational and qualitative research practices of interpretation/representation.

Educational researchers, including authors contributing to this Special Issue, are increasingly confronted, as academics and pedagogues, with questions of retuning our sensibilities in ways that span personal, social, ecological/environmental dimensions of getting down to basic realities of affect-oriented, intensive, immanent concerns at the heart of (educational) inquiry and pedagogy (Braidotti, 2013; Thrift, 2008). These questions of control and power often bring on a kind of numbness/amnesia and inaction as part of the realisation of the new theoretical work that must be engaged (Payne, 2018). As Grosz (2017) says, learning the uncanny (i.e., resistance) requires becoming more comfortable with uncomfortable affective relations in social and ecosocial contexts, as with researchers generating realist accounts of affective relations of the kind proposed by postqualitative inquiry.

Groundings in new philosophy provide the means to move educational research beyond methodological application and interpretive mastery by generating explorations of live relationality. In essence, postqualitative theories work to complicate, obstruct, and defamiliarise qualitative inquiry in order to create openings for new forms of relations and responsibilities as anti-reductionist. As decentring researchers’ language shifts to eschew qualitative instincts as uncertainties in favour of newer theory, the focus shifts to working with the realities and complexities of inquiry that decentres knowledge and embraces the inseparability of ethics, ontology, and knowledge (LeGrange, 2018).

Within postqualitative inquiry, the challenge of new theoretical starting points is onerous and naturally generates considerable resistance. However, the growing field of postqualitative possibilities now consists of a large and rapidly increasing literature aiming to transform the social sciences and humanities within new orientations to educational inquiry capable of addressing post-Anthropocene dynamics. The focus of this new inquiry, as it applies to environmental education, is how we can address educational issues as nature-culture entanglements which Haraway (2003) has portrayed as attending to the ontological choreography of our research problems as transgressive (see also, Lotz-Sisitka, Ali, Mphepo, Chaves, Macintyre, & Pesanayi, 2016; Lotz-Sisitka, Wals, Kronlid, & McGarry, 2015).

Conceptual Starting Points

Guided by an ontology of immanence and framed by post-Anthropocene ethics, postqualitative inquiry works directly with theory within entanglements of new empiricisms, new materialisms and posthumanism (St. Pierre, 2019) in a re-turn to ontological re-imaginings of relations among theory-praxis. Grounded ethically and onto-epistemically within philosophy, the intent is to re-orient thinking within social and educational research, to map the sensations and movements of realist/immanent practices of people in particular situations and places. Marked by a complete transformation from methodology-based inquiry postqualitative inquiries are engaged as a condition of the realities of life experiences and implicate human intensities, embodied sensations, forces, and affects. Mapping such experiences is intended to create openings for critical discussion and debate, and for rethinking conceptual/philosophical relations and natures of being and knowing, discourse, performativities and materialities, both inside and outside of educational settings.

In relation to environmental education, authors of papers in this Special Issue engage a range of theoretical perspectives in ways that not only challenge conventional qualitative inquiry but invite deeper reflection on issues of sociopolitical change and environmental justice. For example, Ringrose, Warfield, and Zarabadi (2019) map the sensations and movements of realist/immanent practices in educational settings in ways that create openings for critical discussion of the relations and natures of being/becoming/known/mattering. Because postqualitative inquiry is immanent, it must be invented/created differently each time, always becoming in concrete encounters with the real with no 'data' reduction or interpretation. These perspectives drive methods that implicate new ethics and new empiricism, as participants themselves appear in live action or, for example, captured on video. Researchers of these live actions are not only viewers but often engage concepts such as diffraction, haecceity, refrain, rhizome that compel subsequent conversations without and within those being observed. In this way they together explore what is/was really going on for researchers, theorists, and participants.

