



The SAGE Handbook of

Qualitative Research

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Edited by
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55 City Road
London EC1Y 1SP
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Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044
India

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33 Pekin Street #02-01
Far East Square
Singapore 048763

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The Sage handbook of qualitative research / editors, Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln. — 4th ed.

p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4129-7417-2 (cloth)

1. Social sciences--Research. 2. Qualitative research. I. Denzin, Norman K. II. Lincoln, Yvonna S. III. Title: Handbook of qualitative research.

H62.H2455 2011 001.A'2—dc22 2010052892

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

11 12 13 14 15 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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PREFACE

The fourth edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, like the third edition, is virtually a new volume. Nearly two thirds of the authors from the third edition have been replaced by new contributors. Indeed, there are 53 new chapters, authors, and/or coauthors. There are 18 totally new chapter topics, including contributions on critical social science, endarkened transnational feminist praxis, critical pedagogy, Asian epistemologies, disability communities and transformative research for social justice, human rights, oral history, indigenous inquiry, evidence, politics, science and government, criteria for assessing interpretive validity, models of representation, varieties of validity, qualitative research and technology, queer theory, performance ethnography, narrative inquiry, arts-based inquiry, the politics and ethics of online ethnography, analytic methodologies, writing strategies, policy and qualitative evaluation, the future of qualitative inquiry, teaching qualitative research, talk and text, focus groups, critical pedagogy, and models, issues, and controversies in mixed methods research. All returning authors have substantially revised their original contributions, in many cases producing a totally new and different chapter.

There were and continue to be multiple social science and humanities audiences for the *Handbook*: graduate students who want to learn how to do qualitative research; interested faculty hoping to become better informed about the field; persons in policy settings, who understand the value of qualitative research methodologies and want to learn about the latest developments in the field; and faculty who are experts in one of more areas of the *Handbook*, but who also want to be informed about the most recent developments in the field. We never imagined this audience would be so large. Nor did we imagine that the *Handbook* would become a text used in undergraduate and graduate research methods courses, but it did. In 2008, we created three new paperback volumes for classroom use: *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*, *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, and *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*.

The fourth edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* continues where the third edition ended. Sometime during the last two decades, critical qualitative inquiry came of age, or

more accurately moved through another historical phase.¹ Out of the qualitative-quantitative paradigm wars of the 1980s, there appeared, seemingly overnight, journals,² handbooks,³ textbooks,⁴ dissertation awards,⁵ annual distinguished lectures,⁶ and scholarly associations.⁷ All of these formations were dedicated to some version of qualitative inquiry (see the Erickson, Chapter 3, this volume). Scholars were in the midst of a social movement of sorts, a new field of inquiry; a new discourse had arrived, or so it seemed, and it flourished.

Qualitative researchers proudly took their place at the table. Students flocked to graduate programs for study and mentoring. Instruction in qualitative and mixed methods models became commonplace. Now there were QUAN and QUAL programs (see the chapter by Eisenhart & Jurow, Chapter 43, this volume). Paradigm proliferation prevailed, a rainbow coalition of racialized and queered post-isms, from feminism, to structuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism, postpostivism, post-scientism, Marxism, and postconstructivism (Erickson, Chapter 3, this volume).

All of this took place within and against a complex historical field, a global war on terror, a third methodological movement (Teddlie & Tashakkori, Chapter 16, this volume), the beginning or end of the eighth moment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).⁸ In the *methodologically contested present*, qualitative researchers confronted and then went beyond the scientific backlash associated with the evidence-based social movement connected in North American education with the No Child Left Behind legislation (see Hatch, 2006). At the same time, they embraced multiple and mixed methods approaches to inquiry (see Teddlie & Tashakkori, Chapter 16, and Creswell, Chapter 15, this volume).

So at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, it is time to move forward. It time to open up new spaces, time to explore new discourses. We need to find new ways of connecting persons and their personal troubles with social justice methodologies. We need to become better accomplished in linking these interventions to those institutional sites where troubles are turned into public issues and public issues transformed into social policy.

A critical framework is central to this project. It privileges practice, politics, action, consequences, performances, discourses, methodologies of the heart, and pedagogies of hope, love, care, forgiveness, and healing (Pelias, Chapter 40, this volume; Dillard & Okpalaoka, Chapter 8, this volume). It speaks for and with those who are on the margins. As a liberationist philosophy, it is committed to examining the consequences of racism, poverty, and sexism on the lives of interacting individuals.

Moving forward, it is necessary to confront and work through the criticisms that continue to be directed to qualitative inquiry. Each generation must draw its line in the sand and take a stance toward the past. Each generation must articulate its epistemological, methodological, and ethical stance toward critical inquiry. Each generation must offer its responses to current and past criticisms. In the spirit of inclusion, let us listen to our critics. But in doing so, we must renew our efforts to de-colonize the academy, to honor the voices of those who have been silenced by dominant paradigms. Let us do this in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration and mutual self-respect.

There is a pressing need to show how the practices of qualitative research can help change the world in positive ways. It is necessary to continue to engage the pedagogical, theoretical, and practical promise of qualitative research as a form of radical democratic practice.

In our invitation letter to authors and editorial boards members, we stated that

As with the third edition, which was published by Sage in 2005, we regard the *Handbook* as a major benchmark for future work in this field. One measure of a benchmark work is its status in graduate education. We want the fourth edition to be a work that all doctoral students in your field will continue to want to study as they prepare for their exams and their dissertations. We have also been gratified to discover that many faculty use the *Handbook* as a class textbook; we hope that the fourth edition fulfills the same teaching needs. The new edition should advance a democratic project committed to social justice in an age of uncertainty. We are working with authors who can write chapters that will address practical, concrete issues of implementation while critiquing the field and mapping key current and emergent themes, debates, and developments.

This is the three-sided agenda of the fourth edition, to show how the discourses of qualitative research, inside and outside the classroom, can be used to help create and imagine a free democratic society. Each of the chapters that follow is defined by these commitments, in one way or another.



We ask of a handbook that it do many things. A handbook should ideally represent the distillation of knowledge of a field; it should be a benchmark volume that synthesizes an existing literature, helping to define and shape the present and future of

that discipline. A handbook charts the past, the present, and the future of the discourses at hand. It represents the very best thinking of the very best scholars in the world. It is reflexive, comprehensive, dialogical, accessible. It is authoritative and definitive. Its subject matter is clearly defined. Its authors work within a shared framework. Its authors and editors seek to impose an order on a field and a discipline. Yet they respect and attempt to honor diversity across disciplinary and paradigmatic perspectives.

A handbook is more than a review of the literature. It speaks to graduate students, to established scholars, and to scholars who wish to learn about the field. It has hands-on information. It shows persons how to move from ideas to inquiry, from inquiry to interpretation, from interpretation to praxis to action in the world. It locates its project within larger disciplinary and historical formations. It takes a stand on social justice issues; it is not just about pure scholarship. It is humble. It is indispensable.

These understandings organized the first three editions of this *Handbook*. In metaphorical terms, if you were to take one book on qualitative research with you to a desert island (or for a comprehensive graduate examination), a handbook would be the book.

A critical social science seeks its external grounding not in science, in any of its revisionist postpositivist forms, but rather in a commitment to critical pedagogy and communitarian feminism with hope but no guarantees. It seeks to understand how power and ideology operate through and across systems of discourse, cultural commodities, and cultural texts. It asks how words and texts and their meanings play a pivotal part in the culture's "decisive performances of race, class [and] gender" (Downing 1987, p. 80).

We no longer just write culture. We perform culture. We have many different forms of qualitative inquiry today. We have multiple criteria for evaluating our work (see Appendix B). It is a new day for our generation. We have drawn our line in the sand, and we may redraw it. But we stand firmly behind the belief that critical qualitative inquiry inspired by the sociological imagination can make the world a better place.

■ ORGANIZATION OF THIS VOLUME

The organization of the *Handbook* moves from the general to the specific, the past to the present. Part I locates the field, starting with applied qualitative research traditions in the academy, then takes up the history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational research, ethics, politics, and critical social science traditions. Part II isolates what we regard as the major historical and contemporary paradigms now structuring and influencing qualitative research in the human disciplines. The chapters move from competing paradigms (positivist, postpositivist,

constructivist, critical theory) to specific interpretive perspectives (critical ethnography, feminist and endarkened transnational discourse, critical race theory, cultural studies, critical humanism and queer theory, Asian epistemologies, and disability studies).

Part III isolates the major strategies of inquiry—historically, the research methods—a researcher can use in a concrete study. The contributors in this section embed their discussions of specific strategies of inquiry (mixed methods, case study, performance ethnography, narrative ethnography, interpretive practice, grounded theory, *testimonio*, participatory action research, clinical research) in social justice topics. The history and uses of these strategies are extensively explored in the 11 chapters in Part III.

Still, the question of methods begins with the design of the qualitative research project. This always begins with a socially situated researcher who moves from a research question, to a paradigm or perspective, to the empirical world. So located, the researcher then addresses the range of methods that can be employed in any study. In Chapter 14 of this volume, Julianne Cheek wisely observes that questions surrounding the practice and politics of funding qualitative research are often paramount at this point in any study. Globally, funding for qualitative research becomes more difficult as methodological conservatism gains momentum in neoliberal political regimes.

Part IV examines methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials. It moves from narrative inquiry to chapters on arts-based inquiry, oral history, observation, visual methodology, performative autoethnography, the politics, ethics, and forms of online ethnography, and analyses of talk and text, then on to focus groups, pedagogy, and politics.

Part V takes up the art and practices of interpretation, evaluation, and presentation, including criteria for judging the adequacy of qualitative materials in an age of relativism, the interpretive process, writing as a method of inquiry, the poetics of place, cultural *poesis*, investigative poetry and the politics of witnessing, and qualitative evaluation and changing social policy. The three chapters in Part VI speculate on the future and promise of the social sciences and qualitative research in an age of global uncertainty.

■ PREPARATION OF THE REVISED *HANDBOOK*

In preparation of a revised *Handbook*, it again became clear in our lengthy discussions that we needed input from perspectives other than our own. To accomplish this, we assembled a highly prestigious, international, and interdisciplinary editorial board (listed at the front of this volume), who assisted us in the selection of equally prestigious authors, the preparation of the Table of Contents, and the reading of (often multiple drafts) of each chapter. We used editorial board members as windows into

their respective disciplines. We sought information on key topics, perspectives, and controversies that needed to be addressed. In our selection of editorial board members and chapter authors, we attempted to crosscut disciplinary, gender, race, paradigm, and national boundaries. Our hope was to use the authors' views to minimize our own disciplinary blinders.

Extensive feedback was received from the editorial board, including suggestions for new chapters, different slants to take on each of the chapters, and suggestions of authors for different chapters. In addition to considering social justice issues, each *Handbook* author—internationally recognized in his or her subject matter—was asked to treat such topics as history, epistemology, ontology, exemplary texts, key controversies, competing paradigms, and predictions about the future.

■ RESPONDING TO CRITICS

We were gratified by the tremendous response from the field; especially gratifying were the hundreds of professors from around the world who choose the *Handbook* (in one form or another) as an assigned reading for their students. We were also gratified by the critical responses to the work. The *Handbook* has helped open a space for dialogue. This dialogue was long overdue. Many found problems with our approach to the field, and these problems indicate places where more conversations need to take place.

Among the criticisms of the first three editions were the following: our framework was unwieldy; we did not give enough attention to the Chicago School; there was too much emphasis on the postmodern period; we had an arbitrary historical model (Alasuutari, 2004; Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003); we were too eclectic; we overemphasized the contemporary period and the crisis of representation; we gave too much attention to political correctness and not enough to knowledge for its own sake; there was not enough on how to do it. Some felt that a revolution had not occurred and wondered, too, how we proposed to evaluate qualitative research, now that the narrative turn has been taken. Others contended that our framework exposed the social sciences to unnecessary criticism and indeed threatened the entire project of social inquiry.

We cannot speak for the more than 160 chapter authors from the first, second, and third editions. Each person has taken a stance on these issues. As editors, we have attempted to represent a number of competing or at least contesting ideologies and frames of reference. This *Handbook* is not nor is it intended to be the view from the bridge of Denzin or Lincoln. We are not saying that there is only one way to do research, or that our way is best, or that the so-called old ways are bad. We are just saying this is one way to conceptualize this field, and it is a way that we find useful.

Of course, the *Handbook* is not a single thing. It even transcends the sum of its parts, and there is enormous diversity

within and between every chapter. It is our hope that readers find spaces within these spaces that work for them. It is our desire that new dialogue take place within these spaces. This will be a gentle, probing, neighborly, and critical conversation, a conversation that bridges the many diverse interpretive communities that today make up this field called qualitative research. We value passion, we invite criticism, and we seek to initiate a discourse of resistance. Internationally, qualitative researchers must struggle against neoliberal regimes of truth, science, and justice.

■ DEFINING THE FIELD

The qualitative research community consist of groups of globally dispersed persons who are attempting to implement a critical interpretive approach that will help them (and others) make sense of the terrifying conditions that define daily life at the first decade of this new century. These individuals employ constructivist, critical theory, feminist, queer, and critical race theory, as well as cultural studies models of interpretation. They locate themselves on the borders between postpositivism and poststructuralism. They use any and all of the research strategies (case study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, biographical, historical, participatory, and clinical) discussed in Part III of the *Handbook*. As interpretive *bricoleurs* (see Harper, 1987, pp. 9, 74; Kincheloe, 2008), the members of this group are adept at using all of the methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials discussed by the authors of the chapters in Part IV of the *Handbook*. And, as writers and interpreters, these individuals wrestle with positivist, postpositivist, poststructural, and postmodern criteria for evaluating their written work.⁷

These scholars constitute a loosely defined international interpretive community. They are slowly coming to agreement on what constitutes a “good” and “bad,” or banal, or an emancipatory, troubling analysis and interpretation. They are constantly challenging the distinction between the “real” and that which is constructed, understanding that all events and understandings are mediated and made real through interactional and material practices, through discourse, conversation, writing, narrative, scientific articles, realist, postrealist, and performance tales from the field.

This group works at both the centers and the margins of those emerging interdisciplinary, transnational formations that crisscross the borders between communications; race, ethnic, religious, and women’s studies; sociology; history; anthropology; literary criticism; political science; economics; social work; health care; and education. This work is characterized by a quiet change in outlook, a transdisciplinary conversation, and a pragmatic change in practices, politics, and habits.

At this juncture—the uneasy, troubled crossroads between neoliberalism, pragmatism, and postmodernism—a quiet

revolution is occurring. This revolution is defined by the politics of representation, which asks what is represented in a text and how should it be judged. We have left the world of naïve realism, knowing now that a text does not mirror the world, it creates the world. Furthermore, there is no external world or final arbiter—lived experience, for example—against which a text is judged.

Pragmatism is central to this conversation, for it is itself a theoretical and philosophical concern, firmly rooted in the post-realist tradition. As such, it is a theoretical position that privileges practice and method over reflection and deliberative action. Indeed, postmodernism itself has no predisposition to privilege discourse or text over observation. Instead, postmodernism (and poststructuralism) would simply have us attend to discourse and performance as seriously as we attend to observation (or any other fieldwork methods) and to recognize that our discourses are the vehicles for sharing our observations with those who were not in the field with us.

The angst attending our recognition of the hidden powers of discourses is precisely what leaves us now at the threshold of postmodernism and signals the advent of questions that will leave none of us untouched. It is true that contemporary qualitative, interpretive research exists within competing fields of discourse. Our present history of the field locates seven moments—and an eighth—the future. These moments all circulate in the present, competing with and defining one another. This discourse is moving in several directions at the same time. This has the effect of simultaneously creating new spaces, new possibilities, and new formations for qualitative research methods while closing down others.

There are those who would marginalize and politicize the postmodern, poststructural versions of qualitative research, equating them with political correctness, with radical relativism, narratives of the self, and armchair commentary. Some would chastise this *Handbook* for not paying adequate homage to the hands-on, nuts-and-bolts approach to fieldwork, to texts that tell us how to study the “real” world. Still others would seek a preferred, canonical, but flexible version of this project, returning to the Chicago School or to more recent formal, analytic, realist versions. Some would criticize the formation from within, contending that the privileging of discourse over observation does not yield adequate criteria for evaluating interpretive work, wondering what to do when left with only voice and interpretation. Many ask for a normative framework for evaluating their own work. None of these desires are likely to be satisfied anytime soon, however. Contestation, contradiction, and philosophical tensions make the achievement of consensus on any of these issues less than imminent.

We are not collating history here, although every chapter describes the history in a subfield. Our intention, which our contributors share, is to point to the future, where the field of qualitative research methods will be 10 years from now. Of course, much of the field still works within frameworks defined by earlier

historical moments. This is how it should be. There is no one way to do interpretive, qualitative inquiry. We are all interpretive *bricoleurs* stuck in the present, working against the past, as we move into a politically charged and challenging future.

■ COMPETING DEFINITIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

The open-ended nature of the qualitative research project leads to a perpetual resistance against attempts to impose a single, umbrella-like paradigm over the entire project. There are multiple interpretive projects, including the decolonizing methodological project of indigenous scholars, theories of critical pedagogy, performance [auto] ethnographies; standpoint epistemologies, critical race theory; critical, public, poetic, queer, materialist, feminist, reflexive, ethnographies; projects connected to the British cultural studies and Frankfurt schools; grounded theorists of several varieties; multiple strands of ethnomethodology; African American, prophetic, postmodern, and neo-pragmatic Marxism; an American-based critical cultural studies model; and transnational cultural studies projects.

The generic focus of each of these versions of qualitative research moves in five directions at the same time: (1) the “detour through interpretive theory” and a politics of the local, linked to (2) the analysis of the politics of representation and the textual analyses of literary and cultural forms, including their production, distribution, and consumption; (3) the ethnographic qualitative study and representation of these forms in everyday life; (4) the investigation of new pedagogical and interpretive practices that interactively engage critical cultural analysis in the classroom and the local community; and (5) a utopian politics of possibility (Madison, 1998) that redresses social injustices and imagines a radical democracy that is not yet (Weems, 2002, p. 3)

■ WHOSE REVOLUTION?

To summarize, a single, several-part thesis organizes our reading of where the field of qualitative research methodology is today. First, this project has changed because the world that qualitative research confronts, within and outside the academy, has changed. It has also changed because of the increasing sophistication—both theoretical and methodological—of interpretivist researchers everywhere. Disjuncture and difference, violence and terror, define the global political economy. This is a post- or neo-colonial world. It is necessary to think beyond the nation or the local group as the focus of inquiry.

Second, this is a world where ethnographic texts circulate like other commodities in an electronic world economy. It may be

that ethnography is one of the major discourses of the neomodern world. But if this is so, it is no longer possible to take for granted what is meant by ethnography, even by traditional, realist qualitative research (see Snow, 1999, p. 97).¹⁰ Global and local legal processes have erased the personal and institutional distance between the ethnographer and those he or she writes about. We do not “own” the fieldnotes we make about those we study. We do not have an undisputed warrant to study anyone or anything. Subjects now challenge how they have been written about, and more than one ethnographer has been taken to court.

Third, this is a gendered project. Feminist, postcolonial, and queer theorists question the traditional logic of the heterosexual, narrative ethnographic text, which reflexively positions the ethnographer’s gender-neutral (or masculine) self within a realist story. Today there is no solidified ethnographic identity. The ethnographer works within a hybrid reality. Experience, discourse, and self-understandings collide against larger cultural assumptions concerning race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, class, and age. A certain identity is never possible; the ethnographer must always ask, “not *who* am I?” but “*when, where, how* am I?” (Trinh, 1992, p. 157).

Fourth, qualitative research is an inquiry project, but it is also a moral, allegorical, and therapeutic project. Ethnography is more than the record of human experience. The ethnographer writes tiny moral tales, tales that do more than celebrate cultural difference or bring another culture alive. The researcher’s story is written as a prop, a pillar that, to paraphrase William Faulkner (1967, p. 724), will help men and women endure and prevail in the opening years of the 21st century.

Fifth, while the field of qualitative research is defined by constant breaks and ruptures, there is a shifting center to the project: the avowed humanistic and social justice commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual. From this principle flow the liberal and radical politics of action that are held by feminist, clinical, ethnic, critical, queer, critical race theory, and cultural studies researchers. While multiple interpretive communities now circulate within the field of qualitative research, they are all united on this single point.

Sixth, qualitative research’s seventh and eighth moments will be defined by the work that interpretive scholars do as they implement the above assumptions. These situations set the stage for qualitative research’s transformations in the 21st century. Finally, we anticipate a continued performance turn in qualitative inquiry, with writers performing their texts for others.

■ TALES OF THE HANDBOOK

Many of the difficulties in developing a volume such as this are common to any project of this magnitude. Others were set by the essential tensions and contradictions that operate in this field at this historical moment. As with the first, second, and

third editions, the “right” chapter author was unavailable, too busy, or overcommitted. Consequently, we sought out others, who turned out to be more “right” than we imagined possible. Few overlapping networks cut across the many disciplines we were attempting to cover. We were fortunate, in more than one instance, when an editorial board member pointed us in a direction of which we were not even aware. We are grateful to Michelle Fine for connecting us with the international community of indigenous scholars. We have attempted to represent some of the best work available in the North and South American, European, Asian, South African, Australian, and New Zealand traditions of qualitative research.

Although we knew the territory somewhat better this time around, there were still spaces we blundered into with little knowledge about who should be asked to do what. We confronted disciplinary and generational blinders—including our own—and discovered there were separate traditions surrounding each of our topics within distinct interpretive communities. It was often difficult to know how to bridge these differences, and our bridges were often makeshift constructions. We also had to cope with vastly different styles of thinking about a variety of different topics based on disciplinary, epistemological, gender, racial, ethnic, cultural, and national beliefs, boundaries, and ideologies.

In many instances, we unwittingly entered into political battles over who should write a chapter or over how a chapter should be written or evaluated. These disputes clearly pointed to the political nature of this project and to the fact that each chapter was a potential if not real site for multiple interpretations. Many times, the politics of meaning came into play, as we attempted to negotiate and navigate our way through areas fraught with high emotion. On more than one occasion, we disagreed with both an author and an editorial board member. We often found ourselves adjudicating between competing editorial reviews, working the hyphens between meaning-making and diplomacy. Regrettably, in some cases, we hurt feelings and perhaps even damaged long-standing friendships. In such moments, we sought forgiveness. With the clarity of hindsight, there are many things we would do differently today, and we apologize for the damage we have done.

We, as well as our authors and advisers, struggled with the meanings we wanted to bring to such terms as theory, paradigm, epistemology, interpretive framework, empirical materials versus data, research strategies, and so on. We discovered that the very term *qualitative research* means different things to many different people.

We abandoned the goal of being comprehensive, even with 1,500-manuscript pages. We fought with authors over deadlines, and the number of pages we would give them. We also fought with authors over how to conceptualize their chapters and found that what was clear to us was not necessarily clear to anyone else. We fought, too, over when a chapter was done and constantly sought the forbearance of our authors as we requested yet another revision.

