

Artificial Intelligence in Qualitative Inquiry: A Grimoire of Conjuring, Haunting, Trespassing, and Doubling

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"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

- Arthur C. Clarke (1973, p. 36)

Qualitative inquirers have devoted considerable attention to what artificial intelligence can do for existing research practices. Much of this conversation has centered on efficiency. We ask whether AI can transcribe more quickly (Battaglia, 2024), organize large bodies of material, generate codes, or reduce the labor of analysis (Hitch, 2024; Nguyen-Trung, 2025; Paulus et al., 2026). In other areas, this technology is imagined expansively—as transformative, uncanny, and even beyond human control (Campolo & Crawford, 2020; Singler, 2020). Across popular culture, AI appears as companion, oracle, monster, double, protector, threat, and worldmaker (Cave et al., 2020; Wörsdörfer, 2026). These figures endow AI with human, superhuman, and sometimes quasi-magical capacities, using it to stage wider hopes and fears about intimacy, autonomy, creation, control, and the human condition (Hermann, 2023; Wörsdörfer, 2026). In qualitative research, however, we often assign it to our most mundane methodological chores.

This volume begins with the mismatch between the expansiveness of what AI has been imagined to be and the narrowness of the tasks it is commonly assigned. What possibilities remain unexplored when AI enters inquiry primarily as a means of saving time or reducing analytical burden? What does AI allow qualitative researchers to do, see, become, or imagine that might otherwise remain unavailable?

A Grimoire of Conjuring, Haunting, Trespassing, and Doubling invites contributors to experiment with what AI makes possible within and around qualitative inquiry. Traditionally, a grimoire gathers practices for working with forces whose effects cannot be fully known in advance (Davies, 2009). We use the term for a collection concerned with creation, transformation, and uncertain forms of knowledge. Its four movements explore unfamiliar relations among human and machinic voices, methods, materials, and modes of knowing.

The Four Movements of the Grimoire

The sections are porous rather than prescriptive. A chapter may conjure through trespass, encounter a haunting through doubling, or move among all four.

Conjuring

Generating, speculating, and building worlds

Conjuring concerns the use of AI to bring something not yet present into form. Contributors might engage AI as a generative presence through which speculative field sites, imagined futures, alternative narratives, invented archives, or unfamiliar methodological forms can emerge. Such work may begin with existing data, theory, memory, or experience while asking what else these materials might become.

Chapters in this section might explore AI-assisted world-building, speculative participants or research encounters, fictionalized extensions of empirical material, imagined futures extrapolated from present conditions, or creative forms that alter how qualitative knowledge can be produced and communicated.

Haunting

Reaching toward absence, loss, and what remains

Haunting gathers work concerned with what is missing but continues to exert a presence. Contributors might use AI to reach toward voices excluded from archives, histories that were never recorded, participants who cannot speak, knowledge that has been suppressed, or futures abandoned in favor of others.

Chapters might explore synthetic archives, speculative remembrance, erased or inaccessible testimony, lost futures, machine-produced traces, or the ethical tensions involved in asking AI to speak near, around, or with those who are absent. Haunting asks what might return when researchers engage what cannot be fully retrieved, restored, or recovered.

Trespassing

Crossing disciplinary, methodological, and epistemological boundaries

Trespassing treats AI as both a means of crossing lines and a disturbance that makes those lines newly visible, unstable, and open to question. Contributors might use AI to move among disciplines, theoretical traditions, artistic practices, ethical conventions, or modes of representation that qualitative inquiry usually keeps apart.

Chapters in this section may deliberately exceed what qualitative research is “expected” to look, sound, or behave like. Trespassing may also involve examining the boundaries that should remain difficult to cross and the unequal consequences of methodological transgression. It asks who is permitted to move beyond established conventions, what becomes available through that movement, and what risks accompany it.

Doubling

Encountering researchers, participants, and their machinic mirrors

Doubling explores what happens when AI produces another version of the researcher, the participant, the data, or the research encounter. Contributors might work with synthetic selves,

shadow participants, alternate narrators, or machinic extensions of a person's language, presence, or style.

Chapters in this section may allow these doubles to speak, diverge, multiply, or continue beyond the conditions that first produced them. They might stage encounters between researchers and their synthetic counterparts, create parallel versions of a participant or field site, or follow a voice as it moves across human and machinic forms. Doubling asks what becomes possible when an encounter no longer remains singular, and how these proliferations trouble authorship, identity, representation, and relation.

What We Are Looking For

Contributions may be conceptual, empirical, experimental, arts-based, performative, poetic, multimodal, methodological, or deliberately difficult to classify. We are especially interested in contributions for which experimentation is integral to the inquiry itself.

Creative experimentation does not presume celebration. Chapters may remain with AI's failures, distortions, refusals, excesses, and ethical complications. We welcome work that takes these tensions seriously without resolving them into best practices or simplified judgments about whether AI is beneficial or harmful.

Proposals centered primarily on using AI to accelerate familiar tasks, compare conventional analyses, or demonstrate methodological efficiency are unlikely to fit. We invite contributors to ask what else qualitative inquiry might become when its methods, voices, materials, and imaginative limits are allowed to move.

Contributor Expectations and Chapter Guidelines

As part of the volume's collaborative review process, contributors whose proposals are accepted will be asked to provide a constructive peer review of one other chapter. Reviews will support the development of individual chapters while encouraging conversation across the volume's four movements.

Final chapters should be no more than 6,000 words, including references, notes, tables, and figure captions. Detailed formatting and style guidelines will depend on the requirements of the publisher and will be communicated to contributors once the volume is under contract.

Chapters should present original work that has not been previously published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. An invitation to submit a full chapter does not guarantee publication. Final acceptance will be contingent on editorial and peer review, satisfactory revision, and publisher approval.

Chapters involving participants, archival materials, or other human-derived materials should address the ethical and representational conditions of that work. Authors will also be asked to account for how AI systems participated in the development of the chapter, including how

generated materials were reviewed, revised, refused, or incorporated. This account may take a conventional or creative form, provided that it offers readers a meaningful sense of the role AI played in the work.

Timeline

- October 15, 2026: Submit abstracts to editors for consideration
- December 1, 2026: Invitation to authors for full chapters
- Proposal submitted to publisher
- June 1, 2027: Submit full chapters to editors
- June 5, 2027: Chapters assigned to reviewers for feedback
- July 15, 2027: Reviewer feedback returned to editors
- August 2, 2027: Invitations for revisions sent to authors
- October 15, 2027: Submit final chapters

**All dates are tentative and subject to change with advanced notice.*

Submit for Consideration

- Proposed chapter title
- 500-750 word abstract in APA7
- Author name(s) and affiliation(s)
- Contact information for the corresponding author
- 100-150 word author bio(s) for all contributors
- What section(s) the author(s) sees the chapter fitting in

Please submit proposals as an attached Word-compatible document (.docx). Please do not send links to Google Docs, Box files, or other online documents. Authors who are unable to create a .docx file may submit a PDF. Submit your proposal to aiqualbook@gmail.com

Correspondence related to the book can be sent to Lorien (aiqualbook@gmail.com).

“The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.”

- Arthur C. Clarke (1973, p. 21)

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