This kind of activity creates conditions for postqualitative inquirers to work with an increasing number of conceptual lenses and perhaps as thoughtful, fully engaged participants within the intra-actions of live events. This is, of course, new empirical work where ethical responsibilities become crucial (Jackson & Mazzei, 2018). St. Pierre, Jackson, and Mazzei (2016) contend that if we are completely entangled with the world, then we are completely responsible for the world and all our relations of becoming with it. We cannot ignore the 'material' any more than we can ignore the controversies about the posthuman. And we cannot ignore the pressing bioethical and biopolitical concerns that cannot help but influence our research practice, including the impact of technology and the relations of power and politics (global and local).

Conceptual creativity becomes critical as new materialist and posthumanist theorists learn how to both use and question themselves as concept generators. For example, postqualitative researchers increasingly engage concepts such as assemblage, lines of flight, refrain, rhizomatics, diffraction, and haecceity to deterritorialise, to rethink and to engage/dissolve binaries such as nature/culture, human/animal relations, Anthropocene/new planetary ethics. Theorists, such as Barad,

Massumi, Haraway, and Braidotti, are accompanied by an increasing number of others to provide theoretical support for field-based researchers who are continually looking for new conceptual viewing points in rethinking and realigning their goals and relationships with participants and particular settings. However, it remains the researchers' ethical response-ability to engage such complex entanglements of discourse and materialities within alternative visions of the real.

The Postqualitative 'Turn': Movements and Moments for Environmental Education Research

Each of the studies in this Special Issue is unique. Each of the authors actively pursues 'realist complexities' with the view to invite readers/viewers into their living complexities. In various ways, these theoretical perspectives will, at some level, implicate the scale of planetary ethics within and beyond the Anthropocene. Researching within frames of agential realism and engaging educational experiences as postqualitative become immanent in the sense of being present (i.e., witnessing) within diverse political scenarios and so thinking-with-concepts becomes crucial as a creative force of self-formation responsible for what is produced in these relations. Thus, for example, Haraway (2003) has continually reminded researchers to attend to the ontological choreography (e.g., as nature/culture intra-actions) of the research problem itself.

Informed by the work of philosophers and theorists, 'thinking with theory' in postqualitative inquiry has proliferated as process-oriented, ontologically-based and intent on working to gain insight into educational experiences in relation to deeper theoretical framings. The authors in this Special Issue illustrate many ways to explore how their experiences relate to the new postperspectives. They are conscious of their own vulnerabilities in taking risks with conservative educational traditions. They are also mindfully cautious of groundings within current material and posthuman theories that expose taken-for-granted assumptions about education and societies. These assumptions are invisible and deeply engrained within existing systems of power and politics (Cudworth & Hobden, 2018). These ideas are explored and articulated in different ways in the manuscripts that comprise this Special Issue. It is within this context of transgressing boundaries that the contributors to this Special Issue recognise research as an evolving process of improving our increasingly vulnerable knowing-in-being-of the world (Barad, 1998).

The Inspirational Authors Who Reinforce the Importance of Change in Environmental Education Research

Alice Medina entangles the Brazilian rainforest, representing concerns for our future. The poem encourages us to find better ways to communicate, to engage in conversation deeply and to speculate on genuine relationships across different perspectives in the claim for existence.

Pauliina Rautio, Rika Hohti, Tuure Tammi and Henrika Ylirisku begin their paper by reiterating a challenge for environmental education inquiry that goes beyond proposing new methods and emphasises re-situating existing research practices as non- or less-Anthropocentric. Then, following their own example of such re-situating and several examples, richly described as horse girl assemblage, thinking with a forest, and the greenhouse as compost of stories, bodies, and theories, the authors come together to move to construct theory within an additive orientation as a way to transformative EE that has potential for forms of transgressive inquiry in EE.

Jane Osgood and Nina Odegard explore new ways to encounter the child in relation to the planet. They engage the potential of feminist, new materialities of the Reggio kindergarten. They purposefully describe their attempts to mobilise the posthuman child within storytellings in relation to recycled, natural materials, within frames of sustainability and environmental education. The authors recognise the need to align early childhood education inquiry with ethically and politically attuned processes of inquiry in relation to more complex understandings of the

posthuman child. They respond with embodied affective insight, in more care-full ways of critically engaging issues of Anthropocene ecologies.