▣ READING THE *HANDBOOK*

Were we to write our own critique of this book, we would point to the shortcomings we see in it, and in many senses, these are the same as those in previous editions. They include an overreliance on the perspectives of our respective disciplines (sociology, communications, and education), as well as a failure to involve more scholars from the international indigenous community. We do not have a detailed treatment of the intersection of critical and indigenous inquiry, nor do we have a comprehensive chapter on human subject research and institutional review boards (IRBs). We worked hard to avoid all of these problems. On the other hand, we have addressed some of the problems present in the third edition. We have made a greater effort to cover more areas of applied qualitative work. We have helped initiate dialogue between different chapter authors. We have created spaces for more voices from other disciplines, especially anthropology and communications, but we still have a shortfall of voices representing people of color and of the Third World. We would have liked to include more non-English speakers from outside Europe and North America. You, the reader, will certainly have your own response to this book, which may highlight other issues that we do not see.

This is all in the nature of the *Handbook* and in the nature of doing qualitative research. This handbook is a social construction, a socially enacted, co-created entity, and though it exists in a material form, it will no doubt be re-created in subsequent iterations as generations of scholars and graduate students use it, adapt it, and launch from it additional methodological paradigmatic, theoretical, and practical work. It is not a final statement. It is a starting point, a springboard for new thought and new work, work that is fresh and sensitive and that blurs the boundaries of our disciplines, but always sharpens our understandings of the larger human project.

With all its strengths and all its flaws, it is our hope that this project, in its fourth edition, will contribute to the growing maturity and global influence of qualitative research in the human disciplines. And, following our original intent, we hope this convinces you, the reader, that qualitative research now constitutes a field of study in its own right, allowing you to better anchor and locate your own work in the qualitative research tradition and its central place in a radical democratic project. If this happens, we will have succeeded in building a bridge that serves all of us well.

▣ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This *Handbook* would not exist without its authors, as well as the editorial board members, who gave freely, often on very short notice, of their time, advice, and ever-courteous suggestions. We acknowledge en masse the support of the authors and the editorial board members, whose names are listed facing the

title page. These individuals were able to offer both long-term, sustained commitments to the project and short-term emergency assistance.

There are other debts, intensely personal and closer to home. The *Handbook* would never have been possible without the ever-present help, support, wisdom, and encouragement of our editors and publishers at Sage: Michele Sordi, Vicki Knight, Sean Connelly, and Lauren Habib. Their grasp of this field, its history, and diversity is extraordinary. Their conceptions of what this project should look like were extremely valuable. Their energy kept us moving forward. Furthermore, whenever we confronted a problem, Michele, Vicki, and Lauren were there with their assistance and good-natured humor.

We would also like to thank the following individuals and institutions for their assistance, support, insights, and patience: our respective universities, administrations, and departments. In Urbana, James Salvo, Melba Velez, Koeli Goel, and Katia Curbelo were the *sine qua non*. Their good humor and grace kept our ever-growing files in order and everyone on the same timetable. Without them, this project would never have been completed.

The following individuals at Sage Publications helped move this project through production: Astrid Viriding, Jackie Tasch, Taryn Bigelow, Robin Gold, and Teresa Herlinger. We are extremely grateful to them, as well as to Dennis Webb and Kathy Paparchontis for their excellent work during the proof-reading and indexing phases of production. Our spouses, Katherine Ryan and Egon Guba, helped keep us on track, listened to our complaints, and generally displayed extraordinary patience, forbearance, and support.

Finally, there is another group of individuals who gave unstintingly of their time and energy to provide us with their expertise and thoughtful reviews when we needed additional guidance. Without the help of these individuals, we would often have found ourselves with less than complete understandings of the various traditions, perspectives, and methods represented in this volume. We would also like to acknowledge the important contributions of the following special readers to this project: Bryant Alexander, Susan Chase, Michele Fine, Susan Finley, Andrea Fontana, Jaber Gubrium, James Holstein, Alison Jones, Stacy Holman Jones, Tony Kuzel, Luis Miron, Ron Pelias, John Prosser, Johnny Saldana, and Harry Torrance.

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■ NOTES

1. Qualitative inquiry in North America has passed through several historical moments or phases: the traditional (1900–1950), the modernist or golden age (1950–1970), blurred genres (1970–1986),

the crisis of representation (1986–1990), the postmodern (1990–1995), postexperimental inquiry (1995–2000), the methodologically contested present (2000–2004), and the fractured future (2005–). These moments overlap and coexist in the present (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 2–3). This model has been termed a progress narrative by Alasuutari (2004, pp. 599–600); Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, and Silverman (2004, p. 2); and Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont (2003). The critics assert that we believe that the most recent moment is the most up-to-date, the avant-garde, the cutting edge (Alasuutari, 2004, p. 601). Naturally, we dispute this reading. Teddlie and Tashakkori (Chapter 16, this volume) have modified our historical periods to fit their historical analysis of the major moments in the emergence of mixed methods in the last century.

2. Today the list for the United States (and England) is very, very long, many of the journals are published by Sage, including *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Qualitative Health Research*, *Qualitative Research*, *Qualitative Social Work*, *Cultural Studies* <=> *Critical Methodologies*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Discourse Studies*, *Discourse and Society*, *Ethnography*, and *Field Methods*. Other important journals include *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *Anthropology and Education*, *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, *Text and Performance Quarterly*, and *The International Review of Qualitative Research*.

3. Again, from Sage—the *Handbooks of: Qualitative Research*, *Grounded Theory*, *Ethnography*, *Interviewing*, *Narrative Inquiry*, *Performance Studies*, and *Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*.

4. Sage seemingly has dozens of these texts, including those focused on case study, interviewing, Internet inquiry, ethnography, focus groups, visual data, conversation analysis, observation, participatory action research, ethics, qualitative design and analysis, life history, and interpretive biography (see Staller, Block, & Horner, 2008, for a review of Sage's place in this discourse).

5. Including the distinguished qualitative dissertation awards of the International Association of Qualitative Inquiry and the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

6. Including the Annual Egon Guba Distinguished Lecture for the QUALSIG of AERA.

7. On May 7, 2005, the last day of the First International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, the International Association of Qualitative Inquiry (IAQI) was founded in Urbana, Illinois. IAQI is the first international association solely dedicated to the scholarly promotion, representation, and global development of qualitative research. At present, IAQI has 3,500 delegates representing 60 nations worldwide. It has established professional affiliations with more than 150 collaborating sites in Oceania, Africa, North and South America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, Japan, Korea, and China (see icqi.org). The *IAQI Newsletter* appears quarterly, as does a new journal, *The International Review of Qualitative Research*.

8. Mixed methods research is Teddlie and Tashakkori's third movement or moment. The first movement is quantitative research, and the second is qualitative inquiry. The third moment offers a middle ground that mediates quantitative and qualitative disputes (Teddlie and Tashakkori, Chapter 16, this volume).

9. These criteria range from those endorsed by postpositivists (variations on validity and reliability, including credibility and trustworthiness), to poststructural feminist standpoint concerns emphasizing collaborative, evocative performance texts that create ethically responsible relations between researchers and those they study.

10. The realist text, Jameson (1990) argues, constructed its version of the world by “programming. . . . readers; by training them in new habits and practices. . . . such narratives must ultimately produce that very category of Reality. . . . of the real, of the ‘objective’ or ‘external’ world, which itself historical, may undergo decisive modification in other modes of production, if not in later stages of this one” (p. 166). The new ethnographic text is producing its versions of reality and teaching readers how to engage this view of the social world.

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INTRODUCTION

The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research

Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln

The global community of qualitative researchers is midway between two extremes, searching for a new middle, moving in several different directions at the same time.¹ Mixed methodologies and calls for scientifically based research, on the one side, renewed calls for social justice inquiry from the critical social science tradition on the other. In the methodological struggles of the 1970s and 1980s, the very existence of qualitative research was at issue. In the new paradigm war, “every overtly social justice-oriented approach to research . . . is threatened with de-legitimization by the government-sanctioned, exclusivist assertion of positivism . . . as the ‘gold standard’ of educational research” (Wright, 2006, pp. 799–800).

The evidence-based research movement, with its fixed standards and guidelines for conducting and evaluating qualitative inquiry, sought total domination: one shoe fits all (Cannella & Lincoln, Chapter 5, this volume; Lincoln, 2010). The heart of the matter turns on issues surrounding the politics and ethics of evidence and the value of qualitative work in addressing matters of equity and social justice (Torrance, Chapter 34, this volume).

In this introductory chapter, we define the field of qualitative research, then navigate, chart, and review the history of qualitative research in the human disciplines. This will allow us to locate this handbook and its contents within their historical moments. (These historical moments are somewhat artificial; they are socially constructed, quasi-historical, and overlapping conventions. Nevertheless, they permit a “performance” of developing ideas. They also facilitate an increasing sensitivity to and sophistication about the pitfalls and promises of ethnography and qualitative research.) A conceptual framework for reading the qualitative research act as a multicultural, gendered process is presented.

We then provide a brief introduction to the chapters, concluding with a brief discussion of qualitative research. We will also discuss the threats to qualitative human-subject research from the methodological conservatism movement, which was noted in our Preface. As indicated there, we use the metaphor of the bridge to structure what follows. This volume provides a bridge between historical moments, politics, the decolonization project, research methods, paradigms, and communities of interpretive scholars.

▣ HISTORY, POLITICS, AND PARADIGMS

To better understand where we are today and to better grasp current criticisms, it is useful to return to the so-called paradigm wars of the 1980s, which resulted in the serious crippling of quantitative research in education. Critical pedagogy, critical theorists, and feminist analyses fostered struggles to acquire power and cultural capital for the poor, non-whites, women, and gays (Gage, 1989).

Charles Teddlie and Abbas Tashakkori’s history is helpful here. They expand the time frame of the 1980s war to embrace at least three paradigm wars, or periods of conflict: the postpositivist-constructivist war against positivism (1970–1990); the conflict between competing postpositivist, constructivist, and critical theory paradigms (1990–2005); and the current conflict between evidence-based methodologists and the mixed methods, interpretive, and critical theory schools (2005–present).²

Egon Guba’s (1990a) *The Paradigm Dialog* signaled an end to the 1980s wars. Postpositivists, constructivists, and critical theorists talked to one another, working through issues connected to ethics, field studies, praxis, criteria, knowledge accumulation,

truth, significance, graduate training, values, and politics. By the early 1990s, there was an explosion of published work on qualitative research; handbooks and new journals appeared. Special interest groups committed to particular paradigms appeared, some with their own journals.³

The second paradigm conflict occurred within the mixed methods community and involved disputes “between individuals convinced of the ‘paradigm purity’ of their own position” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003b, p. 7). Purists extended and repeated the argument that quantitative and qualitative methods and postpositivism and the other “isms” cannot be combined because of the differences between their underlying paradigm assumptions. On the methodological front, the incompatibility thesis was challenged by those who invoked triangulation as a way of combining multiple methods to study the same phenomenon (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003a, p. 7). This ushered in a new round of arguments and debates over paradigm superiority.

A soft, apolitical pragmatic paradigm emerged in the post-1990 period. Suddenly, quantitative and qualitative methods became compatible, and researchers could use both in their empirical inquiries (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003a, p. 7). Proponents made appeals to a “what works” pragmatic argument, contending that “no incompatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods exists at either the level of practice or that of epistemology . . . there are thus no good reasons for educational researchers to fear forging ahead with ‘what works’” (Howe, 1988, p. 16). Of course, what works is more than an empirical question. It involves the politics of evidence.

This is the space that evidence-based research entered. It became the battleground of the third war, “the current upheaval and argument about ‘scientific’ research in the scholarly world of education” (Clark & Scheurich, 2008; Scheurich & Clark, 2006, p. 401). Enter Teddlie and Tashakkori’s third moment: Mixed methods and evidence-based inquiry meet one another in a soft center. C. Wright Mills (1959) would say this is a space for abstracted empiricism. Inquiry is cut off from politics. Biography and history recede into the background. Technological rationality prevails.

Resistances to Qualitative Studies

The academic and disciplinary resistances to qualitative research illustrate the politics embedded in this field of discourse. The challenges to qualitative research are many. To better understand these criticisms, it is necessary to “distinguish analytically the political (or external) role of [qualitative] methodology from the procedural (or internal) one” (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2004, p. 7). Politics situate methodology within and outside the academy. Procedural issues define how qualitative methodology is used to produce knowledge about the world (Seale et al., 2004, p. 7).

Often, the political and the procedural intersect. Politicians and hard scientists call qualitative researchers *journalists* or “soft” scientists. Their work is termed unscientific, only exploratory, or subjective. It is called criticism and not theory, or it is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism or secular humanism (see Huber, 1995; also Denzin, 1997, pp. 258–261).

These political and procedural resistances reflect an uneasy awareness that the interpretive traditions of qualitative research commit one to a critique of the positivist or post-positivist project. But the positivist resistance to qualitative research goes beyond the “ever-present desire to maintain a distinction between hard science and soft scholarship” (Carey, 1989, p. 99). The experimental (positivist) sciences (physics, chemistry, economics, and psychology, for example) are often seen as the crowning achievements of Western civilization, and in their practices, it is assumed that “truth” can transcend opinion and personal bias (Carey, 1989, p. 99; Schwandt, 1997b, p. 309). Qualitative research is seen as an assault on this tradition, whose adherents often retreat into a “value-free objectivist science” (Carey, 1989, p. 104) model to defend their position. The positivists seldom attempt to make explicit, and critique the “moral and political commitments in their own contingent work” (Carey, 1989, p. 104; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, Chapter 6, this volume).

Positivists further allege that the so-called new experimental qualitative researchers write fiction, not science, and have no way of verifying their truth statements. Ethnographic poetry and fiction signal the death of empirical science, and there is little to be gained by attempting to engage in moral criticism. These critics presume a stable, unchanging reality that can be studied with the empirical methods of objective social science (see Huber, 1995). The province of qualitative research, accordingly, is the world of lived experience, for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture. Under this model, there is no preoccupation with discourse and method as material interpretive practices that constitute representation and description. This is the textual, narrative turn rejected by the positivists.

The opposition to positive science by the poststructuralists is seen, then, as an attack on reason and truth. At the same time, the positivist science attack on qualitative research is regarded as an attempt to legislate one version of truth over another.

The Legacies of Scientific Research

Writing about scientific research, including qualitative research, from the vantage point of the colonized, a position that she chooses to privilege, Linda Tuhiwai Smith states that “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism.” She continues, “the word itself is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary . . .

It is “implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism” (p. 1), with the ways in which “knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified, and then represented back to the West” (Smith, 1999, p. 1). This dirty word stirs up anger, silence, distrust. “It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research” (Smith, 1999, p. 1). It is one of colonialism’s most sordid legacies, she says.

Frederick Erickson’s Chapter 3 of this volume charts many key features of this painful history. He notes with some irony that qualitative research in sociology and anthropology was born out of concern to understand the exotic, often dark-skinned “other.” Of course, there were colonialists long before there were anthropologists and ethnographers. Nonetheless, there would be no colonial—and now no neo-colonial—history, were it not for this investigative mentality that turned the dark-skinned other into the object of the ethnographer’s gaze. From the very beginning, qualitative research was implicated in a racist project.⁴

■ DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

Qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields, and subject matter.⁵ A complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions surrounds the term. These include the traditions associated with foundationalism, positivism, postfoundationalism, post-positivism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, post-humanism, and the many qualitative research perspectives and methods connected to cultural and interpretive studies (the chapters in Part II of this volume take up these paradigms).⁶ There are separate and detailed literatures on the many methods and approaches that fall under the category of qualitative research, such as case study, politics and ethics, participatory inquiry, interviewing, participant observation, visual methods, and interpretive analysis.

In North America, qualitative research operates in a complex historical field that crosscuts at least eight historical moments. These moments overlap and simultaneously operate in the present.⁷ We define them as the traditional (1900–1950), the modernist or golden age (1950–1970), blurred genres (1970–1986), the crisis of representation (1986–1990), the postmodern, a period of experimental and new ethnographies (1990–1995), postexperimental inquiry (1995–2000), the methodologically contested present (2000–2010), and the future (2010–), which is now. The future, the eighth moment, confronts the methodological backlash associated with the evidence-based social movement. It is concerned with moral discourse, with the development of sacred textualities. The eighth moment asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community.⁸

The postmodern and postexperimental moments were defined in part by a concern for literary and rhetorical tropes and the narrative turn, a concern for storytelling, for composing ethnographies in new ways (Ellis, 2009; and in this volume, Hamera, Chapter 18; Tedlock, Chapter 19; Spry, Chapter 30; Ellingson, Chapter 36; St.Pierre, Chapter 37; and Pelias, Chapter 40).

Successive waves of epistemological theorizing move across these eight moments. The traditional period is associated with the positivist, foundational paradigm. The modernist or golden age and blurred genres moments are connected to the appearance of postpositivist arguments. At the same time, a variety of new interpretive, qualitative perspectives were taken up, including hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, cultural studies, and feminism.⁹ In the blurred genre phase, the humanities became central resources for critical, interpretive theory and the qualitative research project broadly conceived. The researcher became a *bricoleur* (as discussed later), learning how to borrow from many different disciplines.

The blurred genres phase produced the next stage, the crisis of representation. Here researchers struggled with how to locate themselves and their subjects in reflexive texts. A kind of methodological diaspora took place, a two-way exodus. Humanists migrated to the social sciences, searching for new social theory and new ways to study popular culture and its local ethnographic contexts. Social scientists turned to the humanities, hoping to learn how to do complex structural and poststructural readings of social texts. From the humanities, social scientists also learned how to produce texts that refused to be read in simplistic, linear, incontrovertible terms. The line between a text and a context blurred. In the postmodern experimental moment, researchers continued to move away from foundational and quasifoundational criteria (in this volume, see Altheide & Johnson, Chapter 35; St.Pierre, Chapter 37). Alternative evaluative criteria were sought, ones that might prove evocative, moral, critical, and rooted in local understandings.

Any definition of qualitative research must work within this complex historical field. Qualitative research means different things in each of these moments. Nonetheless, an initial, generic definition can be offered. *Qualitative research* is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.¹⁰

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal

experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide-range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. It is understood, however, that each practice makes the world visible in a different way. Hence, there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study.

■ THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER-AS-BRICOLEUR AND QUILT MAKER

Multiple gendered images may be brought to the qualitative researcher: scientist, naturalist, fieldworker, journalist, social critic, artist, performer, jazz musician, filmmaker, quilt maker, essayist. The many methodological practices of qualitative research may be viewed as soft science, journalism, ethnography, *bricolage*, quilt making, or montage. The researcher, in turn, may be seen as a *bricoleur*, as a maker of quilts, or in filmmaking, a person who assembles images into montages (on montage, see Cook, 1981, pp. 171–177; Monaco, 1981, pp. 322–328; and discussion below; on quilting, see hooks, 1990, pp. 115–122; Wolcott, 1995, pp. 31–33).

Douglas Harper (1987, pp. 9, 74–75, 92); Michel de Certeau (1984, p. xv); Cary Nelson, Paula A. Treichler, and Lawrence Grossberg (1992, p. 2); Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962/1966, p. 17); Deena and Michael Weinstein (1991, p. 161); and Joe L. Kincheloe (2001) clarify the meaning of *bricolage* and *bricoleur*.¹¹ A *bricoleur* makes do by “adapting the bricoles of the world. *Bricolage* is ‘the poetic making do’” (de Certeau, 1984, p. xv), with “such bricoles—the odds and ends, the bits left over” (Harper, 1987, p. 74). The *bricoleur* is a “Jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself[er]” (Lévi-Strauss, 1962/1966, p. 17). In Harper’s (1987) work, the *bricoleur* defines herself and extends herself (p. 75). Indeed, her life story, her biography, “may be thought of as *bricolage*” (Harper, 1987, p. 92).

There are many kinds of *bricoleurs*—interpretive, narrative, theoretical, political. The interpretive *bricoleur* produces a *bricolage*; that is, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation. “The solution (*bricolage*) which is the result of the *bricoleur*’s method is an [emergent] construction” (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p. 161), which changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques of representation and interpretation are added to the puzzle. Nelson et al. (1992) describe the methodology of cultural studies “as a *bricolage*. Its choice of practice, that is, is pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflexive” (p. 2). This understanding can be applied, with qualifications, to qualitative research.

The qualitative-researcher-as-bricoleur or a maker of quilts uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand (Becker, 1998, p. 2). If new tools or techniques have to be invented or pieced together, then the researcher will do this. The choice of which interpretive practices to employ is not necessarily set in advance. The “choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context” (Nelson et al., 1992, p. 2), what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting.

These interpretive practices involve aesthetic issues, an aesthetics of representation that goes beyond the pragmatic or the practical. Here the concept of *montage* is useful (see Cook, 1981, p. 323; Monaco, 1981, pp. 171–172). *Montage* is a method of editing cinematic images. In the history of cinematography, *montage* is associated with the work of Sergei Eisenstein, especially his film, *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925). In *montage*, a picture is made by superimposing several different images on one another. In a sense, *montage* is like *pentimento*, where something painted out of a picture (an image the painter “repented,” or denied) now becomes visible again, creating something new. What is new is what had been obscured by a previous image.

Montage and *pentimento*, like jazz, which is improvisation, create the sense that images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, and forming a composite, a new creation. The images seem to shape and define one another; an emotional gestalt effect is produced. Often, these images are combined in a swiftly run sequence. When done, this produces a dizzily revolving collection of several images around a central or focused picture or sequence; such effects signify the passage of time.

Perhaps the most famous instance of *montage* is given in the Odessa Steps sequence in *The Battleship Potemkin*.¹² In the climax of the film, the citizens of Odessa are being massacred by tsarist troops on the stone steps leading down to the city’s harbor. Eisenstein cuts to a young mother as she pushes her baby’s carriage across the landing in front of the firing troops. Citizens rush past her, jolting the carriage, which she is afraid to push down to the next flight of stairs. The troops are above her firing at the citizens. She is trapped between the troops and the steps. She screams. A line of rifles pointing to the sky erupts in smoke. The mother’s head sways back. The wheels of the carriage teeter on the edge of the steps. The mother’s hand clutches the silver buckle of her belt. Below her, people are being beaten by soldiers. Blood drips over the mother’s white gloves. The baby’s hand reaches out of the carriage. The mother sways back and forth. The troops advance. The mother falls back against the carriage. A woman watches in horror as the rear wheels of the carriage roll off the edge of the landing. With accelerating speed, the carriage bounces down the steps, past the dead citizens. The baby is jostled from side to side inside the carriage. The soldiers

fire their rifles into a group of wounded citizens. A student screams, as the carriage leaps across the steps, tilts, and overturns (Cook, 1981, p. 167).¹³

Montage uses sparse images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity. Montage invites viewers to construct interpretations that build on one another as a scene unfolds. These interpretations are built on associations based on the contrasting images that blend into one another. The underlying assumption of montage is that viewers perceive and interpret the shots in a “montage sequence not *sequentially*, or one at a time, but rather *simultaneously*” (Cook, 1981, p. 172, italics in original). The viewer puts the sequences together into a meaningful emotional whole, as if at a glance, all at once.