Cassandra Tytler's engagement with postqualitative inquiry is a sincere invitation to engage the complexities of performativity, read alongside a politics of affect, to argue that artworks as performative, and opens future strategies for postqualitative inquiry. Exploring the IntraBody of human, technology, narrative, and environment creates conditions, underpinned by posthumanist and new materialist concepts, to engage Braidotti's sense of assembly and Haraway's notion of diffraction within Barad's sense of entanglements — a complex task indeed where researchers become decentred as part of the 'game' and a politics of affect implicates new modes of ethical becoming.

Shelley Kokorudz describes a posthuman study that employed Deleuze's rhizoanalysis to explore the journeys of early school leavers' return to complete high school matriculation. The concept 'assemblage' assisted participants to cartographically map the intra-active complexities that tend to deterritorialise re-entry of high school leavers. As assemblages were mapped, using rhizoanalysis as a nomadic process, these spaces created conditions where reduction patterns among participants' views of their experiences and of themselves created new flight lines for adult students otherwise lost within their often-troubled perceptions of themselves.

Kathryn Riley and Lynden Proctor, with interests in social and ecological justice, take up concepts from agential realism and rhizomatics to reconceptualise the physical education and EE nexus. They consciously ground this transdisciplinary approach to curriculum rhizomatically within complexities of lived experience. Such experiences can be constructed as postqualitative and new materialist endeavour that engage affirmative patterns of relating with an immanent sense of belonging/connecting to people as well as to environmental systems. Riley and Proctor argue that engaging curriculum, such as physical education, within ontological dimensions of postqualitative inquiry, can produce enhanced relationships that include planetary systems.

In *I Contain Multitudes*, Anne Reinertsen works rhizome as poem, picture, and image of the importance of breaking boundaries of taken-for-granted patterns and of collectively creating new more-than-human concepts. Anne poems with speculative process philosophy to (re)think the future, theory, and practice in EE. This paper opens up Anne's ideas of expanding rationales for EE with views of deep learning within an intergenerational perspective and working with connectivities and actualisations of affect. Anne tries and tries again to trace her auto-affective-aesthetic responses to complex issues of climate, as illustrated in this rather complex and brilliant tracing of her work with theory and practice in EE. Enjoy Anne's risk-taking and explorations of activist pedagogies as speculative (ethics). She attempts to 'come to ground' in learning with adults and children, over many years and papers, to rethink interactionist ontologies, activate the ethical in education, and create new stories about the riddles of being for environmental educators and researchers.

As you might expect of Margaret Somerville and Sarah Powell, their project was much more than a typical curriculum development exercise. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's theorising of the 'self' as multi-dimensional multiplicities of events such as the climate emergency of the now global experience of catastrophic fires, in this case in Australia, the authors set the stage for serious discussion of issues of planetary literacy in relation to the politics of educational provision. In this paper, the authors engage young people, in various ways, concerning their lived experiences of 'becoming with fire' between multiplicities of fascination and of fear. The project evolved across arts-based experiences with children as 'becoming with' multiple dimensions of earth ethics in relation to forests and Indigenous knowledges. They engaged concrete materials such as water and rocks, as well as notions of creative regeneration of old fish tanks, as immanent experiences with multiple earth ecosystem phenomena. The paper is written in the style of performing the posthuman cartographies of materialism and foreshadows creative futures for curriculum change, with precarious futures in mind.