The qualitative researcher who uses montage is like a quilt maker or a jazz improviser. The quilter stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience. There are many examples of montage in current qualitative research. Using multiple voices and different textual formations, voices, and narrative styles, Marcelo Diversi and Claudio Moreira (2009) weave a complex text about race, identity, nation, class, sexuality, intimacy, and family. As in quilt making and jazz improvisation, many different things are going on at the same time: different voices, different perspectives, points of views, angles of vision. Autoethnographic performance texts use montage simultaneously to create and enact moral meaning. They move from the personal to the political, the local to the historical and the cultural. These are dialogical texts. They presume an active audience. They create spaces for give and take between reader and writer. They do more than turn the other into the object of the social science gaze (in this volume, see Spry, Chapter 30; Pelias, Chapter 40).

Of course, qualitative research is inherently multimethod in focus (Flick, 2002, pp. 226–227; 2007). However, the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Objective reality can never be captured. We know a thing only through its representations. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation (Flick, 2002, p. 227; 2007). The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (see Flick, 2002, p. 229; 2007, pp. 102–104).

Laura L. Ellingson (Chapter 36, this volume; also 2009) disputes a narrow conception of triangulation, endorsing instead a postmodern form (2009, p. 190). It asserts that the central image for qualitative inquiry is the crystal—multiple lenses—not the triangle. She sees crystallization as embodying an energizing, unruly discourse, drawing raw energy from artful science and scientific artwork (p. 190). Mixed-genre texts in the postexperimental moment have more than three sides.

Like crystals, Eisenstein’s montage, the jazz solo, or the pieces in a quilt, the mixed-genre text combines “symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations . . . crystals grow, change, alter . . . crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions” (Richardson, 2000, p. 934).

In the crystallization process, the writer tells the same tale from different points of view. Crystallized projects mix genres and writing formats, offering partial, situated, open-ended conclusions. In *Fires in the Mirror* (1993) Anna Deavere Smith presents a series of performance pieces based on interviews with people involved in a racial conflict in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, on August 19, 1991. Her play has multiple speaking parts, including conversations with gang members, the police, and anonymous young girls and boys. There is no correct telling of this event. Each telling, like light hitting a crystal, gives a different reflection of the racial incident.

Viewed as a crystalline form, as a montage, or as a creative performance around a central theme, triangulation as a form of, or alternative to, validity thus can be extended. Triangulation is the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously. Each of the metaphors “works” to create simultaneity rather than the sequential or linear. Readers and audiences are then invited to explore competing visions of the context, to become immersed in and merge with new realities to comprehend.

The methodological bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to intensive self-reflection and introspection. The theoretical bricoleur reads widely and is knowledgeable about the many interpretive paradigms (feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, constructivism, queer theory) that can be brought to any particular problem. He or she may not, however, feel that paradigms can be mingled or synthesized. If paradigms are overarching philosophical systems denoting particular ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies, one cannot move easily from one to the other. Paradigms represent belief systems that attach the user to a particular worldview. Perspectives, in contrast, are less well developed systems, and it can be easier to move between them. The researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms.

The interpretive bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting. Critical bricoleurs stress the dialectical and hermeneutic nature of interdisciplinary inquiry, knowing that the boundaries between traditional disciplines no longer hold (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 683). The political bricoleur knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications. There is no value-free science. A civic social science based on a politics of hope is sought (Lincoln, 1999). The gendered, narrative bricoleur also knows that researchers all tell stories

about the worlds they have studied. Thus, the narratives or stories scientists tell are accounts couched and framed within specific storytelling traditions, often defined as paradigms (e.g., positivism, postpositivism, constructivism).

The product of the interpretive bricoleur's labor is a complex, quilt-like bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage; a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, or a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole.

■ QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AS A SITE OF MULTIPLE INTERPRETIVE PRACTICES

Qualitative research, as a set of interpretive activities, privileges no single methodological practice over another. As a site of discussion or discourse, qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. As Part II of this volume reveals, multiple theoretical paradigms claim use of qualitative research methods and strategies, from constructivism to cultural studies, feminism, Marxism, and ethnic models of study. Qualitative research is used in many separate disciplines, as we will discuss below. It does not belong to a single discipline.

Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival, and phonemic analysis—even statistics, tables, graphs, and numbers. They also draw on and use the approaches, methods, and techniques of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research, and participant observation, among others.¹⁴ All of these research practices “can provide important insights and knowledge” (Nelson et al., 1992, p. 2). No specific method or practice can be privileged over another.

Many of these methods or research practices are used in other contexts in the human disciplines. Each bears the traces of its own disciplinary history. Thus, there is an extensive history of the uses and meanings of ethnography and ethnology in education (Erickson, Chapter 3, this volume); of participant observation and ethnography in anthropology (Tedlock, Chapter 19, this volume); sociology (Holstein & Gubrium, Chapter 20, this volume); communications (in this volume, Hamera, Chapter 18; Spry, Chapter 30); cultural studies (Giardina & Newman, Chapter 10, this volume); textual, hermeneutic, feminist, psychoanalytic, arts-based, semiotic, and narrative analysis in cinema and literary studies (in this volume, Olesen, Chapter 7; Chase, Chapter 25; Finley, Chapter 26); and narrative, discourse, and conversational analysis in sociology, medicine, communications, and education (in this volume, Chase, Chapter 25; Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, Chapter 32).

The many histories that surround each method or research strategy reveal how multiple uses and meanings are brought to each practice. Textual analyses in literary studies, for example, often treat texts as self-contained systems. On the other hand, a cultural studies or feminist perspective reads a text in terms of its location within a historical moment marked by a particular gender, race, or class ideology. A cultural studies use of ethnography would bring a set of understandings from feminism, postmodernism, and poststructuralism to the project. These understandings would not be shared by mainstream postpositivist sociologists. Similarly, postpositivist and poststructural historians bring different understandings and uses to the methods and findings of historical research. These tensions and contradictions are evident in many of the chapters in this handbook.

These separate and multiple uses and meanings of the methods of qualitative research make it difficult to agree on any essential definition of the field, for it is never just one thing.¹⁵ Still, a definition must be made. We borrow from and paraphrase Nelson et al.'s (1992, p. 4) attempt to define cultural studies:

Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities, as well as the social and the physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions.

Qualitative research embraces two tensions at the same time. On the one hand, it is drawn to a broad, interpretive, postexperimental, postmodern, feminist, and critical sensibility. On the other hand, it is drawn to more narrowly defined positivist, postpositivist, humanistic, and naturalistic conceptions of human experience and its analysis. Furthermore, these tensions can be combined in the same project, bringing both postmodern and naturalistic, or both critical and humanistic, perspectives to bear.

This rather awkward statement means that qualitative research is a set of complex interpretive practices. As a constantly shifting historical formation, it embraces tensions and contradictions, including disputes over its methods and the forms its findings and interpretations take. The field sprawls between and crosscuts all of the human disciplines, even including, in some cases, the physical sciences. Its practitioners are variously committed to modern, postmodern, and postexperimental sensibilities and the approaches to social research that these sensibilities imply.

Politics and Reemergent Scientism

In the first decade of this new century, the scientifically based research movement (SBR) initiated by the National Research

Council (NRC) created a new and hostile political environment for qualitative research (Howe, 2009). Connected to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), SBR embodied a reemergent scientism (Maxwell, 2004), a positivist evidence-based epistemology. Researchers are encouraged to employ “rigorous, systematic, and objective methodology to obtain reliable and valid knowledge” (Ryan & Hood, 2004, p. 80). The preferred methodology has well-defined causal models using independent and dependent variables. Causal models are examined in the context of randomized controlled experiments, which allow replication and generalization (Ryan & Hood, 2004, p. 81).

Under this framework, qualitative research becomes suspect. There are no well-defined variables or causal models. Observations and measurements are not based on random assignment to experimental groups. Hard evidence is not generated by these methods. At best, case study, interview, and ethnographic methods offer descriptive materials that can be tested with experimental methods. The epistemologies of critical race, queer, postcolonial, feminist, and postmodern theories are rendered useless, relegated at best to the category of scholarship, not science (Ryan & Hood, 2004, p. 81; St.Pierre & Roulston, 2006, p. 132).

Critics of the evidence movement are united on the following points. The movement endorses a narrow view of science (Lather, 2004; Maxwell, 2004), celebrating a “neoclassical experimentalism that is a throwback to the Campbell-Stanley era and its dogmatic adherence to an exclusive reliance on quantitative methods” (Howe, 2004, p. 42). There is “nostalgia for a simple and ordered universe of science that never was” (Popkewitz, 2004, p. 62). With its emphasis on only one form of scientific rigor, the NRC ignores the need for and value of complex historical, contextual, and political criteria for evaluating inquiry (Bloch, 2004).

Neoclassical experimentalists extol evidence-based “medical research as the model for educational research, particularly the random clinical trial” (Howe, 2004, p. 48). But the random clinical trial—dispensing a pill—is quite unlike “dispensing a curriculum” (Howe, 2004, p. 48), nor can the “effects” of the educational experiment be easily measured, unlike a “10-point reduction in diastolic blood pressure” (Howe, 2004, p. 48).

Qualitative researchers must learn to think outside the box as they critique the NRC and its methodological guidelines (Atkinson, 2004). We must apply our critical imaginations to the meaning of such terms as *randomized design*, *causal model*, *policy studies*, and *public science* (Cannella & Lincoln, 2004; Weinstein, 2004). At a deeper level, we must resist conservative attempts to discredit qualitative inquiry by placing it back inside the box of positivism.

Contesting Mixed Methods Experimentalism

Kenneth R. Howe (2004) observes that the NRC finds a place for qualitative methods in mixed methods experimental

designs. In such designs, qualitative methods may be “employed either singly or in combination with quantitative methods, including the use of randomized experimental designs” (Howe, 2004, p. 49; also Clark & Creswell, 2008; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008). Clark, Creswell, Green, and Shope (2008) define mixed methods research “as a design for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a study in order to understand a research problem” (p. 364).¹⁶ Mixed methods are direct descendants of classical experimentalism and the triangulation movement of the 1970s (Denzin, 1989b). They presume a methodological hierarchy, with quantitative methods at the top, relegating qualitative methods to “a largely auxiliary role in pursuit of the *technocratic* aim of accumulating knowledge of ‘what works’” (Howe, 2004, pp. 53–54).

The *incompatibility thesis* disputes the key claim of the mixed methods movement, namely that methods and perspectives can be combined. Recalling the paradigm wars of the 1980s, this thesis argues that “compatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods is impossible due to incompatibility of the paradigms that underlie the methods” (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003a, pp. 14–15; 2003b). Others disagree with this conclusion, and some contend that the incompatibility thesis has been largely discredited because researchers have demonstrated that it is possible to successfully use a mixed methods approach.

There are several schools of thought on this thesis, including the four identified by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003a); that is, the complementary, single paradigm, dialectical, and multiple paradigm models. There is by no means consensus on these issues. Morse and Niehaus (2009) warn that ad hoc mixing of methods can be a serious threat to validity. Pragmatists and transformative emancipatory action researchers posit a dialectical model, working back and forth between a variety of tension points, such as etic–emic, value neutrality–value committed. Others (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lather, 1993) deconstruct validity as an operative term. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy’s (2008) emphasis on emergent methods pushes and blurs the methodological boundaries between quantitative and qualitative methods.¹⁷ Their model seeks to recover subjugated knowledges hidden from everyday view.

The traditional mixed methods movement takes qualitative methods out of their natural home, which is within the critical interpretive framework (Howe, 2004, p. 54; but see Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003a, p. 15; also Chapter 16 in this volume). It divides inquiry into dichotomous categories, exploration versus confirmation. Qualitative work is assigned to the first category, quantitative research to the second (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003a, p. 15). Like the classic experimental model, this movement excludes stakeholders from dialogue and active participation in the research process. Doing so weakens its democratic and dialogical dimensions and decreases the likelihood that previously silenced voices will be heard (Howe, 2004, pp. 56–57).

Howe (2004) cautions that it is not just

[the] “methodological fundamentalists” who have bought into [this] approach. A sizeable number of rather influential . . . educational researchers . . . have also signed on. This might be a compromise to the current political climate; it might be a backlash against the perceived excesses of postmodernism; it might be both. It is an ominous development, whatever the explanation. (p. 57; also 2009, p. 438; Lincoln, 2010, p. 7)

The hybrid dialogical model, in contrast, directly confronts these criticisms.

The Pragmatic Criticisms of Anti-Foundationalism

Clive Seale et al. (2004) contest what they regard as the excesses of an antimethodological, “anything goes,” romantic postmodernism that is associated with our project. They assert that too often the approach we value produces “low quality qualitative research and research results that are quite stereotypical and close to common sense” (p. 2). In contrast they propose a practice-based, pragmatic approach that places research practice at the center. Research involves an engagement “with a variety of things and people: research materials . . . social theories, philosophical debates, values, methods, tests . . . research participants” (p. 2). (Actually this approach is quite close to our own, especially our view of the bricoleur and bricolage).

Their situated methodology rejects the antifoundational claim that there are only partial truths, that the dividing line between fact and fiction has broken down (Seale et al., 2004, p. 3). They believe that this dividing line has not collapsed and that we should not accept stories if they do not accord with the best available facts (p. 6). Oddly, these pragmatic procedural arguments reproduce a variant of the evidence-based model and its criticisms of poststructural performative sensibilities. They can be used to provide political support for the methodological marginalization of many of the positions advanced in this handbook.

This complex political terrain defines the many traditions and strands of qualitative research: the British and its presence in other national contexts; the American pragmatic, naturalistic, and interpretive traditions in sociology, anthropology, communications, and education; the German and French phenomenological, hermeneutic, semiotic, Marxist, structural, and poststructural perspectives; feminist, African American, Latino, and queer studies; and studies of indigenous and aboriginal cultures. The politics of qualitative research create a tension that informs each of the above traditions. This tension itself is constantly being reexamined and interrogated, as qualitative research confronts a changing historical world, new intellectual positions, and its own institutional and academic conditions.

To summarize, qualitative research is many things to many people. Its essence is two-fold: (1) a commitment to some version of the naturalistic, interpretive approach to its subject matter and (2) an ongoing critique of the politics and methods of postpositivism. We turn now to a brief discussion of the major differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. We will then discuss ongoing differences and tensions within qualitative inquiry.

Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research

The word *qualitative* implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning. In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not processes. Proponents claim that their work is done from within a value-free framework.

Research Styles: Doing the Same Things Differently?

Of course, both qualitative and quantitative researchers “think they know something about society worth telling to others, and they use a variety of forms, media, and means to communicate their ideas and findings” (Becker, 1986, p. 122). Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in five significant ways (Becker, 1996). These points of difference turn on different ways of addressing the same set of issues. They return always to the politics of research and who has the power to legislate correct solutions to these problems.

Using Positivism and Postpositivism: First, both perspectives are shaped by the positivist and postpositivist traditions in the physical and social sciences (see discussion below). These two positivist science traditions hold to naïve and critical realist positions concerning reality and its perception. Proponents of the positivist version contend that there is a reality out there to be studied, captured, and understood, whereas the postpositivists argue that reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated (Guba, 1990a, p. 22). Postpositivism relies on multiple methods as a way of capturing as much of reality as possible. At the same time, emphasis is placed on the discovery and verification of theories. Traditional evaluation criteria like internal and external validity are stressed, as are the use of qualitative procedures that lend themselves to structured (sometimes statistical) analysis. Computer-assisted methods of analysis, which permit

frequency counts, tabulations, and low-level statistical analyses, may also be employed.

The positivist and postpositivist traditions linger like long shadows over the qualitative research project. Historically, qualitative research was defined within the positivist paradigm, where qualitative researchers attempted to do good positivist research with less rigorous methods and procedures. Some mid-century qualitative researchers (Becker, Geer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961) reported findings from participant observations in terms of quasi-statistics. As recently as 1999 (Strauss & Corbin, 1999), two leaders of the grounded theory approach to qualitative research attempted to modify the usual canons of good (positivistic) science to fit their own postpositivist conception of rigorous research (but see Charmaz, Chapter 21, this volume; also see Glaser, 1992). Some applied researchers, while claiming to be atheoretical, often fit within the positivist or postpositivist framework by default.

Uwe Flick (2002, pp. 2–3) usefully summarizes the differences between these two approaches to inquiry. He observes that the quantitative approach has been used for purposes of isolating “causes and effects . . . operationalizing theoretical relations . . . [and] measuring and . . . quantifying phenomena . . . allowing the generalization of findings” (p. 3). But today, doubt is cast on such projects.

Rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds are increasingly confronting social researchers with new social contexts and perspectives . . . traditional deductive methodologies . . . are failing . . . thus research is increasingly forced to make use of inductive strategies instead of starting from theories and testing them . . . knowledge and practice are studied as local knowledge and practice. (Flick, 2002, p. 2)

George and Louise Spindler (1992) summarize their qualitative approach to quantitative materials.

Instrumentation and quantification are simply procedures employed to extend and reinforce certain kinds of data, interpretations and test hypotheses across samples. Both must be kept in their place. One must avoid their premature or overly extensive use as a security mechanism. (p. 69)

While many qualitative researchers in the postpositivist tradition will use statistical measures, methods, and documents as a way of locating a group of subjects within a larger population, they will seldom report their findings in terms of the kinds of complex statistical measures or methods that quantitative researchers are drawn to (i.e., path, regression, log-linear analyses).

Accepting Postmodern Sensibilities: The use of quantitative, positivist methods and assumptions has been rejected by a new generation of qualitative researchers who are attached to post-structural or postmodern sensibilities. These researchers argue

that positivist methods are but one way of telling a story about society or the social world. They may be no better or no worse than any other method; they just tell a different kind of story.

This tolerant view is not shared by everyone. Many members of the critical theory, constructivist, poststructural, and post-modern schools of thought reject positivist and postpositivist criteria when evaluating their own work. They see these criteria as being irrelevant to their work and contend that positivist and postpositivist research reproduces only a certain kind of science, a science that silences too many voices. These researchers seek alternative methods for evaluating their work, including verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced texts, dialogues with subjects, and so on. In response, positivist and postpositivists argue that what they do is good science, free of individual bias and subjectivity. As noted above, they see postmodernism and post-structuralism as attacks on reason and truth.

Capturing the Individual's Point of View: Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individual's point of view. However, qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor's perspective by detailed interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture the subject's perspective because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials. Many quantitative researchers regard empirical materials produced by interpretive methods as unreliable, impressionistic, and not objective.

Examining the Constraints of Everyday Life: Qualitative researchers are more likely to confront and come up against the constraints of the everyday social world. They see this world in action and embed their findings in it. Quantitative researchers abstract from this world and seldom study it directly. They seek a nomothetic or etic science based on probabilities derived from the study of large numbers of randomly selected cases. These kinds of statements stand above and outside the constraints of everyday life. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, are committed to an emic, ideographic, case-based position, which directs their attention to the specifics of particular cases.

Securing Rich Descriptions: Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable, whereas quantitative researchers, with their etic, nomothetic commitments, are less concerned with such detail. They are deliberately unconcerned with such descriptions because such detail interrupts the process of developing generalizations.

These five points of difference described above (using positivism and postpositivism, accepting postmodern sensibilities, capturing the individual's point of view, examining the constraints of everyday life, securing thick descriptions) reflect commitments to different styles of research, different epistemologies,

and different forms of representation. Each work tradition is governed by a different set of genres, and each has its own classics and its own preferred forms of representation, interpretation, trustworthiness, and textual evaluation (see Becker, 1986, pp. 134–135). Qualitative researchers use ethnographic prose, historical narratives, first-person accounts, still photographs, life history, fictionalized “facts,” and biographical and autobiographical materials, among others. Quantitative researchers use mathematical models, statistical tables, and graphs and usually write in an impersonal, third-person prose.

■ TENSIONS WITHIN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

It is erroneous to presume that qualitative researchers share the same assumptions about these five points of difference. As the discussion below will reveal, positivist, postpositivist, and poststructural differences define and shape the discourses of qualitative research. Realists and postpositivists within the interpretive, qualitative research tradition criticize poststructuralists for taking the textual, narrative turn. These critics contend that such work is navel-gazing. It produces the conditions “for a dialogue of the deaf between itself and the community” (Silverman, 1997, p. 240). Those who attempt to capture the point of view of the interacting subject in the world are accused of naïve humanism, of reproducing a Romantic impulse that elevates the experiential to the level of the authentic (Silverman, 1997, p. 248).

Still others argue that lived experience is ignored by those who take the textual, performance turn. David Snow and Calvin Morrill (1995) argue that

This performance turn, like the preoccupation with discourse and storytelling, will take us further from the field of social action and the real dramas of everyday life and thus signal the death knell of ethnography as an empirically grounded enterprise. (p. 361)

Of course, we disagree.

According to Martyn Hammersley (2008, p. 1), qualitative research is currently facing a crisis symbolized by an ill-conceived postmodernist image of qualitative research, which is dismissive of traditional forms of inquiry. He feels that “unless this dynamic can be interrupted the future of qualitative research is endangered” (p. 11).

Paul Atkinson and Sara Delamont (2006), two qualitative scholars in the traditional, classic Chicago School tradition,¹⁸ offer a corrective. They remain committed to qualitative (and quantitative) research “*provided that they are conducted rigorously and contribute to robustly useful knowledge*” (p. 749, italics in original). Of course, these scholars are committed to social policy initiatives at some level. But, for them, the postmodern image of qualitative inquiry threatens and undermines the

value of traditional qualitative inquiry. Atkinson and Delamont exhort qualitative researchers to “think hard about whether their investigations are the best social science they could be” (p. 749). Patricia and Peter Adler (2008) implore the radical postmodernists to “give up the project for the good of the discipline and for the good of society” (p. 23).

Hammersley (2008, pp. 134–136, 144), extends the traditional critique, finding little value in the work of ethnographic postmodernists and literary ethnographers.¹⁹ This new tradition, he asserts, legitimates speculative theorizing, celebrates obscurity, and abandons the primary task of inquiry, which is to produce truthful knowledge about the world (p. 144). Poststructural inquirers get it from all sides. The criticisms, Carolyn Ellis (2009, p. 231) observes, fall into three overlapping categories. Our work (1) is too aesthetic and not sufficiently realistic; it does not provide hard data; (2) is too realistic and not mindful of poststructural criticisms concerning the “real” self and its place in the text; and (3) is not sufficiently aesthetic, or literary; that is, we are second-rate writers and poets (p. 232).

The Politics of Evidence

The critics’ model of science is anchored in the belief that there is an empirical world that is obdurate and talks back to investigators. This is an empirical science based on evidence that corroborates interpretations. This is a science that returns to and is lodged in the real, a science that stands outside nearly all of the turns listed above; this is Chicago School neo-postpositivism.

Contrast this certain science to the position of those who are preoccupied with the politics of evidence. Jan Morse (2006), for example, says: “Evidence is not just something that is out there. Evidence has to be produced, constructed, represented. Furthermore, the politics of evidence cannot be separated from the ethics of evidence” (pp. 415–416). Under the Jan Morse model, representations of empirical reality become problematic. Objective representation of reality is impossible. Each representation calls into place a different set of ethical questions regarding evidence, including how it is obtained and what it means. But surely a middle ground can be found. If there is a return to the spirit of the paradigm dialogues of the 1980s, then multiple representations of a situation should be encouraged, perhaps placed alongside one another.

Indeed, the interpretive camp is not antisocial, per se. We do something different. We believe in multiple forms of science: soft, hard, strong, feminist, interpretive, critical, realist, postrealist, and post-humanist. In a sense, the traditional and postmodern projects are incommensurate. We interpret, we perform, we interrupt, we challenge, and we believe nothing is ever certain. We want performance texts that quote history back to itself, texts that focus on epiphanies; on the intersection of biography, history, culture, and politics; on turning point moments in people’s lives. The critics are correct on this point. We have a

political orientation that is radical, democratic, and interventionist. Many postpositivists share these politics.

Critical Realism

For some, there is a third stream between naïve positivism and poststructuralism. Critical realism is an antipositivist movement in the social sciences closely associated with the works of Roy Bhaskar and Rom Harré (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). Critical realists use the word *critical* in a particular way. This is not Frankfurt School critical theory, although there are traces of social criticism here and there (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 201). *Critical*, instead, refers to a transcendental realism that rejects methodological individualism and universal claims to truth. Critical realists oppose logical positivist, relativist, and antifoundational epistemologies. Critical realists agree with the positivists that there is a world of events out there that is observable and independent of human consciousness. Knowledge about this world is socially constructed. Society is made up of feeling, thinking human beings, and their interpretations of the world must be studied (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 200). A correspondence theory of truth is rejected. Critical realists believe that reality is arranged in levels. Scientific work must go beyond statements of regularity to the analysis of the mechanisms, processes, and structures that account for the patterns that are observed.

Still, as postempiricist, antifoundational, critical theorists, we reject much of what is advocated here. Throughout the last century, social science and philosophy were continually tangled up with one another. Various “isms” and philosophical movements criss-crossed sociological and educational discourse, from positivism to postpositivism to analytic and linguistic philosophy, to hermeneutics, structuralism, and poststructuralism; to Marxism, feminism, and current post-post-versions of all of the above. Some have said that the logical positivists steered the social sciences on a rigorous course of self-destruction.

We do not think critical realism will keep the social science ship afloat. The social sciences are normative disciplines, always already embedded in issues of value, ideology, power, desire, sexism, racism, domination, repression, and control. We want a social science committed up front to issues of social justice, equity, nonviolence, peace, and universal human rights. We do not want a social science that says it can address these issues if it wants to do so. For us, this is no longer an option.

■ QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AS PROCESS

Three interconnected, generic activities define the qualitative research process. They go by a variety of different labels, including theory, method, and analysis; or ontology, epistemology, and

methodology. Behind these terms stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gendered, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology), which are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways. That is, empirical materials bearing on the question are collected and then analyzed and written about. Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community, which configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act.

In this volume, we treat these generic activities under five headings or phases: the researcher and the researched as multicultural subjects, major paradigms and interpretive perspectives, research strategies, methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials, and the art of interpretation. Behind and within each of these phases stands the biographically situated researcher. This individual enters the research process from inside an interpretive community. This community has its own historical research traditions, which constitute a distinct point of view. This perspective leads the researcher to adopt particular views of the “other” who is studied. At the same time, the politics and the ethics of research must also be considered, for these concerns permeate every phase of the research process.

■ THE OTHER AS RESEARCH SUBJECT

From its turn-of-the-century birth in modern, interpretive form, qualitative research has been haunted by a double-faced ghost. On the one hand, qualitative researchers have assumed that qualified, competent observers could, with objectivity, clarity, and precision, report on their own observations of the social world, including the experiences of others. Second, researchers have held to the belief in a real subject or real individual who is present in the world and able, in some form, to report on his or her experiences. So armed, researchers could blend their own observations with the self-reports provided by subjects through interviews, life story, personal experience, and case study documents.

These two beliefs have led qualitative researchers across disciplines to seek a method that would allow them to record accurately their own observations while also uncovering the meanings their subjects brought to their life experiences. This method would rely on the subjective verbal and written expressions of meaning given by the individuals, which are studied as windows into the inner life of the person. Since Wilhelm Dilthey (1900/1976), this search for a method has led to a perennial focus in the human disciplines on qualitative, interpretive methods.

Recently, as noted above, this position and its beliefs have come under assault. Poststructuralists and postmodernists

have contributed to the understanding that there is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of—and between—the observer and the observed. Subjects, or individuals, are seldom able to give full explanations of their actions or intentions; all they can offer are accounts or stories about what they did and why. No single method can grasp the subtle variations in ongoing human experience. Consequently, qualitative researchers deploy a wide-range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied.

Table 1.1 depicts the relationships we see among the five phases that define the research process (the researcher; major paradigms; research strategies; methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials; and the art, practices, and politics of interpretation). Behind all but one of these phases stands the biographically situated researcher. These five levels of activity, or practice, work their way through the biography of the researcher. We take them up in brief order here, for each phase is more fully discussed in the transition sections between the various parts of this volume.

Phase 1: The Researcher

Our remarks above indicate the depth and complexity of the traditional and applied qualitative research perspectives into which a socially situated researcher enters. These traditions locate the researcher in history, simultaneously guiding and constraining work that will be done in any specific study. This field has been constantly characterized by diversity and conflict, and these are its most enduring traditions (see Levin & Greenwood, Chapter 2, this volume). As a carrier of this complex and contradictory history, the researcher must also confront the ethics and politics of research (Christians, Chapter 4, this volume). It is no longer possible for the human disciplines to research the native, the indigenous other, in a spirit of value-free inquiry. Today researchers struggle to develop situational and transsituational ethics that apply to all forms of the research act and its human-to-human relationships. We no longer have the option of deferring the decolonization project.

Phase 2: Interpretive Paradigms

All qualitative researchers are philosophers in that “universal sense in which all human beings . . . are guided by highly abstract principles” (Bateson, 1972, p. 320). These principles combine beliefs about *ontology* (What kind of being is the human being? What is the nature of reality?), *epistemology* (What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?), and *methodology* (How do we know the world or gain knowledge of it?)

Table 1.1 The Research Process

<i>Phase 1: The Researcher as a Multicultural Subject</i>
History and research traditions
Conceptions of self and the other
The ethics and politics of research
<i>Phase 2: Theoretical Paradigms and Perspectives</i>
Positivism, postpositivism
Interpretivism, constructivism, hermeneutics
Feminism(s)
Racialized discourses
Critical theory and Marxist models
Cultural studies models
Queer theory
Post-colonialism
<i>Phase 3: Research Strategies</i>
Design
Case study
Ethnography, participant observation, performance ethnography
Phenomenology, ethnomethodology
Grounded theory
Life history, <i>testimonio</i>
Historical method
Action and applied research
Clinical research
<i>Phase 4: Methods of Collection and Analysis</i>
Interviewing
Observing
Artifacts, documents, and records
Visual methods
Autoethnography
Data management methods
Computer-assisted analysis
Textual analysis
Focus groups
Applied ethnography
<i>Phase 5: The Art, Practices, and Politics of Interpretation and Evaluation</i>
Criteria for judging adequacy
Practices and politics of interpretation
Writing as interpretation
Policy analysis
Evaluation traditions
Applied research

(see Guba, 1990a, p. 18; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 14–15; and Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba in Chapter 6 of this volume). These beliefs shape how the qualitative researcher sees the world and acts in it. The researcher is “bound within a net of epistemological and ontological premises which—regardless of ultimate truth or falsity—become partially self-validating” (Bateson, 1972, p. 314).

The net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises may be termed a *paradigm* (Guba, 1990a, p. 17) or interpretive framework, a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990a, p. 17). All research is interpretive: guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied. Some beliefs may be taken for granted, invisible, or only assumed, whereas others are highly problematic and controversial. Each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the researcher, including the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them.

At the most general level, four major interpretive paradigms structure qualitative research: positivist and postpositivist, constructivist-interpretive, critical (Marxist, emancipatory), and feminist-poststructural. These four abstract paradigms become more complicated at the level of concrete specific interpretive communities. At this level, it is possible to identify not only the constructivist but also multiple versions of feminism (Afrocentric and poststructural),²⁰ as well as specific ethnic, feminist, endarkened, social justice, Marxist, cultural studies, disability, and non-Western-Asian paradigms. These perspectives or paradigms are examined in Part II of this volume.

The paradigms examined in Part II work against or alongside (and some within) the positivist and postpositivist models. They all work within relativist ontologies (multiple constructed realities), interpretive epistemologies (the knower and known interact and shape one another), and interpretive, naturalistic methods.

Table 1.2 presents these paradigms and their assumptions, including their criteria for evaluating research, and the typical form that an interpretive or theoretical statement assumes in the paradigm.²¹

Each paradigm is explored in considerable detail in chapters 6 through 10. The positivist and postpositivist paradigms were discussed above. They work from within a realist and critical realist ontology and objective epistemologies, and they rely on experimental, quasi-experimental, survey, and rigorously defined qualitative methodologies.

The *constructivist paradigm* assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. Findings are usually presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory or pattern theories (in this volume, see Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, Chapter 6; Creswell, Chapter 15; Teddlie & Tashakkori, Chapter 16; Charmaz, Chapter 21; Morse, Chapter 24; Altheide & Johnson, Chapter 35; and St. Pierre, Chapter 37). Terms like credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

Table 1.2 Interpretive Paradigms

<i>Paradigm/Theory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Form of Theory</i>	<i>Type of Narration</i>
Positivist/ postpositivist	Internal, external validity	Logical-deductive, grounded	Scientific report
Constructivist	Trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, confirmability	Substantive-formal, standpoint	Interpretive case studies, ethnographic fiction
Feminist	Afrocentric, lived experience, dialogue, caring, accountability, race, class, gender, reflexivity, praxis, emotion, concrete grounding, embodied	Critical, standpoint	Essays, stories, experimental writing
Ethnic	Afrocentric, lived experience, dialogue, caring, accountability, race, class, gender	Standpoint, critical, historical	Essays, fables, dramas
Marxist	Emancipatory theory, falsifiability, dialogical, race, class, gender	Critical, historical, economic	Historical, economic, sociocultural analyses
Cultural studies	Cultural practices, praxis, social texts, subjectivities	Social criticism	Cultural theory-as-criticism
Queer theory	Reflexivity, deconstruction	Social criticism, historical analysis	Theory-as-criticism, autobiography

Feminist, ethnic, Marxist, cultural studies, queer theory, Asian, and disability models privilege a materialist-realist ontology; that is, the real world makes a material difference in terms of race, class, and gender. Subjectivist epistemologies and naturalistic methodologies (usually ethnographies) are also employed. Empirical materials and theoretical arguments are evaluated in terms of their emancipatory implications. Criteria from gender and racial communities (e.g., African American) may be applied (emotionality and feeling, caring, personal accountability, dialogue).

Poststructural feminist theories emphasize problems with the social text, its logic, and its inability to ever represent the world of lived experience fully. Positivist and postpositivist criteria of evaluation are replaced by other terms, including the reflexive, multivoiced text, which is grounded in the experiences of oppressed people.

The cultural studies and queer theory paradigms are multifocused, with many different strands drawing from Marxism, feminism, and the postmodern sensibility (in this volume, Giardina & Newman, Chapter 10; Plummer, Chapter 11; St. Pierre, Chapter 37). There is a tension between a humanistic cultural studies, which stresses lived experiences (meaning), and a more structural cultural studies project, which stresses the structural and material determinants and effects (race, class, gender) of experience. Of course, there are two sides to every coin; both sides are needed and are indeed critical. The cultural studies and queer theory paradigms use methods strategically, that is, as resources for understanding and for producing resistances to local structures of domination. Such scholars may do close textual readings and discourse analysis of cultural texts (in this volume, Olesen, Chapter 7; Chase, Chapter 25), as well as local, online, reflexive, and critical ethnographies; open-ended interviewing; and participant observation. The focus is on how race, class, and gender are produced and enacted in historically specific situations.

Paradigm and personal history in hand, focused on a concrete empirical problem to examine, the researcher now moves to the next stage of the research process, namely working with a specific strategy of inquiry.

Phase 3: Strategies of Inquiry and Interpretive Paradigms

Table 1.1 presents some of the major strategies of inquiry a researcher may use. Phase 3 begins with research design, which broadly conceived involves a clear focus on the research question, the purposes of the study, “what information most appropriately will answer specific research questions, and which strategies are most effective for obtaining it” (LeCompte & Preissle with Tesch, 1993, p. 30; see also Cheek, Chapter 14, this volume). A research design describes a flexible set of guidelines that connect theoretical paradigms, first, to strategies of inquiry

and, second, to methods for collecting empirical material. A research design situates researchers in the empirical world and connects them to specific sites, people, groups, institutions, and bodies of relevant interpretive material, including documents and archives. A research design also specifies how the investigator will address the two critical issues of representation and legitimation.

A strategy of inquiry refers to a bundle of skills, assumptions, and practices that researchers employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world. Strategies of inquiry put paradigms of interpretation into motion. At the same time, strategies of inquiry also connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials. For example, the case study relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis. Research strategies implement and anchor paradigms in specific empirical sites or in specific methodological practices, for example, making a case an object of study. These strategies include the case study, phenomenological and ethnomethodological techniques, the use of grounded theory, and biographical, autoethnographic, historical, action, and clinical methods. Each of these strategies is connected to a complex literature; each has a separate history, exemplary works, and preferred ways for putting the strategy into motion.

Phase 4: Methods of Collecting and Analyzing Empirical Materials

The researcher has several methods for collecting empirical materials.²² These methods are taken up in Part IV. They range from the interview to direct observation, the use of visual materials or personal experience. The researcher may also use a variety of different methods of reading and analyzing interviews or cultural texts, including content, narrative, and semiotic strategies. Faced with large amounts of qualitative materials, the investigator seeks ways of managing and interpreting these documents, and here data management methods and computer-assisted models of analysis may be of use. In this volume, David L. Altheide and John M. Johnson (Chapter 35), Laura L. Ellingson (Chapter 36), and Judith Davidson and Silvana diGregorio (Chapter 38) take up these techniques.

Phase 5: The Art and Politics of Interpretation and Evaluation

Qualitative research is endlessly creative and interpretive. The researcher does not just leave the field with mountains of empirical materials and easily write up his or her findings. Qualitative interpretations are constructed. The researcher first creates a field text consisting of fieldnotes and documents from the field, what Roger Sanjek (1992, p. 386) calls “indexing” and David Plath (1990, p. 374) “filework.” The writer-as-interpreter moves from this text to a research text; notes and interpretations based

on the field text. This text is then re-created as a working interpretive document that contains the writer's initial attempts to make sense out of what has been learned. Finally, the writer produces the public text that comes to the reader. This final tale from the field may assume several forms: confessional, realist, impressionistic, critical, formal, literary, analytic, grounded theory, and so on (see Van Maanen, 1988).

The interpretive practice of making sense of one's findings is both artistic and political. Multiple criteria for evaluating qualitative research now exist, and those we emphasize stress the situated, relational, and textual structures of the ethnographic experience. There is no single interpretive truth. As argued earlier, there are multiple interpretive communities, each having its own criteria for evaluating an interpretation.

Program evaluation is a major site of qualitative research, and qualitative researchers can influence social policy in important ways. Applied, qualitative research in the social sciences has a rich history (discussed in this volume by Levin & Greenwood, Chapter 2; Cheek, Chapter 14; Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke, & Sabhlok, Chapter 23; Morse, Chapter 24; Torrance, Chapter 34; Abma & Widdershoven, Chapter 41). This is the critical site where theory, method, praxis, action, and policy all come together. Qualitative researchers can isolate target populations, show the immediate effects of certain programs on such groups, and isolate the constraints that operate against policy changes in such settings. Action and clinically oriented qualitative researchers can also create spaces for those who are studied (the other) to speak. The evaluator becomes the conduit for making such voices heard.

Bridging the Historical Moments: What Comes Next?

St.Pierre (2004) argues that we are already in the post "post" period—post-poststructuralism, post-postmodernism, post-experimental. What this means for interpretive, ethnographic practices is still not clear. But it is certain that things will never again be the same. We are in a new age where messy, uncertain multivoiced texts, cultural criticism, and new experimental works will become more common, as will more reflexive forms of fieldwork, analysis, and intertextual representation. In a complex space like this, pedagogy becomes critical—that is, How do we teach qualitative methods? Judith Preissle (Chapter 42) and Margaret Eisenhart and S. Jurow (Chapter 43) offer insights on the future. It is true, as the poet said, the center no longer holds. We can reflect on what should be in this new center.

Thus, we come full circle. And returning to our bridge metaphor, the chapters that follow take the researcher back and forth through every phase of the research act. Like a good bridge, the chapters provide for two-way traffic, coming and going between moments, formations, and interpretive communities. Each chapter examines the relevant histories, controversies, and current practices that are associated with each paradigm, strategy,

and method. Each chapter also offers projections for the future, where a specific paradigm, strategy, or method will be 10 years from now, deep into the formative years of the next century.

In reading this volume, it is important to remember that the field of qualitative research is defined by a series of tensions, contradictions, and hesitations. This tension works back and forth between and among (1) the broad, doubting, postmodern sensibility; (2) the more certain, more traditional positivist, postpositivist, and naturalistic conceptions of this project; and (3) an increasingly conservative, neoliberal global environment. All of the chapters that follow are caught in and articulate these tensions.

■ NOTES

1. The following paragraphs draw from Denzin (2010, pp. 19–25).
2. They contend that our second moment, the Golden Age (1950–1970), was marked by the debunking of positivism, the emergence of postpositivism, and the development of designs that used mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. Full-scale conflict developed throughout the 1970–1990 period, the time of the first "paradigm war."
3. Conflict broke out between the many different empowerment pedagogies: feminist, anti-racist, radical, Freirean, liberation theology, postmodernists, poststructuralists, cultural studies, and so on (see Guba & Lincoln, 2005; also, Erickson, Chapter 3, this volume).
4. Recall bell hooks's reading of the famous cover photo on *Writing Culture* (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), which consists of a picture of Stephen Tyler doing fieldwork in India. Tyler is seated some distance from three dark-skinned people. A child is poking its head out of a basket. A woman is hidden in the shadows of the hut. A male, a checkered white and black shawl across his shoulder, elbow propped on his knee, hand resting along the side of his face, is staring at Tyler. Tyler is writing in a field journal. A piece of white cloth is attached to his glasses, perhaps shielding him from the sun. This patch of whiteness marks Tyler as the white male writer studying these passive brown and black people. Indeed, the brown male's gaze signals some desire or some attachment to Tyler. In contrast, the female's gaze is completely hidden by the shadows and by the words in the book's title, which cross her face (hooks, 1990, p. 127).
5. Qualitative research has separate and distinguished histories in education, social work, communications, psychology, history, organizational studies, medical science, anthropology, and sociology.
6. Definitions: *positivism*: Objective accounts of the real world can be given; *postpositivism*: Only partially objective accounts of the world can be produced, for all methods are flawed; *foundationalism*: We can have an ultimate grounding for our knowledge claims about the world, and this involves the use of empiricist and positivist epistemologies (Schwandt, 1997a, p. 103); *nonfoundationalism*: We can make statements about the world without "recourse to ultimate proof or foundations for that knowing" (Schwandt, 1997a, p. 102); *quasi-foundationalism*: Certain knowledge claims about the world based on neorealist criteria can be made, including the correspondence concept of truth. There is an independent reality that can be mapped.

7. Jameson (1991, pp. 3–4) reminds us that any periodization hypothesis is always suspect, even one that rejects linear, stage-like models. It is never clear to what reality a stage refers. What divides one stage from another is always debatable. Our seven moments are meant to mark discernible shifts in style, genre, epistemology, ethics, politics, and aesthetics.

8. See Denzin and Lincoln (2005, pp. 13–21) for an extended discussion of each of these phases. This model has been termed a progress narrative by Alasuutari (2004, pp. 599–600) and Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, and Silverman (2004, p. 2). The critics assert that we believe that the most recent moment is the most up-to-date, the avant-garde, the cutting edge (Alasuutari, 2004, p. 601). Naturally, we dispute this reading. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003a, pp. 5–8) have modified our historical periods to fit their historical analysis of the major moments in the emergence of mixed methods in the last century.

9. *Definitions: structuralism*: Any system is made up of a set of oppositional categories embedded in language; *semiotics*: the science of signs or sign systems—a structuralist project; *poststructuralism*: Language is an unstable system of referents, making it impossible to ever completely capture the meaning or an action, text, or intention; *postmodernism*: a contemporary sensibility, developing since World War II, which privileges no single authority, method, or paradigm; *hermeneutics*: An approach to the analysis of texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process; *phenomenology*: A complex system of ideas associated with the works of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Alfred Schutz; *cultural studies*: a complex, interdisciplinary field that merges with critical theory, feminism, and post-structuralism.

10. Of course, all settings are natural, that is, places where everyday experience takes place. Qualitative researchers study people doing things together in the places where these things are done (Becker, 1986). There is no field site or natural place where one goes to do this kind of work (see also Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 8). The site is constituted through our interpretive practices. Historically, analysts have distinguished between experimental (laboratory) and field (natural) research settings; hence the argument that qualitative research is naturalistic. Activity theory erases this distinction (Keller & Keller, 1996, p. 20; Vygotsky, 1978).

11. “The meaning of *bricoleur* in French popular speech is ‘someone who works with his (or her) hands and uses devious means compared to those of the craftsman . . . the *bricoleur* is practical and gets the job done’ (Weinstein & Weinstein, 1991, p. 161). These authors provide a history of this term, connecting it to the works of the German sociologist and social theorist Georg Simmel, and by implication to Charles Baudelaire. Martyn Hammersley (2000) disputes our use of this term. Following Claude Lévi-Strauss, he reads the *bricoleur* as a myth maker. He suggests it be replaced with the notion of the boat builder. Hammersley also quarrels with our “moments” model of qualitative research, contending it implies some sense of progress.

12. Brian De Palma reproduces this baby carriage scene in his 1987 film, *The Untouchables*.

13. In the harbor, the muzzles of the Potemkin’s two huge guns swing slowly into the camera. Words on screen inform us: “The brutal military power answered by guns of the battleship.” A final famous three-shot montage sequence shows, first, a sculptured sleeping lion,

then the lion rising from his sleep, and finally the lion roaring, symbolizing the rage of the Russian people (Cook, 1981, p. 167). In this sequence, Eisenstein uses montage to expand time, creating a psychological duration for this horrible event. By drawing out this sequence, by showing the baby in the carriage, the soldiers firing on the citizens, the blood on the mother’s glove, the descending carriage on the steps, he suggests a level of destruction of great magnitude.

14. Here it is relevant to make a distinction between techniques that are used across disciplines and methods that are used within disciplines. Ethnomethodologists, for example, employ their approach as a method, whereas others selectively borrow that method-as-technique for their own applications. Harry Wolcott (in conversation) suggests this distinction. It is also relevant to make a distinction between topic, method, and resource. Methods can be studied as topics of inquiry; that is how a case study gets done. In this ironic, ethnomethodological sense, method is both a resource and a topic of inquiry.

15. Indeed any attempt to give an essential definition of qualitative research requires a qualitative analysis of the circumstances that produce such a definition.

16. They identify four major mixed methods designs: triangulation, embedded, explanatory, and exploratory (Clark et al., 2008, p. 371).