Bronwyn Davies teases her audience with personal stories and intra-actions among emergent natural phenomena as always already building toward the material forces that constitute us, in conjunction with the political forces that constitute her, and us, as beings. Within this context she explores problems of our habituated identities of self and other human/nonhuman identifications in terms of 'a sense of self' as it emerges within our ongoing responsibilities to each other and to the living and nonliving processes of the earth. She engages this responsibility as a process in the mattering of the world and as prerequisite to hardening of the categories in favour of becoming diffracted through 'our responsiveness to earth others'. Davies' concerns about neoliberalism are assuaged in new materialist modalities and associated stories toward new flight lines of intra-active becomings and responsibilities.

Scott Jukes, David Clarke and Jamie Mcphie take postqualitative inquiry to be infused with a question mark, yet open to possibility and drawn to potentials, to realise ontology and its performance as synonymous with the figurative real of EE. Conscious of the politics at play, the authors raise important (posthuman) questions that avoid territorialisation while striving to create conditions for possibilities, through hopes, doubts, and credible new pathways. Such pathways encourage educational researchers and theorists to think as philosophers might do, while practising posthumanist political ecologies with speculative realism at play. But in fact, what of the politics at play? Foreshadowing concerns about labels that may box in inquiry and about sedimentation, they encourage deterritorialising postqualitative inquiry, as they say, striving to create conditions of possibility. And they do so. Read on, about places, pathways, lines/movements and materialities of environments, fires and viruses.

Scott Jukes, Alistair Stewart and Marcus Morse emphasise the nonrepresentational nature of postqualitative inquiry by engaging agential realist accounts of experience (through video) to explore practices of reading landscapes diffractively. Along with poetry, these agential realist accounts of lived experiences form the empirical materials of the project — to create multiple possibilities as openings for postqualitative research practice inspired by posthumanist and new materialist orientations. This paper challenges readers to think, differently, to think with theory, within creative alternative ontological spaces. Such thinking can perhaps portend change for postparadigmatic inquiry and for EE. Creating openings for emergent processes of inquiry, for example, engages the value of video as a way of opening the conceptual comprehensions of agential realism as 'on the ground' applications of natural practice by 'starting in the middle'.

Helen Kopnina brings a different focus to EE through her work in renewable energy within circular economies and management styles in business and industry. She provides unique insights and illustrates how she and her students think about ecological while teaching circular economies. Interestingly, her reading theory from philosophy overlaps many theorists who now dominate the fields of educational research. In this entry, Helen illustrates how theory, and not methodology, drives inquiry and how it applies in her transitioning within the new economic thinking of the circular economy. Two case studies illustrate EE inquiry beyond qualitative interpretive/representational methodology and assist readers in translating philosophical complexities of new empiricism and new materialisms as new ethics realist inquiry, within the context of the circular economy. Student case studies demonstrated that the emergent ethics of posthumanism is coupled with an emerging politics that refuses humanist methodologies and encourages non-Anthropocentrism within EE.

Seeking ways to disturb and destabilise long-held onto-epistemic assumptions associated with colonial-modernity, Robin Bellingham investigates how these disturbances might occur in diffractive and decolonising reading methodology. She outlines prior diffractive reading experiences that draw on Barad's diffraction theory and decolonial theory. By juxtaposing readings of teacher education policy through military imaginaries and a situated inquiry of the Great Barrier Reef (as pedagogical agent), she identifies diffractive methods that are generative for destabilising colonising ways of knowing and for reimagining the violence of colonial-capitalist systems. Her process of learning from difference enabled a different reading of difference itself! As Robin so aptly

foreshadows, future work in this genre relating to relational and ethical dimensions of the material-discursive implicates issues of difference in power and politics that must be opened up within EE research.

Annette Gough and Noel Gough argue that postqualitative inquiry is not a useful descriptor for EE research and that it is time to consider what comes after the posts. They argue that thinking with theory, which most postqualitative researchers advocate in the onto-epistemic framings, offers a more generative conceptualisation of inquiry that has the potential to create openings for the rationale advanced for postqualitative inquiry as well as the associated research practices. Their goal is similar to many educational researchers who identify with postqualitative possibilities. That is, to provide a rich recounting, moving beyond extant methodologies and engaging critically within new materialisms and posthumanisms. They suggest using multiple conceptual diffractive lenses, to engage different ways of thinking and to begin to 'plug in' to thinking with theory to more intelligently and realistically engage with education beyond the Anthropocene and after the posts are over.