17. Their emergent model focuses on methods that break out of traditional frameworks and exploit new technologies and innovations; this is a process model that works between politics, epistemology, theory, and methodology.

18. There are several generations of the Chicago School, from Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, Herbert Blumer, and Everett Hughes (1920–1950) period, to second (Becker, Strauss, Goffman), to third (Hammersley, Atkinson, Delamont, Snow, Anderson, Fine, Adler and Adler, Prus, Maines, Flaherty, Sanders et al).

19. His blanket term for auto, performance, poststructural ethnography.

20. Olesen (Chapter 7, this volume) identifies three strands of feminist research: mainstream empirical; standpoint and cultural studies; and poststructural, postmodern; placing Afrocentric and other models of color under the cultural studies and postmodern categories.

21. These, of course, are our interpretations of these paradigms and interpretive styles.

22. *Empirical materials* is the preferred term for what are traditionally described as data.

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Part I

LOCATING THE FIELD

Part I of the *Handbook* begins by locating qualitative research within the academy. It then turns to the history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational research. The last two chapters take up the ethics, politics, and moral responsibilities of the qualitative researcher.

▣ THE ACADEMY AND THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION TRADITION

The opening chapter, by Morten Levin and Davydd Greenwood, calls for a reinvention of the social sciences. Their chapter reveals the depth and complexity of the traditional and applied qualitative research perspectives that are consciously and unconsciously inherited by the researcher-as-interpretive-bricoleur.¹ These traditions locate the investigator in academic systems of historical (and organizational) discourse. This system guides and constrains the interpretive work that is done in any specific study. The academy is in a state of crisis. Traditional funding connections to stakeholders no longer hold. Radical change is required, and action research can help lead the way.

Levin and Greenwood argue that action researchers have a responsibility to do work that is socially meaningful and socially responsible. The relationship between researchers, universities, and society must change. Politically informed action research, inquiry committed to praxis and social change, is the vehicle for accomplishing this transformation.

Action researchers are committed to a set of disciplined, material practices that produce radical, democratizing transformations in the civic sphere. These practices involve collaborative dialogue, participatory decision-making, inclusive democratic deliberation, and the maximal participation and representation of all relevant parties (Ryan & Destefano, 2000, p. 1). Action researchers literally help transform inquiry into praxis or action. Research subjects become co-participants and stakeholders in the process of inquiry. Research becomes praxis—practical, reflective, pragmatic action—directed to solving problems in the world.

These problems originate in the lives of the research co-participants; they do not come down from on high by way of grand theory. Together, stakeholders and action researchers co-create knowledge that is pragmatically useful and grounded in local knowledge. In the process, they jointly define research objectives and political goals, co-construct research questions, pool knowledge, hone shared research skills, fashion interpretations and performance texts that implement specific strategies for social change, and measure validity and credibility by the willingness of local stakeholders to act on the basis of the results of the action research.

Academic science has a history of not being able to accomplish goals such as these consistently. Levin and Greenwood offer several reasons for this failure, including the inability of a so-called positivistic, value-free social science to produce useful social research; the increasing tendency of outside corporations to define the needs and values of the university; the loss of research funds to entrepreneurial and private-sector research organizations; and bloated, inefficient internal administrative infrastructures.

Levin and Greenwood are not renouncing the practices of science; rather, they are calling for a reformulation of what science and the academy are all about. Their model of pragmatically grounded action research is not a retreat from disciplined scientific inquiry.² This form of inquiry reconceptualizes science as a multiperspective, methodologically diverse, collaborative, communicative, communitarian, context-centered, moral project. Levin and Greenwood want to locate action research at the center of the contemporary university. Their chapter is a call for a civic social science, a pragmatic science that will lead to the radical reconstruction of the university's relationships with society, state, and community in this new century.

▣ HISTORY

In their monumental chapter (“Qualitative Methods: Their History in Sociology and Anthropology”), reprinted in the second edition of the *Handbook*, Arthur Vidich and Stanford

Lyman (2000) show how the ethnographic tradition extends from the Greeks through the 15th- and 16th-century interests of Westerners in the origins of primitive cultures; to colonial ethnology connected to the empires of Spain, England, France, and Holland; to several 20th-century transformations in the United States and Europe. Throughout this history, the users of qualitative research have displayed commitments to a small set of beliefs, including objectivism, the desire to contextualize experience, and a willingness to interpret theoretically what has been observed.

In Chapter 3 of this volume, Frederick Erickson shows that these beliefs supplement the positivist tradition of complicity with colonialism, the commitments to monumentalism, and the production of timeless texts. The colonial model located qualitative inquiry in racial and sexual discourses that privileged white patriarchy. Of course, as indicated in our Introduction, these beliefs have recently come under considerable attack.

Erickson, building on Vidich and Lyman, documents the extent to which early as well as contemporary qualitative researchers were (and remain) implicated in these systems of oppression. His history extends Vidich-Lyman's, focusing on five foundational footings: disciplinary perspectives on qualitative research—especially sociology and anthropology; the participant observer as observer/author; the people observed during fieldwork; the rhetorical and substantive content of the qualitative research report; and the audiences for such texts.

He offers a trenchant review of recent disciplinary efforts (by the American Educational Research Association) to impose fixed criteria of evaluation on qualitative inquiry. He carefully reviews recent criticisms of the classic ethnographic text. He argues that the realist ethnographic text—the text with its omniscient narrator—is no longer a genre of reporting that can be responsibly practiced.

■ THE ETHICS OF INQUIRY

Clifford Christians locates the ethics and politics of qualitative inquiry within a broader historical and intellectual framework. He first examines the Enlightenment model of positivism, value-free inquiry, utilitarianism, and utilitarian ethics. In a value-free social science, codes of ethics for professional societies become the conventional format for moral principles. By the 1980s, each of the major social science associations (contemporaneous with passage of federal laws and promulgation of national guidelines) had developed its own ethical code with an emphasis on several guidelines: informed consent, nondeception, the absence of psychological or physical harm, privacy and confidentiality, and a commitment to collecting and presenting reliable and valid empirical materials. Institutional review boards (IRBs) implemented these guidelines, including ensuring that informed consent is always obtained in human subject

research. However, Christians notes that in reality IRBs protect institutions and not individuals.

Several events challenged the Enlightenment model, including the Nazi medical experiments, the Tuskegee syphilis study, Project Camelot in the 1960s, Stanley Milgram's deception of subjects in his psychology experiments, Laud Humphrey's deceptive study of homosexuals, and the complicity of social scientists with military initiatives in Vietnam. In addition, charges of fraud, plagiarism, data tampering, and misrepresentation continue to the present day.

Christians details the poverty of the Enlightenment model. It creates the conditions for deception, for the invasion of private spaces, for duping subjects, and for challenges to the subject's moral worth and dignity (see also Angrosino & Rosenberg, Chapter 28, this volume; also Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 120–141). Christians calls for its replacement with an ethics based on the values of a feminist communitarianism.

This is an evolving, emerging ethical framework that serves as a powerful antidote to the deception-based, utilitarian IRB system. The new framework presumes a community that is ontologically and axiologically prior to the person. This community has common moral values, and research is rooted in a concept of care, of shared governance, of neighborliness, or of love, kindness, and the moral good. Accounts of social life should display these values and be based on interpretive sufficiency. They should have sufficient depth to allow the reader to form a critical understanding about the world studied. These texts should exhibit an absence of racial, class, and gender stereotyping. These texts should generate social criticism and lead to resistance, empowerment, social action, and positive change in the social world.

In the feminist communitarian model, as with the model of participatory action research advocated by Levin and Greenwood, participants have a co-equal say in how research should be conducted, what should be studied, which methods should be used, which findings are valid and acceptable, how the findings are to be implemented, and how the consequences of such action are to be assessed. Spaces for disagreement are recognized, while discourse aims for mutual understanding and the honoring of moral commitments.

A sacred, existential epistemology places us in a noncompetitive, nonhierarchical relationship to the earth, to nature, and to the larger world (Bateson, 1972, p. 335). This sacred epistemology stresses the values of empowerment, shared governance, care, solidarity, love, community, covenant, morally involved observers, and civic transformation. As Christians observes, this ethical epistemology recovers the moral values that were excluded by the rational Enlightenment science project. This sacred epistemology is based on a philosophical anthropology that declares that "all humans are worthy of dignity and sacred status without exception for class or ethnicity" (Christians, 1995, p. 129). A universal human ethic, stressing the

sacredness of life, human dignity, truth telling, and nonviolence, derives from this position (Christians, 1997, pp. 12–15). This ethic is based on locally experienced, culturally prescribed protonorms (Christians, 1995, p. 129). These primal norms provide a defensible “conception of good rooted in universal human solidarity” (Christians, 1995, p. 129; also 1997, 1998). This sacred epistemology recognizes and interrogates the ways in which race, class, and gender operate as important systems of oppression in the world today.

In this way, Christians outlines a radical ethical path for the future. He transcends the usual middle-of-the-road ethical models, which focus on the problems associated with betrayal, deception, and harm in qualitative research. Christians’s call for a collaborative social science research model makes the researcher responsible, not to a removed discipline (or institution), but rather to those studied. This implements critical, action, and feminist traditions, which forcefully align the ethics of research with a politics of the oppressed. Christians’s framework reorganizes existing discourses on ethics and the social sciences.³

Clearly the existing, Belmont and Common Rule definitions have little, if anything, to do with a human rights and social justice ethical agenda. Regrettably, these principles have been informed by notions of value-free experimentation and utilitarian concepts of justice. They do not conceptualize research in participatory terms. In reality, these rules protect institutions and not people, although they were originally created to protect human subjects from unethical biomedical research. The application of these regulations is an instance of mission or ethics creep, or the overzealous extension of IRB regulations to interpretive forms of social science research. This has been criticized by many, including Kevin Haggerty (2004), C. K. Gunsalus et al. (2007), Leon Dash (2007), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP, 2001, 2002, 2006a, 2006b).⁴

Oral historians (see Shopes, Chapter 27, this volume) have contested the narrow view of science and research contained in current reports (American Historical Association, 2008; Shopes & Ritchie, 2004). Anthropologists and archaeologists have challenged the concept of informed consent as it impacts ethnographic inquiry (see Fluehr-Lobban, 2003a, 2003b; also Miller & Bell, 2002). Journalists argue that IRB insistence on anonymity reduces the credibility of journalistic reporting, which rests on naming the sources used in a news account. Dash (2007, p. 871) contends that IRB oversight interferes with the First Amendment rights of journalists and the public’s right to know. Indigenous scholars Marie Battiste (2008) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) assert that Western conceptions of ethical inquiry have “severely eroded and damaged indigenous knowledge” and indigenous communities (Battiste, 2008, p. 497).⁵

As currently deployed, these practices close down critical ethical dialogue. They create the impression that if proper IRB

procedures are followed, then one’s ethical house is in order. But this is ethics in a cul de sac.

■ DISCIPLINING AND CONSTRAINING ETHICAL CONDUCT

The consequence of these restrictions is a disciplining of qualitative inquiry that extends from granting agencies to qualitative research seminars and even the conduct of qualitative dissertations (Lincoln & Cannella, 2004a, 2004b). In some cases, lines of critical inquiry have not been funded and have not gone forward because of criticisms from local IRBs. Pressures from the right discredit critical interpretive inquiry. From the federal to the local levels, a trend seems to be emerging. In too many instances, there seems to be a move away from protecting human subjects to an increased monitoring, censoring, and policing of projects that are critical of the right and its politics.

Yvonna S. Lincoln and William G. Tierney (2004) observe that these policing activities have at least five important implications for critical social justice inquiry. First, the widespread rejection of alternative forms of research means that qualitative inquiry will be heard less and less in federal and state policy forums. Second, it appears that qualitative researchers are being deliberately excluded from this national dialogue. Consequently, third, young researchers trained in the critical tradition are not being heard. Fourth, the definition of research has not changed to fit newer models of inquiry. Fifth, in rejecting qualitative inquiry, traditional researchers are endorsing a more distanced form of research, one that is compatible with existing stereotypes concerning people of color.

These developments threaten academic freedom in four ways: (1) they lead to increased scrutiny of human subjects research and (2) new scrutiny of classroom research and training in qualitative research involving human subjects; (3) they connect to evidence-based discourses, which define qualitative research as unscientific; and (4) by endorsing methodological conservatism, they reinforce the status quo on many campuses. This conservatism produces new constraints on graduate training, leads to the improper review of faculty research, and creates conditions for politicizing the IRB review process, while protecting institutions and not individuals from risk and harm.

■ A PATH FORWARD

Since 2004, many scholarly and professional societies have followed the Oral History and American Historical Associations in challenging the underlying assumptions in the standard campus IRB model. A transdisciplinary, global, counter-IRB

discourse has emerged (Battiste, 2008; Christians, 2007; Ginsberg & Mertens, 2009; Lincoln, 2009). This discourse has called for the blanket exclusion of non-federally funded research from IRB review. The AAUP (2006a, 2006b) has gone so far as to recommend that

exemptions based on methodology, namely research on autonomous adults whose methodology consists entirely of collecting data by surveys, conducting interviews, or observing behavior in public places should be exempt from the requirement of IRB review, with no provisos, and no requirement of IRB approval of the exemption. (p. 4)

The executive council of the Oral History Association endorsed the AAUP recommendations at its October 2006 annual meeting. They were quite clear: "Institutions consider as straightforwardly exempt from IRB review any 'research whose methodology consists entirely of collecting data by surveys, conducting interviews, or observing behavior in public places'" (Howard, 2006, p. 9). This recommendation can be extended: Neither the Office for Human Resource Protection, nor a campus IRB has the authority to define what constitutes legitimate research in any field, only what research is covered by federal regulations.

We agree.

■ ETHICS AND CRITICAL SOCIAL SCIENCE

In Chapter 5, Gaile Cannella and Yvonna S. Lincoln, building on the work of Michel Foucault, argue that a critical social science requires a radical ethics, an "ethics that is always/already concerned about power and oppression even as it avoids constructing 'power' as a new truth" (p. 97). A critical ethical stance works outward from the core of the person. A critical social science incorporates feminist, postcolonial, and even postmodern challenges to oppressive power. It is aligned with a critical pedagogy and a politics of resistance, hope, and freedom.

A critical social science focuses on structures of power and systems of domination. It creates spaces for a decolonizing project. It opens the doors of the academy so that the voices of oppressed people can be heard and honored and so that others can learn from them.

■ CONCLUSION

Thus do the chapters in Part I of the *Handbook* come together over the topics of ethics, power, politics, social justice, and the academy. We endorse a radical, participatory ethic, one that is communitarian and feminist, an ethic that calls for trusting, collaborative nonoppressive relationships between researchers

and those studied, an ethic that makes the world a more just place (Collins, 1990, p. 216).

■ NOTES

1. Any distinction between applied and nonapplied qualitative research traditions is somewhat arbitrary. Both traditions are scholarly. Each has a long tradition and a long history, and each carries basic implications for theory and social change. Good theoretical research should also have applied relevance and implications. On occasion, it is argued that applied and action research are nontheoretical, but even this conclusion can be disputed.

2. We will develop a notion of a sacred science below and in our concluding chapter.

3. Given Christians's framework, there are primarily two ethical models: utilitarian and nonutilitarian. However, historically, and most recently, one of five ethical stances (absolutist, consequentialist, feminist, relativist, deceptive) has been followed, although often these stances merge with one another. The *absolutist* position argues that any method that contributes to a society's self-understanding is acceptable, but only conduct in the public sphere should be studied. The *deception* model says any method, including the use of lies and misrepresentation, is justified in the name of truth. The *relativist* stance says researchers have absolute freedom to study what they want; ethical standards are a matter of individual conscience. Christians's feminist-communitarian framework elaborates a *contextual-consequential framework*, which stresses mutual respect, noncoercion, nonmanipulation, and the support of democratic values (see Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 120–141; Smith, 1990; also Collins, 1990, p. 216; Mitchell, 1993).

4. Mission creep includes these issues and threats: rewarding wrong behaviors, focusing on procedures and not difficult ethical issues, enforcing unwieldy federal regulations, and involving threats to academic freedom and the First Amendment (Becker, 2004; Gunsalus et al., 2007; also Haggerty, 2004). Perhaps the most extreme form of IRB mission is the 2002 State of Maryland Code, Title 13—Miscellaneous Health Care Program, Subtitle 20—Human Subject Research § 13–2001, 13–2002:Compliance with Federal Regulations: A person may not conduct research using a human subject unless the person conducts the research in accordance with the federal regulations on the protection of human subjects (see Shamoo & Schwartz, 2007).

5. There is a large Canadian project on indigenous intellectual property rights—Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage. This project represents an international, interdisciplinary collaboration among more than 50 scholars and 25 partnering organizations embarking on an unprecedented and timely investigation of intellectual property (IP) issues in cultural heritage that represent emergent local and global interpretations of culture, rights, and knowledge. Their objectives are:

- to document the diversity of principles, interpretations, and actions arising in response to IP issues in cultural heritage worldwide;
- to analyze the many implications of these situations;

- to generate more robust theoretical understandings as well as exemplars of good practice; and
- to make these findings available to stakeholders—from Aboriginal communities to professional organizations to government agencies—to develop and refine their own theories, principles, policies, and practices.

Left Coast is their publisher. See their website: <http://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/>

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REVITALIZING UNIVERSITIES BY REINVENTING THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Bildung and Action Research

Morten Levin and Davydd Greenwood

Doing social science is, among other things, a form of contextualized institutional social practice. This banality, taken to its obvious conclusion and set in the context of contemporary academic social science, yields a number of consequences that most academic social scientists will not like. One implication is that theoretical and methodological approaches must be interpreted within the institutional contexts and social practices where they are embedded and practiced. If the desire for theoretical and methodological development is genuine, then this means the social sciences cannot proceed without developing and advocating an understanding of how universities, research institutions, and disciplinary structures shape the contexts and practices of their activities. Academic social scientists' engagement in autopoietic theoretical and methodological efforts disconnects them from society at large. Research and teaching agendas are motivated more by what is fashionable in the professionalized arenas of institutionalized social science than by the aim of addressing pertinent societal problems. Since the larger organizational structures and processes of universities, campus administrative structures, national and international professional societies, and national and international ranking systems currently are inimical to the development of socially meaningful theories/practices in social sciences, then those structures have to be analyzed and changed as well.

We make a situated, pragmatist analysis that examines university organizational structures, power relations, discourses, and external relations as they affect social research methodologies and practices. Doing this creates an epistemological,

political, methodological, theoretical, and ethical necessity to go beyond conventional organizational analyses of the academic professions and analyze actual social science behavior in concrete contexts. Academic social scientists have to confront existing choices about university organizational structures and the larger extra-university context in which social science research operates. Social scientists have the tools to reveal the contours of these problems and the obligation to use them in playing a role in the pro-social reform of those structures. Leaving the changes to professional administrators, their consultants, and outside policymakers has already undermined universities in significant ways.

We pretend no neutrality on these matters. We believe that universities as something more than vocational schools and research shops are in real jeopardy. Current methods, professional practices, and organizational structures make the academic social sciences almost impossible to justify to increasingly hostile publics, funders, and policymakers. Since the Tayloristic structures of university organization are inimical to more than cosmetic institutional reform (e.g., strategic planning without any significant organizational change), we challenge them directly. We believe that universities matter and are therefore worth reforming, but only as loci for the formation of citizens; the analysis of complex technical, social, and ethical issues; and the support of meaningful efforts toward the solution of society's most pressing problems. Such universities could thrive only by means of fluid, multi-dimensional relationships within their own structures and with the nonuniversity worlds that are the source of their legitimacy and funding. We believe that the social sciences should have a



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what we mean. For us, the balancing act is a radical and transformative vision of the future of the social sciences and of universities because it involves creating new points of encounter arising as everyone involved moves away from their former positions and institutional bunkers, taking on new theoretical, methodological, and institutional positions.

Thus, our model is based on Jürgen Habermas's (1984) discourse ethics. The balancing act is a reasoned way to let arguments and positions confront each other, not in a win-lose competition, but in a collaborative learning process where good arguments support transformative learning for all (see, e.g., Freire, 1970; Mezirow, 1991). We also build on Ronald Barnett's (2003) arguments that the essence of academic life is to demand the exercise of reason to support or to reject any position. We assert not only that there is a middle ground but also that meaningful social research must take place precisely on that middle ground. By forcing us to strive both to be relevant for practical problem-solving and rigorous enough to make an intellectual contribution to the ongoing development of social research approaches, the balancing act requires us to stand on this middle ground and justify our work in both practical and epistemological terms and then to struggle to reorganize the work environments and the external links of universities to make this possible and sustainable. This is the first dimension of the balancing act.

We argue for multiperspective research and teaching as prerequisites for connected knowledge generation. In the research arenas where different disciplines must contribute, it is evident that a middle ground has to be shaped to facilitate transdisciplinary research and teaching (Gibbons et al., 1994; Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons, 2001). This is the second dimension of the balancing act.

Action research embodies this middle ground because it accepts the challenge to serve two "masters"—the demand for practical solutions and the scientific demands for intellectual focus and linkages resulting in publications that expand the understandings of professional peers. To do so, social scientists must have integrity, as they can neither operate fully in the world of abstract academic communication nor in the world of practical solutions to social problems. The integrity of the action researcher, moving continuously between these potentially contradictory demands, is key. The action researcher's self-imposed demand to maintain integrity in searching for the best possible theoretical, methodological, and practical outcomes is the only guarantee.

Practicing this integrity, action researchers also model scientific and social integrity for their students. The integrity of the university as an institution depends on facilitating these processes and protecting all parties from internal or external coercion caused by sensitive issues involving multiple stakeholders. This is the third element of the balancing act.

Because action research is built on a commitment to democratic dialogue and social processes, the further obligation of

action researchers is to weigh the fairness and democratic implications of their research and teaching processes and of the practical solutions they propose (Flood & Romm, 1996). The power and interests of the relevant stakeholders affect these processes, and the researchers seek to balance these interests through open processes characterized by integrity throughout.

Another balancing act within universities is an institutional challenge to mediate between the development and promotion of deep expertise and high skill levels in many fields and the deployment of that capability around important transdisciplinary projects within and beyond the university. This is the fourth element of the balancing act. Disciplinary silos and autonomy oppose such a change project, but doing away with the ongoing development and teaching of deep expert knowledge would also be destructive to the future of the university and society at large. As important as this is, we see little evidence of a meaningful role played by university management structures in achieving and protecting this balance. Current evidence points in the opposite direction, toward academic commodity production in a fee-for-service environment.

Action research teaching is the fifth element in the balancing act. This teaching balances conveying social theories and methods drawn from the social sciences and connecting these theories and methods practically with everyday social life. Telling students how to think and act is not successful in giving students the ability to evaluate theories and methods, gather and analyze social research data, and work with diverse actors to bring about social change. Nothing short of balancing theory and practice in the classroom and taking the professor and students out of the classroom in the company of other colleagues from other fields and nonuniversity stakeholders constitutes "teaching social science." If the teaching activity does not bridge theory and praxis, then the students are not learning social science. Instead, they are becoming experts in academic commodity production for the benefit of their own careers.

This kind of engaged reflective research is impossible in the conventional academic social sciences or in the existing organizational structures of universities, despite the depth of the crisis in the funding of higher education and the loss of public confidence in the academic social sciences. To explain this, we provide a perspective on Tayloristic organization and management in universities, organizational dynamics that create the disconnected social sciences, which cannot deliver meaningful social formation (*Bildung*) and which have created a marketized teaching system where "shopping" for courses substitutes for a well-reasoned course plan that creates personal formation (*Bildung*).

Social Scientists' Antisocial Self-Understandings

Deep expertise in particular topics and approaches is essential to research about and understanding of broader systemic



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to permanent appointment, advancement through the ranks, salary increases, increased influence, and eventually greater personal autonomy.

The whole process is based on individualistic competition. Disciplinary solidarity may be asserted when competing with other disciplines, but within the disciplinary department, the ethos is competitive and individualistic. What one academic gets often is gained by doing better than other colleagues in the same unit.

People who spend their professional lives operating according to these rules are unlikely to think of themselves as deeply connected to the structures within which they operate except when they look up the chain of command. Those who succeed within their disciplines nationally and internationally do sometimes become senior statesmen locally, taking on tasks for the collectivity, but they rarely arrive at the position of senior statesmen without first having won a competition with colleagues in their earlier years within their departments.

This behavior is amply supported by the intellectual property regimes current in academia. The ownership of ideas and the authorship of manuscripts are taken for granted as the property of individuals and disciplinary research teams. Ideas are supposed to be original, and the fiction is that an academic's original ideas belong to her or him alone. He or she communicates them and tries to get others to use some of her or his language and to refer to her or his work in the process. If the ideas result in useful inventions, an all-out struggle between the faculty member and the university administration often ensues over the distribution of the rights to the profits between the individual and the university (Marginson & Considine, 2000; Kirp, 2003; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Washburn, 2005).

We could multiply examples and arguments, but we have said enough to show how the organizational environment of the social sciences encourages anti- or at least nonsocial thought and action. The relevant social life is within the discipline and department, and even there, it is generally competitive. It is rare for an academic social scientist to think of her- or himself as a part of a university collectivity with shared cultural norms, a worldview, and preferred methods and as a person whose behavior is largely explained by the social and cultural context in which he or she operates. Instead, it is the "others," the informants, the people the social scientists study outside the university, who have culture, roles, and values and who live in a socio-cultural context, not the social scientists. Taylorism is firmly backed up by modernism.

We provide a concrete example from anthropology. For generations, it was assumed that the ability of anthropologists to see and understand the cultures of others was based on their unquestioned rationality and training as Western intellectuals. This was a perverse legacy. Culture and society are claimed to have a pervasive causal influence on the behavior of humans, but the anthropologists making this claim operated professionally as

if this general human condition did not apply to them. In anthropology, this tension was long hidden by giving up the study of North America and Europe as part of anthropology. It is telling that the Society for the Anthropology of Europe was not founded until 1987 and that the Society for North American Anthropology was founded at nearly the same time. By not treating these areas as suitable for anthropology, anthropologists removed themselves from the study of their own societies (also reducing competition with economics, political science, and sociology) and steered clearer of political repression like that suffered in the era of the House Un-American Activities Committee and Senator Joseph McCarthy (Price, 2004). They could also engage the modernist fiction of the unquestioned superiority of Western knowledge systems.

This untenable position became more paradoxical when the combination of feminism and cultural studies made positionality, the impossibility of neutral stances, the politics of research, and other previously obscured issues open to discussion. Taking on these perspectives at a discursive level and representing them in the bibliographies of manuscripts and course syllabi, anthropologists and other social scientists still generally have resisted studying themselves, their own institutions, and their own practices. Talking about positionality and reflexivity is not the same as understanding one's positions and being reflexive.

Social science teaching shows the same kind of dynamic. Typically, the general introductory courses are taught as lectures, sometimes with discussion sections, but mainly as passive learning activities. The lecturers state their understanding of what the discipline is about, how professionals operate, and what the key lessons from generations of research are. Students do not learn how to act as social scientists, why the disciplines exist, how they are similar and different from each other, or how research is done. These practices change some in upper-level courses, where enrollments are smaller and more interaction is possible, but many social science majors after 3 years cannot conduct research nor explain how or why the discipline they majored in differs from other disciplines.

At the graduate level, at least in the United States, the situation is more extreme. Graduate students are mentored more individually and must learn to "talk the talk" and "walk the walk" of their professors as a condition for getting a PhD. Taking a particularly egregious example from anthropology, fewer than 10% of the graduate departments of anthropology in the United States require a methodology course as part of graduate training. Students who want to learn how to do anthropological field research often find themselves doing their doctoral research without training on how to proceed.

Other disciplines offer more methodological training. Graduates in sociology, political science, and economics know the main techniques associated with their disciplines. Are they trained, therefore, as researchers? Do they know what their discipline "is," why it exists, and how it relates to others? Our experience is that



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involves changes in work life as it is lived daily. To engage the change process, we believe it is necessary to confront the conventional social sciences with the direct challenge of creating a new and different social science praxis.

Action research, well practiced, offers a way to accomplish this because it links all disciplines, the university, and its external stakeholders in a cogenerative social research process that tests theories and methods for validity in the form of concrete solutions to problems in real-world contexts. Action research also involves collaborative research teams in which new learners from within and outside the university are welcome and contribute their energy and experiences to the process. In this way, action research necessarily develops the democratization of knowledge generation, transmission, and application.

The action research process is based on making concrete organizational and behavioral changes, and these change processes are used as a systematic tool for learning. As such, action research forms a spiral of experimentation and reflection where all involved take part in the learning activities. This is a democratic and engaged activity giving a voice to everyone involved; it is what we have labeled cogenerative learning.

Obviously, this runs counter to the disciplinary, proprietary, commodity view of research and teaching. In recommending action research, we are insisting that the way forward is to reconfigure universities, particularly public universities, as central institutions in the further development of democracy through participative processes.

What would such a change activity look like at universities? Action research activity would have to address the antisocial behavior of academics that we have alluded to earlier, the Tayloristic organizational structure and leadership systems of universities, and universities' disconnectedness from society; finally, it would be oriented around a core *Bildung* process for all involved parties.

Where is there both energy and possibility for such a process? It is fairly clear where it is not. Attacking the bunkers of the professionalized disciplines and departments directly is a recipe for failure. Making demands on senior administrators and policymakers to give up their Taylorist, marketized addictions is routinely advocated and ignored. Insisting that universities serve society democratically at a time when the only service that counts is service to powerful economic and political players is not promising.

In this challenging environment, we are left with the recreation of the university as a center of *Bildung*. The one place where we think it might be possible to imagine reform through *Bildung* managed by action research is in teaching and research activities. For centuries, university teaching has meant learning that is a top-down, passive process, where the teacher knows what the students need to come to know. By contrast, in line with a long history in adult education and with the principles advocated by Dewey, we see learning as an active process in which the

students are presented problems, raise questions, and are assisted in gaining the skills to seek answers for themselves. In this perspective, the teacher, who is also a learner, is a mentor and participant in the same learning process. We see the relationship between students and teachers as a genuine cogenerative process where each participant contributes her or his knowledge and insight as a collaborator in this joint learning activity.

But this kind of learning works only when the students and the teachers see the problems being dealt with as important. Thus, this kind of education can and should make solving practical problems its point of entry—for example, learning what it means to be “green” by working with multidisciplinary teams of inside and external stakeholders to clean up the local water supply, learning administrative skills by helping a local group set up a volunteer health clinic, and so on. Such projects, which work equally well at the beginning university level and the postgraduate level, connect universities to the outside society and necessarily include those who own the local problem in the same learning activity. Because the focus of learning is real problems that are too complex for single discipline approaches, such projects are necessarily multidisciplinary and multiperspective ones.

We are not advocating the impossible. The best way to prove that something is possible is to show that it has already been done somewhere. What we present here are two modest efforts to push the boundaries of what can be possible, even within the current *modus operandi* of universities.

Levin provides one example from a class in organizational development at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). When the class began, there was no clear problem focus. Instead, the students began by visiting a company and meeting with managers, trade union representatives, and workers. Students had the option of interviewing local people, or they could have access to videotaped interviews done by Levin that were later subjected to analysis. The next stage was for the students to interpret the situation and develop perspectives on a meaningful problem focus. In this phase, they met for the second time with the local company people. The students worked in groups of three to five members.

They created a plan for a developmental process in the company, which was presented in writing to the class, and they got feedback from Levin. This feedback shaped a dynamic that effectively simulates a real-life dynamic on organizational development processes. Finally, representatives from the company were invited to the presentation of the students' work, and the company people also participated in the grading process. The companies found this process useful in helping them think through organizational dilemmas, and it has been relatively easy to get companies to volunteer for it.

The *Bildung* elements are clear. Students are receiving formation by interacting with each other, with the professor, and with external stakeholders over real-world problems with real data



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A HISTORY OF QUALITATIVE INQUIRY IN SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH¹

Frederick Erickson

Qualitative inquiry seeks to discover and to describe in narrative reporting what particular people do in their everyday lives and what their actions mean to them. It identifies meaning-relevant *kinds* of things in the world—kinds of people, kinds of actions, kinds of beliefs and interests—focusing on differences in forms of things that make a difference for meaning. (From Latin, *qualitas* refers to a primary focus on the qualities, the features, of entities—to distinctions in kind—while the contrasting term *quantitas* refers to a primary focus on differences in amount.) The qualitative researcher first asks, “What are the kinds of things (material and symbolic) to which people in this setting orient as they conduct everyday life?” The quantitative researcher first asks, “How many instances of a certain kind are there here?” In these terms, quantitative inquiry can be seen as always being preceded by foundational qualitative inquiry, and in social research, quantitative analysis goes haywire when it tries to shortcut the qualitative foundations of such research—it then ends up counting the wrong kinds of things in its attempts to answer the questions it is asking.

This chapter will consider major phases in the development of qualitative inquiry. Because of the scale of published studies using qualitative methods, the citations of literature present illustrative examples of work in each successive phase of qualitative inquiry’s development rather than an exhaustive review of literature in any particular phase. I have referred the reader at various points to additional literature reviews and historical accounts of qualitative methods, and at the outset, I want to acknowledge the comprehensive historical chapter by Arthur Vidich and Stanford Lyman (1994, pp. 23–59), which was published in the first edition of this *Handbook*. Our discussion here takes a somewhat different perspective concerning the crisis in authority that has developed in qualitative inquiry over the last 30 years.

This chapter is organized both chronologically and thematically. It considers relationships evolving over time between five foundational “footings” for qualitative research: (1) disciplinary perspectives in social science, particularly in sociology and anthropology; (2) the participant-observational fieldworker as an observer/author; (3) the people who are observed during the fieldwork; (4) the rhetorical and substantive content of the qualitative research report as a text; and (5) the audiences to which such texts have been addressed. The character and legitimacy of each of these “footings,” have been debated over the entire course of qualitative social inquiry’s development, and these debates have increased in intensity in the recent past.

I. ORIGINS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In the ancient world, there were precursors to qualitative social inquiry. Herodotus, a Greek scholar writing in the 5th century B.C.E., had interests that were cross-cultural as well as historical. Writing in the 2nd century C.E., the Greek skeptical philosopher Sextus Empiricus conducted a cross-cultural survey of morality, showing that what was considered right in one society was considered wrong in others. Both he and Herodotus worked from the accounts of travelers, which provided the primary basis for comparative knowledge about human lifeways until the late 19th century. Knowledge of nature also was reported descriptively, as in the physics of Aristotle and the medicine of Galen.

Descriptive reporting of everyday social practices flourished again in the Renaissance and Baroque eras in the publication of “how to do it books” such as Baldassar Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* and the writing of Thoinot Arbeau (*Orchésographie*) on courtly dancing, of Johann Comenius (*Didactica Magna*) on



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commission the research work). This audience had as its primary interests the substantive significance of the research topic and the technical quality of the conduct of the study. The success of the report (and of the author's status as a reporter) was a matter of judgment residing in the scholarly community. The research objects' existential experience of being scrutinized during the researcher's fieldwork and then described in the researcher's report was not a primary consideration for the readers of the report, nor for its author. Indeed those who had been studied were not expected to read the research report, since many were not literate.

For a time, each of these five footings had the stability of canonical authority in the "normal science" practice of qualitative inquiry. That was a period that could be called a "golden age," but with a twinge of irony in such a designation, given what we now know about the intense contestation that has developed recently concerning each of the footings.

■ II. A "GOLDEN AGE" OF REALIST ETHNOGRAPHY

From the mid 1920s to the early 1950s, the basic approach in qualitative inquiry was realist general ethnography—at the time it was just called *ethnography*. More recently, such work has been called *realist* because of its literary quality of "you are there" reporting, in which the narrator presents description as if it were plain fact, and *general* because it attempted a comprehensive description of a whole way of life in the particular setting that was being described—a setting (such as a village or an island or, later, an urban neighborhood or workplace within a formal organization) that was seen as being distinctly bounded. Typically, the narrator wrote in third person and did not portray him- or herself as being present in the scenes of daily life that were described. A slightly distanced authorial voice was intended to convey an impression of even-handedness—conveying "the native's point of view" without either overt advocacy of customary practices or explicit critique of them. (For a discussion of the stance of detachment, see Vidich & Lyman, 1994, p. 23.) Usually, the social theory perspective underlying such work was some form of functionalism, and this led authors to focus less on conflict as a driving force in society and more on the complementarity of various social institutions and processes within the local setting.

Ethnographic monographs in anthropology during this time followed the overall approach found in Bronislaw Malinowski's (1922) *Argonauts*, where he said that an adequate ethnography should report three primary bodies of evidence:

1. *The organisation of the tribe, and the anatomy of its culture* must be recorded in firm, clear outline. The method of *concrete, statistical documentation* is the means through which such an outline has to be given.
2. Within this frame *the imponderabilia of actual life*, and the *type of behaviour* must be filled in. They have to be collected through minute, detailed observations, in the form of some sort of ethnographic diary, made possible by close contact with native life.
3. A collection of ethnographic statements, characteristic narratives, typical utterances, items of folk-lore, and magical formulae has to be given as a *corpus inscriptionem*, as documents of native mentality. (p. 24)

What was studied was a certain village or region in which a named ethnic/linguistic group resided. The monograph usually began with an overall description of the physical setting (and often of subsistence activities). This was followed by a chapter on an annual cycle of life, one on a typical day, one on kinship and other aspects of "social organization," one on child rearing, and then chapters on certain features of the setting that were distinctive to it. (Thus, for example, Evans-Pritchard's 1940 monograph on a herding people, *The Nuer*, contains detailed description of the aesthetics of appreciation of color patterns in cowhide.) Narrative vignettes describing the actions of particular people in an actual event were sometimes provided, or typical actions were described more synoptically. These vignettes and quotes from informants were linked in the text by narrating commentary. Often maps, frequency tables, and analytic charts (including kinship diagrams) were included.

Notable examples in British and American anthropology during this period include volumes by students of Franz Boas, such as Margaret Mead's (1928) semipopular account, *Coming of Age in Samoa*. Raymond Firth, a student of Malinowski, produced *We the Tikopia* (1936/2004), E. E. Evans-Pritchard, a student of Malinowski's contemporary, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (who himself had published a monograph *The Andaman Islanders* in the same year as Malinowski's *Argonauts*, 1922) published *The Nuer* in 1940. David Holmberg (1950) published a study of the Siriono, titled *Nomads of the Longbow*. In addition to American work on indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere, there were monograph series published on British colonial areas—from Australia, studies of New Guinea, Micronesia, and Melanesia, and from England, studies of East Africa, West Africa, and South Africa.

In the United States, community studies in an anthropologically ethnographic vein were encouraged by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess at the department of sociology of the University of Chicago. On the basis of hunches about geographic determinism in the founding and maintenance of distinct social areas within cities, various Chicago neighborhoods were treated as if they were bounded communities, for example, Louis Wirth's (1928) study of the West Side Jewish ghetto and Harvey Warren Zorbaugh's (1929) study of contiguous working-class Italian and upper class "mainstream American" neighborhoods on the near North Side. A tradition of community study



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popular writing, established Mead's reputation in the United States as a public intellectual. Derek Freeman (1983), an Australian anthropologist, waited until after Mead's death to publish a scathing critique of Mead's research in Samoa. He claimed that Mead had been naive in believing what her informants told her; that they had exaggerated their stories in the direction she had signaled that she wanted to hear. Subsequent consideration suggests that Mead's interpretation was correct overall (see, e.g., Shankman, 1996), but the highly authoritative style of Mead's text (and the lack of systematic presentation of evidence to support the claims she was making) left her vulnerable to the accusation that she had got her findings wrong.

Were all ethnographers self-deceived—or worse, were many of them “just making things up?” The Redfield-Lewis controversy—two vastly different descriptions of the same group—raised an even deeper question: Do the perspective, politics, and ideology of the observer so powerfully influence what he or she notices and reflects on that it overdetermines the conclusions drawn? Realist general ethnography was experiencing heavy weather indeed.

One line of response to these doubts was the “better evidence” movement already discussed. Somewhat earlier, another stream of work had developed that led to participatory action research or collaborative action research. In this approach, outside researchers worked with members of a setting to effect change that was presumed to be of benefit there—for example, improvements in public health, agricultural production, the formation of cooperatives for marketing, and the organization of work in factories. Research efforts accompanied attempts at instituting change, as in the study of local community health practices and beliefs within a project aimed to prevent cholera and dysentery by providing clean water. The social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) was one of the pioneers of these attempts, focusing especially on labor-management relations in England. The attempts in England spread through trade union channels into Scandinavia (see Emery & Thorsrud, 1969). Another pioneer was Whyte, working in industrial settings in the United States (see Whyte, Greenwood, & Lazes, 1989).

Also in the period immediately before and after World War II, anthropologists were undertaking change-oriented research overseas, and the Society for Applied Anthropology was founded in 1948. During the 1960s and 1970s, applied anthropologists and linguists worked in action projects in the United States and England in ethnic and racial minority communities (e.g., Gumperz, Roberts, & Jupp, 1979; Schensul & Schensul, 1992).

One line of justification for applied research harked back to the “better evidence” movement: Through a researcher's “involvement in the action” (Schensul, 1974), the accuracy and validity of evidence collection and analysis are tested in conditions of natural experimentation.

Another justification for applied research had to do with the explicit adoption of value positions by action researchers and

their community partners. This is similar to the “critical” position in social research that especially took hold in the 1970s and 1980s, and as action research progressed, it combined increasingly with the various critical approaches discussed in the previous section (for elaboration, see Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

This aspect of action research led away from the stance of cultural relativism itself—from even the appearance of value neutrality—toward value affirmation. In research efforts to effect social change, explicit value commitments had to be adopted if the work was to make change in specific directions. This was called critical ethnography, related to the “critical theory” perspective articulated by the Frankfurt School. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer had developed a critique, based in neo-Marxist social analysis, of both capitalism and fascism. The point was to criticize whatever material or cultural influences might lead people to take actions or support actions that resulted in limiting their own life chances—that is, their collusion in their own oppression. In Marxist terms one could say that critical theory made visible social processes that worked against the class interests of those being dominated—for example U.S. white workers supporting an oligarchy that oppressed both them and Black workers. Culturally relativist ethnography had not called domination by that name, nor had it named suffering as an object of attention and of description. Critical ethnography claimed to do just that, and in so doing, the ethnographer stepped out of a defended position of value neutrality to one of vulnerability, shifting from distanced relations with informants to relations of solidarity. This was to engage in social inquiry as ethnography “that breaks your heart” (Behar, 1996).

The adoption of an explicit value position created a fixed fulcrum from which analytic leverage could be exerted in distinguishing between which everyday practices led to increase or decrease in life chances (see Bredo & Feinberg 1982). As the critical ethnography movement developed, the focus shifted somewhat from careful explication of the value yardsticks used to judge habitual practices to claims about domination and oppression as if the inequity involved was self-evident. There was a push back from the earlier generation of scholars, who accused critical ethnographers of letting their values so drive their fieldwork that they were able to see only what they expected to see, ignoring disconfirming evidence.

As critical ethnographers identified more and more kinds of inequity, it became apparent that social criticism itself was relative depending on which dimension of superordination/subordination was the locus for analysis. If it was economic relations, then processes of class-based oppression appeared most salient; if gender relations, then patriarchal processes of domination; if postcolonial relations, the survivals of “colonized” status; if sexual identification, then heterosexual domination. And if race became the primary fulcrum for critical social analysis—race, as distinct from, yet as linked to class,



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Moreover, in action research and other kinds of advocacy research, research may also address popular audiences.

This is a story of decentering and jockeying for position as qualitative inquiry has evolved over the last 120 years. Today there is an uneven pattern of adoption and rejection of the newer approaches in qualitative inquiry. In applied fields, such as education, medicine, and business, “realist” ethnography has gained wide acceptance, while more recently developed approaches have sometimes been adopted (especially in education) and sometimes met with skepticism or with outright rejection. In anthropology, heroic “lone ethnographer” fieldwork and reporting, after the self-valorizing model of Malinowski, has generally gone out of fashion. In sociology, the detached stance of professional researcher has also been seriously questioned, together with the realist mode of research reporting.

Yet there has also been push back. In education, for example, while realist ethnography was officially accepted as legitimately scientific in an influential report issued by the National Research Council (Shavelson & Towne, 2002), postmodern approaches were singled out for harsh criticism. The report also took the position that science is a seamless enterprise, with social scientific inquiry being continuous in its fundamental aims and procedures with that of natural science. This position was reinforced by a statement by the primary professional society of researchers in education, the American Educational Research Association. Quoting from the AERA website:

The following definition of scientifically based research (SBR) was developed by an expert working group convened by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) . . . AERA provided this definition in response to congressional staff requests for an SBR definition that was grounded in scientific standards and principles. The request derived from an interest in averting the inconsistencies and at times narrowness of other SBR definitions used in legislation in recent years.

Alternate Definition of Scientifically Based Research (SBR) Supported by AERA Council, July 11, 2008

The term “principles of scientific research” means the use of rigorous, systematic, and objective methodologies to obtain reliable and valid knowledge. Specifically, such research requires

- development of a logical, evidence-based chain of reasoning;
- methods appropriate to the questions posed;
- observational or experimental designs and instruments that provide reliable and generalizable findings;
- data and analysis adequate to support findings;
- explication of procedures and results clearly and in detail, including specification of the population to which the findings can be generalized;
- adherence to professional norms of peer review;

dissemination of findings to contribute to scientific knowledge; and

access to data for reanalysis, replication, and the opportunity to build on findings.

The statements by the NRC panel and the AERA Council claimed to provide a more broadly ecumenical definition of scientific research than that which some members of the U.S. Congress and their staffs were trying to insist on in developing criteria of eligibility for federal funding. Some legislators proposed that funding should be restricted to experimental designs with random assignment of subjects to treatment or control conditions. However, AERA’s adoption of the “seamless” view of science means that many of the recent approaches to qualitative inquiry are declared beyond the boundaries of legitimate research. Moreover, the statements by the NRC and by AERA show no awareness of an intellectual history of social and cultural research in which, across many generations of scholars, serious doubts have been raised as to the possibility that inquiry in the human sciences should be, or could be, conducted in ways that were continuous with the natural sciences.