Anne Poelina, Sandra Woollorton, Mindy Blaise, Catrina Luz Aniere, Pierre Horwitz, Peta J. White, and Stephen Muecke conceptualise and engage postqualitative research in relation to Aboriginal voices attuned to ecological imperatives for planetary wellbeing beyond the Anthropocene. It is their contention that Aboriginal voices are well situated to engage such imperatives. Within this conceptual frame, they elaborate a relational, postqualitative decolonial onto-epistemology as EE for planetary care. In this paper postqualitative research foregrounds the sentient nature of life as ancestral power which brings a vitality of co-becoming as places of active engagement. Postqualitative processes have a distinct role in foregrounding a country's animacy and presence and in illustrating country-as-agentic and country-as-active-witness in lives that demand our responsibility to listen, to help create new futures, which may require something beyond current postqualitative ideas.

Gabrielle Ivinson and EJ Renold speculate that EE needs to begin from young people's experience with landscapes. Their particular focus is found in cultures with cosmologies that recognise the forces and memories of lived experiences of growing up in the visceral, visual, and tactile atmospherics of postindustrial spaces. Their text is rich in descriptions of the aftermath of capitalist ruins where young people are engaged in creative workshops within a 'what if' approach to EE where teaching becomes living engagement with 'sustainability'. The authors do not shy away from confronting the issues, historically and in the present aftermath of unbridled industrialism in what they refer to as the 'slave-sugar-coal-nexus'. By shifting the focus to explore the views of young people from ex-mining communities and other postindustrial places, Ivinson and Renold use new materialist concepts such as immanence, affect, and transpersonal as starting point to assist young students in 'actualising' the virtual forces affecting imaginings that can attune to troubles of past in ways transversal and transgressive.

The David Rousell and Andrea Penalzoza Caicedo paper is a clear succinct exemplar of postqualitative inquiry that explores speculative immersion as strategy for communicating with young people. The authors employ concepts to re-theorise experiences of young people within situated EE contexts, in contrast to phenomenological methodology. These theoretical framings are woven through young people's immersive accounts of 'place' as grounding for generating cartographies of conceptual and sensory moments. The paper is densely engaged with relevant theory with the clear purpose of bringing postqualitative theory into practice. The methods move the reader beyond more traditional models of qualitative methodology using the initial novelty of thinking with concepts as foci for listening for the precolonial history of (a) place. Thus, this paper strongly illustrates some of the mechanics of postqualitative theory as praxis.

Inspired by the notion of thinking with water, Shiva Hassan Zarabadi's paper 'materialises' the emergence of affective assemblages of young women's lived experiences as entanglements with the living sea. The focus on the experiences of Muslim school girls implicates 'matters' of gender and race, as resonates with Indigenous colonisation. Nomadic mappings of fluid relationships with

more-than-human bodies and with hijab, family and community are conceptualised within post-qualitative framings, that is, within posthuman research on affective and material racialising assemblages. This paper exemplifies a highly complex and strategically compacted engagement embedded within a complex and dense theoretical literature. It is a demanding paper that cuts to the core values as dimensions of postqualitative inquiry.

Exemplified by education-related experiences of author Rick White during a local fire event in Australia, Rick White and Melissa Wolfe speculate on postqualitative possibilities in search of meaningful theoretical and practical responses to the ecological crisis. The positing of a necessary transition to a postgrowth society with educational implications creates a challenge for more penetrating curriculum reconstruction. White and Wolfe's focus is intended to create educational conditions that enable postqualitative thinking (with theory) that illustrates the importance of engaging historical connections between local disasters and alternative global and local education provision. This thoughtful and rather unique paper was carefully constructed to expose strategic connections crucial to postqualitative educational transitions.

Putting it All in Perspective

In this Special Issue of the *AJEE* the authors explore how different theoretical perspectives can expand the boundaries of educational research and open up educational and social inquiry (e.g., Carlson, 2021; Kuntz & St. Pierre, 2021). Putting it all in perspective, postqualitative inquiry, whether we like the term or not, is about 'upending Western Anthropocentric views of educational research' from a fundamentally political perspective (Hendriksen, Creely, & Mehta, 2022). Applying new perspectives such as posthumanism, new materialism, new ethics, and new empiricism implicates ongoing rethinking of existing assumptions and meanings in terms of new philosophical stances. For example, new materialisms, posthumanisms, new ethics, and new empirics create space for re-imaginings and at the same time points to tensions and debates that implicate many varied assumptions about human abilities to predict and shape future complexities. Each of these understandings carries assumptions about autonomy and human abilities to dominate (or not) and shape the 'subordinate' matter in our world (Lapinska, 2020, p. 337).

The posthuman divergence from the ideology of dominance offers a flattening of the hierarchy between humans and nonhuman machines that challenges humanist conceptions, a concrescence often discussed in terms of new materialisms. Questions of qualitative methodologies, as interpretive methods, restricted by naturalistic (applied science) paradigms and the need to move beyond Cartesian logics which has created hierarchies and polarities, remain. However, increasingly, academics in the social sciences are creating openings that view environmental justice through posthuman and new materialist lenses. This transition in rethinking inquiry assists in the reconceptualisation of environment and environmental education/research as does increasing resistance pressure from Indigenous and Black onto-epistemologies that demand cultural intra-action and performative practices. These new/old groundings in earth relations are crucial in integrating legal and economic system changes required to address complexities that remain beyond our extant capacities within a collective (global) consciousness. 'Climate' breakdown has become one of our most immanent concerns, along with socio-ecological destruction, as trans-cultural changes that signal the need for new beginnings as many of the papers in this Special Issue foreshadow.

In broad terms, inquiries within this Special Issue suggest the need for critical thinking that challenges gender and race relations, social exclusion and environmental justice and political structures of privilege, power, and politics. Taken as a whole, these inquiries delineate a new role for EE research, as transgressive research (Hooks, 1994; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2016). This Special Issue signals the beginning of changes that include learning from activist, feminist, Indigenous

approaches, and embodied ways of knowing. The authors show us an openness to new approaches to inquiry that can be mobilised for social change and environmental justice.

The following questions should be taken as discussion starters for anyone serious about exploring the new! Space prevents deeper discussion about further issues in this venue, but perhaps creates openings for further discussion in seminars and Special Issues to follow.

- How articulate can/must researchers be about philosophy such that it can underpin a research project (Thiele, Donoghue, & Türer, 2022)?
- What has methodology to do with postqualitative forms of inquiry?
- How do new ethics of responsibility and new empirics influence postqualitative inquiry?
- How might academic practices be reconfigured as creative processes through ‘thinking with theory’ (not qualitative methodologies) with new materialist and posthuman theorists (e.g., Karen Barad’s agential realism and process philosophy)?
- What have ‘all the above’ got to do with the ‘politics’ of inquiry (i.e., issues of power, gender, race . . .) (Davies, 2022)?
- Whether, and in what ways, do poststructuralist and new materialist research contribute to a just world?
- How can we engage the potential for activism in inquiry and in the world (de Andrade, Fang, Murray, Rodriguez-Dornas, Stenhouse, & Wyatt, 2021)?
- ‘How will these little words make a difference to the status quo, to the way things go?’
- After Haraway (2016), ‘How can we stay with the trouble?’
- In our inquiries, are we ethically bound to pay attention to how we word the world, to monitor our own complicity in the maintenance of social and environmental justice?
- What are our response-abilities; what kind of language/concepts ought we to use, the limits to our freedoms . . . ethics?

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