Geertz warned against the “broad umbrella” conception of science in his favorable review of Flyvbjerg’s (2001) book, *Making Social Science Matter*:

Using the term “science” to cover everything from string theory to psychoanalysis is not a happy idea because doing so elides the difficult fact that the ways in which we try to understand and deal with the physical world and those in which we try to understand and deal with the social one are not altogether the same. The methods of research, the aims of inquiry, and the standards of judgment all differ, and nothing but confusion, scorn, and accusation—relativism! Platonism! reductionism! verbalism!—results from failing to see this. (Geertz, 2001, p. 53)

In addition to external critique from the advocates of social inquiry as “hard science,” there is also a conservative reaction from within the community of qualitative researchers. One such statement appears in a recent collection of essays by Martin Hammersley (2008):

I have argued that this postmodern approach is founded on some false assumptions that undermine the distinctive nature of social research . . . one consequence of this has been a legitimization of speculative theorizing; another has been a celebration of obscurity, and associated denunciations of clarity . . . [this] leads toward an abdication of the responsibility for clear and careful argument aimed at discovering what truths qualitative inquiry is capable of providing. (p. 144)

We must work to overcome, or at least to reduce, methodological pluralism. It is not that all research can or should be done in the same standardised way. Rather, my point is that any approach to methodological thinking needs to engage with the same general issues. (p. 181)



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known to the unknown. Mill seeks to establish this function of logic as inference from the known, rather than certifying the rules for formal consistency in reasoning (Mill, 1843/1893, III). Scientific certitude can be approximated when induction is followed rigorously, with propositions empirically derived and the material of all our knowledge provided by experience.² For the physical sciences, Mill establishes four modes of experimental inquiry: agreement, disagreement, residues, and the principle of concomitant variations (1843/1893, III.8, pp. 278–288). He considers them the only possible methods of proof for experimentation, as long as one presumes the realist position that nature is structured by uniformities.³

In Book 6 of *A System of Logic*, “On the Logic of the Moral Sciences,” Mill (1843/1893) develops an inductive experimentalism as the scientific method for studying “the various phenomena which constitute social life” (VI.6.1, p. 606). Although he conceived of social science as explaining human behavior in terms of causal laws, he warned against the fatalism of full predictability. “Social laws are hypothetical, and statistically-based generalizations that by their very nature admit of exceptions” (Copleston, 1966, p. 101; see also Mill, 1843/1893, VI.5.1, p. 596). Empirically confirmed instrumental knowledge about human behavior has greater predictive power when it deals with collective masses than when it concerns individual agents.

Mill’s positivism is obvious throughout his work on experimental inquiry.⁴ Based on Auguste Comte’s *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830), he defined matter as the “permanent possibility of sensation” (Mill, 1865b, p. 198) and believed that nothing else can be said about the metaphysical.⁵ Social research is amoral, speaking to questions of means only. Ends are outside its purview. In developing precise methods of indication and verification, Mill established a theory of knowledge in empirical terms. Truth is not something in itself but “depends on the past history and habits of our own minds” (Mill, 1843/1893, II, Vol. 6, p. 181). Methods for investigating society must be rigorously limited to the risks and benefits of possible courses of action. With David Hume and Comte, Mill insisted that metaphysical substances are not real; only the facts of sense phenomena exist. There are no essences or ultimate reality behind sensations; therefore, Mill (1865/1907, 1865a, 1865b) and Comte (1848/1910) argued that social scientists should limit themselves to particular data as a factual source out of which experimentally valid laws can be derived. For both, this is the only kind of knowledge that yields practical benefits (Mill, 1865b, p. 242); in fact, society’s salvation is contingent on such scientific knowledge (p. 241).⁶

Like his consequentialist ethics, Mill’s philosophy of social science is built on a dualism of means and ends. Citizens and politicians are responsible for articulating ends in a free society and science for providing the know-how to achieve them. Science is amoral, speaking to questions of means but with no wherewithal or authority to dictate ends. Methods in the social sciences must be disinterested regarding substance and content. Protocols for practicing liberal science “should be prescriptive, but not morally

or politically prescriptive and should direct against bad science but not bad conduct” (Root, 1993, p. 129). Research cannot be judged right or wrong, only true or false. “Science is political only in its applications” (Root, 1993, p. 213). Given his democratic liberalism, Mill advocates neutrality “out of concern for the autonomy of the individuals or groups” social science seeks to serve. It should “treat them as thinking, willing, active beings who bear responsibility for their choices and are free to choose” their own conception of the good life by majority rule (Root, 1993, p. 19).

Value Neutrality in Max Weber

When 21st-century mainstream social scientists contend that ethics is not their business, they typically invoke Max Weber’s essays written between 1904 and 1917. Given Weber’s importance methodologically and theoretically for sociology and economics, his distinction between political judgments and scientific neutrality is given canonical status.

Weber distinguishes between value freedom and value relevance. He recognizes that in the discovery phase, “personal, cultural, moral, or political values cannot be eliminated; . . . what social scientists choose to investigate . . . they choose on the basis of the values” they expect their research to advance (Root, 1993, p. 33). But he insists that social science be value-free in the presentation phase. Findings ought not to express any judgments of a moral or political character. Professors should hang up their values along with their coats as they enter their lecture halls.

“An attitude of moral indifference,” Weber (1904/1949b) writes, “has no connection with scientific objectivity” (p. 60). His meaning is clear from the value-freedom/value-relevance distinction. For the social sciences to be purposeful and rational, they must serve the “values of relevance.”

The problems of the social sciences are selected by the value relevance of the phenomena treated. . . . The expression “relevance to values” refers simply to the philosophical interpretation of that specifically scientific “interest” which determines the selection of a given subject matter and problems of empirical analysis. (Weber, 1917/1949a, pp. 21–22)

In the social sciences the stimulus to the posing of scientific problems is in actuality always given by practical “questions.” Hence, the very recognition of the existence of a scientific problem coincides personally with the possession of specifically oriented motives and values. . . .

Without the investigator’s evaluative ideas, there would be no principle of selection of subject matter and no meaningful knowledge of the concrete reality. Without the investigator’s conviction regarding the significance of particular cultural facts, every attempt to analyze concrete reality is absolutely meaningless. (Weber, 1904/1949b, pp. 61, 82)

Whereas the natural sciences, in Weber’s (1904/1949b, p. 72) view, seek general laws that govern all empirical phenomena, the social sciences study those realities that our values consider



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means. The policy procedures based on them reflect the same guidelines that dominate the codes of ethics: informed consent, protection of privacy, and nondeception. The authority of IRBs was enhanced in 1989 when Congress passed the NIH Revitalization Act and formed the Commission on Research Integrity. The emphasis at that point was on the invention, fudging, and distortion of data. Falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism continue as federal categories of misconduct, with a revised report in 1996 adding warnings against unauthorized use of confidential information, omission of important data, and interference (that is, physical damage to the materials of others).

With IRBs, the legacy of Mill, Comte, and Weber comes into its own. Value-neutral science is accountable to ethical standards through rational procedures controlled by value-neutral academic institutions in the service of an impartial government. Consistent with the way anonymous bureaucratic regimes become refined and streamlined toward greater efficiency, the regulations rooted in scientific and medical experiments now extend to humanistic inquiry. Protecting subjects from physical harm in laboratories has grown to encompass human behavior, history, and ethnography in natural settings. In Jonathon Church's (2002) metaphor, "a biomedical paradigm is used like some threshing machine with ethnographic research the resulting chaff" (p. 2). Whereas Title 45/Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) designed protocols for research funded by 17 federal agencies, at present, most universities have multiple project agreements that consign all research to a campus IRB under the terms of 45 CFR 46 (cf. Shopes & Ritchie, 2004).

While this bureaucratic expansion has gone on unremittingly, most IRBs have not changed the composition of their membership. Medical and behavioral scientists under the aegis of value-free neutrality continue to dominate. And the changes in procedures have generally stayed within the biomedical model also. Expedited review under the common rule, for social research with no risk of physical or psychological harm, depends on enlightened IRB chairs and organizational flexibility. Informed consent, mandatory before medical experiments, is simply incongruent with interpretive research that does not reduce humans to subjects but sees itself as collaboration among human beings (Denzin & Giardina, 2007, pp. 20–28).¹⁴ Despite technical improvements,

Intellectual curiosity remains actively discouraged by the IRB. Research projects must ask only surface questions and must not deviate from a path approved by a remote group of people. . . . Often the review process seems to be more about gamesmanship than anything else. A better formula for stultifying research could not be imagined. (Blanchard, 2002, p. 11)

In its conceptual structure, IRB utilitarian policy is designed to produce the best ratio of benefits to costs (McIntosh & Morse, 2009, pp. 99–100). IRBs ostensibly protect the subjects who fall

under the protocols they approve. However, given the interlocking utilitarian functions of social science, the academy, and the state that Mill identified and promoted, IRBs in reality protect their own institutions rather than subject populations in society at large (see Vanderpool, 1996, Chapters 2 to 6). Only when professional associations like the American Anthropological Association create their own best practices for ethnographic research is the IRB structure pushed in the right direction. Such renovations, however, are contrary to the centralizing homogeneity of closed systems such as the IRBs.

Current Crisis

Mill and Comte, each in his own way, presumed that experimental social science benefited society by uncovering facts about the human condition. Durkheim and Weber believed that a scientific study of society could help people come to grips with the development of big-business monopolies and industrialism. The American Social Science Association was created in 1865 to link "real elements of the truth" with "the great social problems of the day" (Lazarsfeld & Reitz, 1975, p. 1). This myth of beneficence was destroyed with "the revelations at the Nuremberg trials (recounting the Nazis' 'medical experiments' on concentration camp inmates) and with the role of leading scientists in the Manhattan Project" (Punch, 1998, pp. 166–167).

The crisis of confidence multiplied with the exposure of actual physical harm in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study and the Willowbrook Hepatitis Experiment. In the 1960s, Project Camelot, a U.S. Army attempt to use social science to measure and forecast revolutions and insurgency, was bitterly opposed around the world and had to be canceled. Milgram's (1974) deception of unwitting subjects and Laud Humphreys's (1970, 1972) deceptive research on homosexuals in a public toilet and later in their homes, were considered scandalous for psychologically abusing research subjects. Noam Chomsky (1969/2002) exposed the complicity of social scientists with military initiatives in Vietnam.

Vigorous concern for research ethics since the 1980s, support from foundations, and the development of ethics codes and the IRB apparatus are credited by their advocates with curbing outrageous abuses. However, the charges of fraud, plagiarism, and misrepresentation continue on a lesser scale, with dilemmas, conundrums, and controversies unabated over the meaning and application of ethical guidelines. Entrepreneurial faculty competing for scarce research dollars are generally compliant with institutional control, but the vastness of social science activity in universities and research entities makes full supervision impossible.¹⁵

Underneath the pros and cons of administering a responsible social science, the structural deficiencies in its epistemology have become transparent (Mantzavinos, 2009). A positivistic philosophy of social inquiry insists on neutrality regarding



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■ INTERPRETIVE SUFFICIENCY

Within a feminist communitarian model, the mission of social science research is interpretive sufficiency. In contrast to an experimentalism of instrumental efficiency, this paradigm seeks to open up the social world in all its dynamic dimensions. The thick notion of sufficiency supplants the thinness of the technical, exterior, and statistically precise received view. Rather than reducing social issues to financial and administrative problems for politicians, social science research enables people to come to terms with their everyday experience themselves.

Interpretive sufficiency means taking seriously lives that are loaded with multiple interpretations and grounded in cultural complexity. Ethnographic accounts should, therefore, “possess that amount of depth, detail, emotionality, nuance, and coherence that will permit a critical consciousness to be formed by the reader. Such texts should also exhibit representational adequacy, including the absence of racial, class, and gender stereotyping” (Denzin, 1997, p. 283; see 1989, pp. 77–81).

From the perspective of a feminist communitarian ethics, interpretive discourse is authentically sufficient when it fulfills three conditions: represents multiple voices, enhances moral discernment, and promotes social transformation. Consistent with the community-based norms advocated here, the focus is not on professional ethics per se but on the general morality. When feminist communitarianism is integrated with non-Enlightenment communal concepts such as *ubuntu* (from the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, “a person is a person through other persons” or “I am because of others”), a dialogic ethics is formed that expands the general morality to the human race as a whole (Christians, 2004).

Multivocal and Cross-Cultural Representation

Within social and political entities are multiple spaces that exist as ongoing constructions of everyday life. The dialogical self is situated and articulated within these decisive contexts of gender, race, class, and religion. In contrast to contractarianism, where tacit consent or obligation is given to the state, promises are made and sustained to one another. Research narratives reflect a community’s multiple voices through which promise-keeping takes place.

In Carole Pateman’s communitarian philosophy, sociopolitical entities are not to be understood first of all in terms of contracts. Making promises is one of the basic ways in which consenting human beings “freely create their own social relationships” (Pateman, 1989, p. 61; see also Pateman, 1985, pp. 26–29). We assume an obligation by making a promise. When individuals promise, they are obliged to act accordingly. But promises are primarily made not to authorities through political contracts, but to fellow citizens. If obligations are rooted in promises, obligations are owed to other colleagues in institutions and to participants in

community practices. Therefore, only under conditions of participatory democracy can there be self-assumed moral obligation.

Pateman understands the nature of moral agency. We know ourselves primarily in relation and derivatively as thinkers withdrawn from action. Only by overcoming the traditional dualisms between thinker and agent, mind and body, reason and will, can we conceive of being as “the mutuality of personal relationships” (MacMurray, 1961a, p. 38). Moral commitments arise out of action and return to action for their incarnation and verification. From a dialogical perspective, promise-keeping through action and everyday language is not a supercilious pursuit because our way of being is not inwardly generated but socially derived.

We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through . . . rich modes of expression we learn through exchange with others. . . .

My discovering my own identity doesn’t mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others. . . .

In the culture of authenticity, relationships are seen as the key loci of self-discovery and self-affirmation. (Taylor et al., 1994, pp. 32, 34, 36)

If moral bondedness flows horizontally and obligation is reciprocal in character, the affirming and sustaining of promises occurs cross-culturally. But the contemporary challenge of cultural diversity has raised the stakes and made easy solutions impossible. One of the most urgent and vexing issues on the democratic agenda at present is not just how to meet the moral obligation to treat ethnic differences with fairness but how to recognize explicit cultural groups politically (Benhabib, 2002, 2008).

Communitarianism as the basis for ethnic plurality rejects melting pot homogeneity and replaces it with the politics of recognition. The basic issue is whether democracies are discriminating against their citizens in an unethical manner when major institutions fail to account for the identities of their members (Taylor et al., 1994, p. 3). In what sense should the specific cultural and social features of African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Buddhists, Jews, the physically disabled, or children matter publicly? Should not public institutions ensure only that democratic citizens share an equal right to political liberties and due process without regard to race, gender, or religion? Beneath the rhetoric is a fundamental philosophical dispute that Taylor calls the “politics of recognition.” As he puts it, “Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need” (Taylor et al., 1994, p. 26). This foundational issue regarding the character of cultural identity needs to be resolved for cultural pluralism to come into its own. Feminist



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When rooted in a positivist or postpositivist worldview, explanations of social life are considered incompatible with the renderings offered by the participants themselves. In problematics, lingual form, and content, research production presumes greater mastery and clearer illumination than the nonexperts who are the targeted beneficiaries. Protecting and promoting individual autonomy has been the philosophical rationale for value neutrality since its origins in Mill. But the incoherence in that view of social science is now transparent. By limiting the active involvement of rational beings or judging their self-understanding to be false, empiricist models contradict the ideal of rational beings who “choose between competing conceptions of the good” and make choices “deserving of respect” (Root, 1993, p. 198). The verification standards of an instrumentalist system “take away what neutrality aims to protect: a community of free and equal rational beings legislating their own principles of conduct” (Root, 1993, p. 198). The social ontology of feminist communitarianism escapes this contradiction by reintegrating human life with the moral order.

Freed from neutrality and a superficial instrumentalism, the ethics of feminist communitarianism participates in the revolutionary social science advocated by Cannella and Lincoln (2009):

Research conceptualizations, purposes, and practices would be grounded in critical ethical challenges to social (therefore science) systems, supports for egalitarian struggle, and revolutionary ethical awareness and activism from within the context of community. Research would be relational (often as related to community) and grounded within critique of systems, egalitarian struggle, and revolutionary ethics. (p. 68)

In this form, the positivist paradigm is turned upside down intellectually, and qualitative research advances social justice and is grounded in hope (Denzin & Giardina, 2009, pp. 41–42). Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) correctly locate the politics and ethics of this chapter in global terms. For them, Occidental social scientists advocating alternative interpretive research “and indigenous communities alike have been moving toward the same goals.” They both “seek a set of ethical principles that are feminist, caring, communitarian, holistic, respectful, mutual (rather than power imbalanced), sacred, and ecologically sound” (p. 569).

■ NOTES

1. Michael Root (1993) is unique among philosophers of the social sciences in linking social science to the ideals and practices of the liberal state on the grounds that both institutions “attempt to be neutral between competing conceptions of the good” (p. xv). As he elaborates: “Though liberalism is primarily a theory of the state, its principles can be applied to any of the basic institutions of a society; for one can argue that the role of the clinic, the corporation, the scholarly

associations, or professions is not to dictate or even recommend the kind of life a person should aim at. Neutrality can serve as an ideal for the operations of these institutions as much as it can for the state. Their role, one can argue, should be to facilitate whatever kind of life a student, patient, client, customer, or member is aiming at and not promote one kind of life over another” (p. 13). Root’s interpretations of Mill and Weber are crucial to my own formulation.

2. Although committed to what he called “the logic of the moral sciences” in delineating the canons or methods for induction, Mill shared with natural science a belief in the uniformity of nature and the presumption that all phenomena are subject to cause-and-effect relationships. His five principles of induction reflect a Newtonian cosmology.

3. Utilitarianism in John Stuart Mill was essentially an amalgamation of Jeremy Bentham’s greatest happiness principle, David Hume’s empirical philosophy and concept of utility as a moral good, and Comte’s positivist tenets that things-in-themselves cannot be known and knowledge is restricted to sensations. In his influential *A System of Logic*, Mill (1843/1893) is typically characterized as combining the principles of French positivism (as developed by Comte) and British empiricism into a single system.

4. For an elaboration of the complexities in positivism—including reference to its Millian connections—see Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 19–28).

5. Mill’s realism is most explicitly developed in his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy* (1865b). Our belief in a common external world, in his view, is rooted in the fact that our sensations of physical reality “belong as much to other human or sentient beings as to ourselves” (p. 196; see also Copleston, 1966, p. 306, note 97).

6. Mill (1873/1969) specifically credits Comte for his use of the inverse deductive or historical method: “This was an idea entirely new to me when I found it in Comte; and but for him I might not soon (if ever) have arrived at it” (p. 126). Mill explicitly follows Comte in distinguishing social statics and social dynamics. He published two essays on Comte’s influence in the *Westminster Review*, which were reprinted as *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (Mill, 1865a; see also Mill, 1873/1969, p. 165).

7. Emile Durkheim is more explicit and direct about causality in both the natural and the social worlds. While he argues for sociological over psychological causes of behavior and did not believe intention could cause action, he unequivocally sees the task of social science as discovering the causal links between social facts and personal behavior (see, e.g., Durkheim, 1966, pp. 44, 297–306).

8. As one example of the abuse Weber resisted, Root (1993, pp. 41–42) refers to the appointment of Ludwig Bernhard to a professorship of economics at the University of Berlin. Although he had no academic credentials, the Ministry of Education gave Bernhard this position without a faculty vote (see Weber, 1973, pp. 4–30). In Shils’s (1949) terms, “A mass of particular, concrete concerns underlies [his 1917] essay—his recurrent effort to penetrate to the postulates of economic theory, his ethical passion for academic freedom, his fervent nationalist political convictions, and his own perpetual demand for intellectual integrity” (p. v).

9. The rationale for the Social Science Research Council in 1923 is multilayered, but in its attempt to link academic expertise with policy research, and in its preference for rigorous social scientific methodology, the SSRC reflects and implements Weber.



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Cheryl Rau (2010) construct a countercolonial ethics, labeled an *ethics of alterity*, which would shift the focus from “us” or “them” to “a collective reconfiguring of who ‘we’ are” (p. 364). Corrine Glesne (2007) even suggests that the purpose of research should be solidarity: “If you want to research us, you can go home. If you have come to accompany us, if you think our struggle is also your struggle, we have plenty of things to talk about” (p. 171). Critical pedagogues focus on the underpinnings of power in whatever context they find themselves and the ways that power performs or is performed to create injustice.

These are just a few of the ethical locations from which a critical social science has been proposed, introducing multiplicities, complexities, and ambiguities that would be part of any moral conceptualization and practice of research focusing on human suffering and oppression, radical democracy, and the struggle for equity and social justice. Furthermore, those of us who have been privileged through our connection with the dominant (e.g., education, economic level, race, gender) and may at least appear as the face of the oppressor must always avoid actions or interpretations that appropriate. We must struggle to “join with,” and “learn from” rather than “speak for” or “intervene into.” Voices from the margins demonstrate the range of knowledges, perspectives, languages, and ways of being that should become foundational to our actions, that should become a new center.

At various points, we have attempted to stand for a critical, transformative social science, for example: with Viruru (Viruru & Cannella, 2006) the critique of the construction of the ethnographic subject and the examination of privilege created by language in research practices; with Manuelito (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008) in proposing that social science be constructed in ways that are egalitarian, anticolonial, and ethically embedded within the nonviolent revolutionary consciousness proposed by hooks (1990). Recognizing that ethics as a construct is always and already essentializing, we have suggested that a revolutionary ethical conscience would be anticolonial and ask questions like: How are groups being used politically to perpetuate power within systems? How can we enlarge the research imaginary (e.g., regarding gender, race, childhood) to reveal the possibilities that our preoccupations have obscured? Can we cultivate ourselves as those who can desire and inhabit unthought spaces regarding research (about childhood, diverse views of the world)? (Lincoln & Cannella, 2007). Can we critique our own privilege? Can we join the struggle for social justice in ways that support multiple knowledges and multiple logics? These diverse perspectives and the underlying moral foundations from which they are generated are basic to the construction of an ethical, critical, even anticolonial social science. The ethics and the science must be understood as complex, must always be fluid, and must continually employ self-examination.

Furthermore, using the scholarship of Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon, Judith Butler, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,

Anthony C. Alessandrini (2009) calls for an ethics without subjects that is a new concept of ethical relationships, a responsible ethics that can be considered “after” humanism (p. 78). This postcolonial ethics would not be between people; rather in its future-oriented construction, an ethical relationship would occur with “would-be subjects that have not yet come into existence” (p. 78). The ethical relations would address contemporary political and power orientations by recognizing that the investigator and investigated (whether people, institutions, or systems) are subjects of the presence or aftermath of colonialism (Spivak, 1987). The tautology of humanist piety that would “save” others through science, religion, or politics would be avoided (Fanon, 1967; Foucault, 1984a). Yet, the Enlightenment blackmail that insists on a declaration of acceptance or rejection would be circumvented, while at the same time a critical flexibility is maintained (Butler, 2002; Foucault, 1984b). Ethics would involve being responsive and responsible to, while both trusting and avoiding construction of the Other. Ethical responsibility would be to a future, which can be accepted as unknowable (Attridge, 1994).

Drawing from Ritchie and Rau (2010), we would also support a *critical research ethics* that would counter colonialism. This critical ethics would value and recognize the need to

- Expose the diversity of realities
- Engage with the webs of interaction that construct problems in ways that lead to power/privilege for particular groups
- Reposition problems and decisions toward social justice
- Join in solidarity with the traditionally oppressed to create new ways of functioning

The magnitude and history of contemporary power. The ethics of a critical social science cannot avoid involvement with contemporary, everyday life and dominant societal discourses influencing that life. Research that would challenge oppression and foster social justice must acknowledge the gravity of context and the history of power within that context.

In the 21st century, this life has been constructed by the “Imperial Court of Corporate Greed and Knowledge Control” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 15). Interpretations of knowledge and literally all human activity have been judged as valid and reliable if they fit the entrepreneurial imperative, if they foster privatization, competition, corporatization, and profiteering. In recent years, many of us have expressed outrage regarding this hypercapitalist influence, the free market illusion, over everything from definitions of public and higher education as benchmarked and measurable to privatization of services for the public good, to war mongering as a vehicle for corporatization to technologies that produce human desires that value self and others only as economic, measured, and entrepreneurial performers (Cannella & Miller, 2008; Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Chomsky, 1999; Horwitz, 1992).

Many of us would hope that a different administration in Washington, D.C., combined with the current financial crisis



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forming relationships, and constructs new ways of being. This form of self-governance involves examination of the ways one can change oneself (as person and/or as researcher). An evolving critical pedagogy can be used to illustrate the ethics of an ontological transformation that goes beyond Western constructions of the self. Kincheloe (2007) illustrates the central critical features that can be related to ethical identity development. These features include constructs like socioindividual imagination, challenges to the boundaries of abstract individualism, socioindividual analysis of power, alternatives to the alienation of the individual, mobilizing desire, and critical consciousness that acknowledges self-production. To illustrate, socioindividual imagination is the ability to conceptualize new forms of collaboration, rethinking subjectivities and acknowledging that the professional and personal are critical social projects; institutions like education are thus constructed as emphasizing social justice and democratic community as the facilitator of human development. Another example, mobilizing desire, is constructed as a radical democratization, joining continued efforts of the excluded to gain access and input into civic life.

Finally, *telos* is the willingness to disassemble self, to deconstruct one's world (and one's research practices if a researcher) in ways that demonstrate commitment to an ethical practice that would avoid the construction of power over any individual or group of others (even unpredictable, yet to be determined others located in the future). *Telos* is a form of self-bricolage, slowly elaborating and establishing a self that is committed to think differently, that welcomes the unknown and can function flexibly (Foucault, 1994). As critical pedagogy again suggests, alternatives to alienation of the individual are created, forms of domination that construct isolation are rejected, and unthought-of ways to be with and for others are constructed (Kincheloe, 2007). Furthermore, *telos* can construct new pathways through which individual researchers, as well as groups of scholars, can consider notions like an ethics without subjects that combines critical and postcolonial perspectives that are committed to the future and to avoiding the continued colonialist construction of the Other (Alessandrini, 2009).

Although certainly consistent with modernist approaches to individual rationality, the examination of an individual ethical axis demonstrates the ways that even the master's tools can be used for critique and transformation.

Currently, researchers must both engage in their own individual ethical decisions regarding research and function within institutional forms of regulation. From a range of critical locations, we are continuously reminded that different disciplinary strategies are enacted by institutions dependent on the historical moment and context (Foucault, 1977). Certainly, individual critically ethical selves (in our modernist academic community, which privileges the scientific individual) will be more prepared to engage with the conflicting ethical messages within

institutions, whether academic expectations or legislated regulation; to take hold of our own existence as researchers, to transform academic spaces, and to redefine discourses (Denzin & Giardina, 2007).

▣ TRANSFORMING REGULATIONS: REDEFINING THE TECHNOLOGIES THAT GOVERN US

Qualitative and critical qualitative researchers have continued to "take hold" of their academic spaces as they have clashed with legislated research regulation (especially, for example, as practiced by particular institutional review boards in the United States). This conflict has been much discussed and will not end any time soon. This work has demonstrated not only that legislated attempts to regulate research ethics are an illusion, but that regulation is culturally grounded and can even lead to ways of functioning that are damaging to research participants and collaborators. As examples, Marzano (2007) demonstrates the ways that following Anglo-Saxon ethical research regulation in an Italian setting with medical patients involved in qualitative research can be detrimental to the participant patients. Susan Tilley and Louise Gormley (2007) illustrate the ways that the construction of confidentiality represents challenges to understandings of individual integrity in a Mexican setting. Furthermore, a range of scholarship demonstrates that research ethics is particularized, must be infused throughout the process, and requires a continued dialogue with self (Christians, 2007; Clark & Sharf, 2007). Legislated forms of governmentality can certainly not address these particulars.

If researchers accompany communities, rather than "test/know/judge" them, perhaps community members will want to address review boards and legislators themselves concerning collaborative practices. In describing the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch, Marie Battiste and James (Sa'ke'j) Youngblood Henderson (2000; Battiste, 2008) demonstrate just such a practice, as Mi'kmaw people have constructed research guidelines in which research is always to be an equal partnership in which the Mi'kmaw people are the guardians and interpreters of their intellectual and cultural property and review research conclusions for accuracy and sensitivity.

Aligned with the ethics of the traditionally marginalized, which could ultimately reconceptualize the questions and practices of research, a critical social science would no longer accept the notion that one group of people can "know" and define (or even represent) "others." This perspective would certainly change the research purposes and designs that are submitted for human subjects review, perhaps even eliminating the need for "human subjects" in many cases. This change could result in research questions and forms of data collection that do not require researchers to interpret the meaning making or constructions of



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Part II

PARADIGMS AND PERSPECTIVES IN CONTENTION

In our introductory chapter, following Egon G. Guba (1990, p. 17), we defined a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Paradigms deal with first principles or ultimates. They are human constructions. They define the worldview of the researcher-as-interpretive-*bricoleur*. These beliefs can never be established in terms of their ultimate truthfulness. Perspectives, in contrast, are not as solidified nor as well unified as paradigms, although a perspective may share many elements with a paradigm, for example, a common set of methodological assumptions or a particular epistemology.

A paradigm encompasses four terms: ethics (axiology), epistemology, ontology, and methodology. Ethics ask, "How will I be as a moral person in the world?" Epistemology asks, "How do I know the world?" "What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known?" Every epistemology, as Christians indicates (Chapter 4, this volume) implies an ethical-moral stance toward the world and the self of the researcher. Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world. Methodology focuses on the best means for gaining knowledge about the world.

Part II of the *Handbook* examines the major paradigms and perspectives that now structure and organize qualitative research. These paradigms and perspectives are positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory action frameworks. Alongside these paradigms are the perspectives of feminism (in its multiple forms), critical race theory, critical pedagogy, cultural studies, queer theory, Asian epistemologies, and disability theories, coupled with transformative, social justice paradigms. Each of these perspectives has developed its own criteria, assumptions, and methodological practices. These practices are then applied to disciplined inquiry within that framework. The tables in Chapter 6 by Guba & Yvonna Lincoln, with Susan A. Lynham outline the major differences between the positivist, postpositivist, critical theory (feminism + race), constructivism, and participatory (+ postmodern) paradigms.

We provided a brief discussion of each paradigm and perspective in Chapter 1; here we elaborate them in somewhat more

detail. However, before turning to this discussion, it is important to note three interconnected events. Within the last decade, the borders and boundary lines between these paradigms and perspectives have begun to blur. As Lincoln and Guba observe, the "pedigrees" of various paradigms are themselves beginning to "interbreed." However, although the borders have blurred, perceptions of differences between perspectives have hardened. Even as this occurs, the discourses of methodological conservatism, discussed in our Preface and in Chapter 1, threaten to narrow the range and effectiveness of qualitative research practices. Hence, the title of this part, Paradigms and Perspectives in Contention.

MAJOR ISSUES CONFRONTING ALL PARADIGMS

In Chapter 6, Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba suggest that, in the present moment, all paradigms must confront seven basic, critical issues. These issues involve (1) axiology (ethics and values), (2) accommodation and commensurability (can paradigms be fitted into one another), (3) action (what the researcher does in the world), (4) control (who initiates inquiry, who asks questions), (5) foundations of truth (foundationalism vs. anti- and nonfoundationalism), (6) validity (traditional positivist models vs. poststructural-constructionist criteria), and (7) voice, reflexivity, and postmodern representation (single vs. multivoiced).

Each paradigm takes a different stance on these topics. Of course, the positivist and postpositivist paradigms provide the backdrop against which these other paradigms and perspectives operate. Lincoln and Guba analyze these two traditions in considerable detail, including their reliance on naive realism; their dualistic epistemologies; their verificational approach to inquiry; and their emphasis on reliability, validity, prediction, control, and a building block approach to knowledge. Lincoln and Guba discuss the inability of these paradigms to address adequately issues surrounding voice, empowerment, and praxis. They also allude to the failure to satisfactorily address



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indigenous peoples are offered, understanding that there is no single, homogenous, indigenous or disability community. Mertens et al. end on a powerful note: "The pathway to full realization of human rights and social justice for people with disability is not smooth . . . the transformative paradigm provides a way forward" (p. 237).

■ CONCLUSION

The researcher-as-interpretive-bricoleur cannot afford to be a stranger to any of the paradigms and perspectives discussed in Part II of the *Handbook*. The researcher must understand the basic ethical, ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of each and be able to engage them in dialogue. The differences between paradigms and perspectives have significant and important implications at the practical, material, everyday level. The blurring of paradigm differences is likely to continue, as long as proponents continue to come together to discuss their differences, while seeking to build on those areas where they are in agreement.

It is also clear that there is no single "truth." All truths are partial and incomplete. There will be no single conventional paradigm, as Lincoln and Guba (2000) argue, to which all social scientists might ascribe. We occupy a historical moment marked

by multivocality, contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms. This is an age of emancipation, freedom from the confines of a single regime of truth, emancipation from seeing the world in one color.

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Table 6.2 Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues

<i>Item</i>	<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Postpositivism</i>	<i>Critical Theory et al.</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>
Inquiry aim	Explanation: prediction and control		Critique and transformation; restitution and emancipation	Understanding; reconstruction
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as facts or laws	Nonfalsified hypotheses that are probable facts or laws	Structural/historical insights	Individual or collective reconstructions coalescing around consensus
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion—“building blocks” adding to “edifice of knowledge”; generalizations and cause-effect linkages		Historical revisionism; generalization by similarity	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience
Goodness or quality criteria	Conventional benchmarks of “rigor”: internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity		Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance and misapprehension; action stimulus	Trustworthiness and authenticity, including catalyst for action
Values	Excluded—influence denied		Included—formative	Included—formative
Ethics	Extrinsic: tilt toward deception		Intrinsic: moral tilt toward revelation	Intrinsic: process tilt toward revelation; special problems
Voice	“Disinterested scientist” as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents		“Transformative intellectual” as advocate and activist	“Passionate participant” as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction
Training	Technical and quantitative; substantive theories	Technical; quantitative and qualitative; substantive theories	Resocialization; qualitative and quantitative; history and liberation	Resocialization; history; values of altruism, empowerment, and liberation
Accommodation	Commensurable		Incommensurable with previous two	
Hegemony	In control of publication, funding, promotion, and tenure		Seeking recognition and input; offering challenges to predecessor paradigms, aligned with postcolonial aspirations	



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<p>Epistemology</p> <p><i>The process of thinking. The relationship between what we know and what we see. The truths we seek and believe as researchers</i> (Bernal, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lynham & Webb-Johnson, 2008; Pallas, 2001).</p> <p>What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched? (Creswell, 2007).</p>	<p>Belief in total objectivity. There is no reason to interact with who or what researchers study. Researchers should value only the scientific rigor and not its impact on society or research subjects (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007).</p>	<p>Assume we can only approximate nature. Research and the statistics it produces provide a way to make a decision using incomplete data. Interaction with research subjects should be kept to a minimum. The validity of research comes from peers (the research community), not from the subjects being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007).</p>	<p>Research is driven by the study of social structures, freedom and oppression, and power and control. Researchers believe that the knowledge that is produced can change existing oppressive structures and remove oppression through empowerment (Merriam, 1991).</p>	<p>Subjectivist: Inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Transactional/subjectivist: co-created findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195). The philosophical belief that people construct their own understanding of reality; we construct meaning based on our interactions with our surroundings (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). "Social reality is a construction based upon the actor's frame of reference within the setting" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 80).</p>	<p>"We practice inquiries that make sense to the public and to those we study" (Preissle, 2006, p. 636). Assumes that reality as we know it is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). <i>To me this means that we construct knowledge through our lived experiences and through our interactions with other members of society. As such, as researchers, we must participate in the research process with our subjects to ensure we are producing knowledge that is reflective of their reality.</i></p>	<p>Holistic: "Replaces traditional relation between 'truth' and 'interpretation' in which the idea of truth antedates the idea of interpretation" (Heshusius, 1994, p. 15). Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; co-created findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195). Critical subjectivity: Understanding how we know what we know and the knowledge's consummating relations. Four ways of knowing: (1) experiential, (2) presentational, (3) propositional, and (4) practical (Heron & Reason, 1997).</p>
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<p>Accommodation <i>What needs are provided by the inquiry research?</i> (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Commensurable: Research has a common unit for study and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194).</p>	<p>Commensurable: Research has a common unit for study and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194).</p>	<p>Incommensurable: Data produced do not have to be from a common unit of measurement. Approaches research with different styles and methods that can produce multiple forms of data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Incommensurable with positivism and postpositivism; commensurable with critical and participatory inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Some accommodation with criticalist and participatory methods of examining culture (Geertz, 1973). Incommensurable: Data produced do not have to be from a common unit of measurement. Approaches research with different styles and methods that can produce multiple forms of data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Incommensurable: Data produced does not have to be from a common unit of measurement. Approaches research with different styles and methods that can produce multiple forms of data (Guba, & Lincoln, 2005). Some accommodation with criticalist and participatory methods of examining culture (Geertz, 1973).</p>
<p>Hegemony <i>The influence researchers have on others. Who has the power in inquiry and what is inquired. Presenting definition of reality</i> (Kilgore, 2001).</p>	<p>Belief that research should have the influence – not the person conducting the inquiry. Aim is to produce truth, not provide ways for that reality to affect others.</p>	<p>Statistical analysis of reality will produce data from which decisions can be made. Ultimately, the researcher is in charge of the inquiry process (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194).</p>	<p>Research demonstrates the interactions of privilege and oppression as they relate to race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, and age (Kilgore, 2001).</p>	<p>Seeks recognition and input; offers challenges to predecessor paradigms, aligned with postcolonial aspirations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). <i>Postcolonial is in reference to theories that deal with the cultural legacy of colonial rule (Gandhi, 1998).</i></p>	<p>Power is a factor in what and how we know (Kilgore, 2001, p. 51).</p>
THEMES OF KNOWLEDGE: Inquiry Aims, Ideals, Design, Procedures, and Methods					
	<p>Positivism</p>	<p>Postpositivism</p>	<p>Critical (+ Feminist + Race)</p>	<p>Constructivism (or Interpretivist)</p>	<p>Participatory (+ Postmodern)</p>
C: CRITICAL ISSUES OF THE TIME					
<p>Axiology <i>How researchers act based on the research they produce—also the criteria of values and value judgments especially in ethics (Merriam-Webster, 1997).</i></p>	<p>Researchers should remain distant from the subject so their actions are to not have influence on populations—only the laws their inquiry produces (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Researchers should attempt to gain a better understanding of reality and as close as possible to truth through the use of statistics that explains and describes what is known as</p>	<p>Researchers seek to change existing education as well as other social institutions' policies and practice (Bernal, 2002).</p>	<p>Propositional, transactional knowing is instrumentally valuable as a means to social emancipation, which is an end in itself, is intrinsically valuable (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).</p>	<p>Practical knowing how to flourish with a balance of autonomy, co-operation and hierarchy in a culture is an end in itself, is intrinsically valuable (Heron & Reason, 1997).</p>



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<p>Voice, reflexivity, postmodern textual representations</p> <p>Voice: Can include the voice of the author, the voice of the respondents (subjects), and the voice of the researcher through their inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p> <p>Reflexivity: The process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, "the human instrument" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p> <p>Postmodern textual representations: The approach researchers take in understanding how social science is written and presented to avoid "dangerous illusions" which may exist in text (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p> <p><i>Whose voices are heard in the research produced through the inquiry process? Whose views are presenting and/or producing the data?</i> (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Only the researcher has a voice; any effort to include the voice of the participants would impact objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Only the researcher has a voice; any effort to include the voice of the participants would impact objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>The researcher has a voice, but also imparts the voice of the subjects. The researcher is careful to present knowledge through his or her own paradigm while being sensitive to the views of others (Bernal, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).</p>	<p>Voices mixed with participants' voices sometimes dominant; reflexivity serious and problematic; textual representation and extended issue (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).</p> <p>Voices mixed, with participants' voices sometimes dominant.</p> <p>Reflexivity is serious and problematic.</p> <p>Researchers do not wish to give direction to study.</p> <p>Must use reflection as a researcher: "A few issues seem to be perennial: combining research approaches, assessing research quality, and the researcher's relationship to theory and philosophy, on the one hand, and participants and the public, on the other hand" (Preissle, 2006, p. 689).</p>	<p>Voices mixed; textual representation rarely discussed but problematic; reflexivity relies on critical subjectivity and self-awareness (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 199).</p> <p>Textural: Must be within the context of who or what (for institutions or organizations) is being studied. The subject(s) voice must be present in the research (Epistemology Class Notes).</p>	<p><i>approach, could we say that there is no such thing as invalidity of data or method if someone can find it to be an accurate reflection of their interpretation of reality?</i></p>
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* Table originally developed by Guba and Lincoln, later expanded and extended by Susan A. Lynham as a teaching tool. The columns were filled in by David Byrd, a Ph.D. student in Dr. Lynham's epistemology class, 2008 Texas A&M University.



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Now, templates of truth and knowledge can be defined in a variety of ways—as the end product of rational processes, as the result of experiential sensing, as the result of empirical observation, and others. In all cases, however, the referent is the physical or empirical world: rational engagement with it, experience of it, and empirical observation of it. Realists, who work on the assumption that there is a “real” world “out there” may in individual cases also be foundationalists, taking the view that all of these ways of defining are rooted in phenomena existing outside the human mind.

Although we can think about them, experience them, or observe them, the elements of the physical world are nevertheless transcendent, referred to but beyond direct apprehension. Realism is an ontological question, whereas foundationalism is a criterial question. Some foundationalists argue that having real phenomena necessarily implies certain final, ultimate criteria for testing them as truthful (although we may have great difficulty in determining what those criteria are); nonfoundationalists tend to argue that there are no such ultimate criteria, only those that we can agree on at a certain time, within a certain community (Kuhn, 1967) and under certain conditions. Foundational criteria are discovered; nonfoundational criteria are negotiated. It is the case, however, that most realists are also foundationalists, and many nonfoundationalists or antifoundationalists are relativists.

An ontological formulation that connects realism and foundationalism within the same “collapse” of categories that characterizes the ontological-epistemological collapse is one that exhibits good fit with the other assumptions of constructivism. That state of affairs suits new-paradigm inquirers well. Critical theorists, constructivists, and participatory/cooperative inquirers take their primary field of interest to be precisely that subjective and intersubjective, critical social knowledge and the active construction and co-creation of such knowledge by human agents, which is produced by human consciousness. Furthermore, new-paradigm inquirers take to the social knowledge field with zest, informed by a variety of social, intellectual, and theoretical explorations. These theoretical excursions include

- Saussurian linguistic theory, which views all relationships between words and what those words signify as the function of an internal relationship within some linguistic system;
- Literary theory’s deconstructive contributions, which seek to disconnect texts from any *essentialist* or transcendental meaning and resituate them within both author’s and reader’s historical and social contexts (Hutcheon, 1989; Leitch, 1996);
- Feminist (Addelson, 1993; Alpern, Antler, Perry, & Scobie, 1992; Babbitt, 1993; Harding, 1993), race and ethnic (Kondo, 1990, 1997; Trinh, 1991), and queer theorizing (Gamson, 2000), which seeks to uncover and explore varieties of oppression and

historical colonizing between dominant and subaltern genders, identities, races, and social worlds;

- The postmodern historical moment (Michael, 1996), which problematizes truth as partial, identity as fluid, language as an unclear referent system, and method and criteria as potentially coercive (Ellis & Bochner, 1996); and
- Criticalist theories of social change (Carspecken, 1996; Schratz & Walker, 1995).

The realization of the richness of the mental, social, psychological, and linguistic worlds that individuals and social groups create and constantly re-create and co-create gives rise, in the minds of new-paradigm postmodern and poststructural inquirers, to endlessly fertile fields of inquiry rigidly walled off from conventional inquirers. Unfettered from the pursuit of transcendental scientific truth, inquirers are now free to resituate themselves within texts, to reconstruct their relationships with research participants in less constricted fashions, and to create representations (Tierney & Lincoln, 1997) that grapple openly with problems of inscription, reinscription, metanarratives, and other rhetorical devices that obscure the extent to which human action is locally and temporally shaped. The processes of uncovering forms of inscription and the rhetoric of metanarratives are *genealogical*—“*expos[ing] the origins of the view that have become sedimented and accepted as truths*” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 42; emphasis added)—or *archaeological* (Foucault, 1971; Scheurich, 1997).

New-paradigm inquirers engage the foundational controversy in quite different ways. Critical theorists, particularly critical theorists who are more positivist in orientation, who lean toward Marxian interpretations, tend toward foundational perspectives, with an important difference. Rather than locating foundational truth and knowledge in some external reality “out there,” such critical theorists tend to locate the foundations of truth in specific historical, economic, racial, gendered, and social infrastructures of oppression, injustice, and marginalization. Knowers are not portrayed as *separate from* some objective reality, but they may be cast as unaware actors in such historical realities (“false consciousness”) or as aware of historical forms of oppression but unable or unwilling, because of conflicts, to act on those historical forms to alter specific conditions in this historical moment (“divided consciousness”). Thus, the “foundation” for critical theorists is a duality: social critique tied in turn to raised consciousness of the possibility of positive and liberating social change. Social critique may exist apart from social change, but both are necessary for most critical perspectives.

Constructivists, on the other hand, tend toward the antifoundational (Lincoln, 1995, 1998b; Schwandt, 1996). *Antifoundational* is the term used to denote a refusal to adopt any permanent, unvarying (or “foundational”) standards by which



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Other “Transgressive” Validities

Richardson is not alone in calling for forms of validity that are “transgressive” and disruptive of the status quo. Patti Lather (1993) seeks “an incitement to discourse,” the purpose of which is “to rupture validity as a regime of truth, to displace its historical inscription . . . via a dispersion, circulation and proliferation of counterpractices of authority that take the crisis of representation into account” (p. 674). In addition to catalytic validity (Lather, 1986), Lather (1993) poses *validity as simula-cra/ironic validity*; *Lyotardian paralogy/neopragmatic validity*, a form of validity that “foster[s] heterogeneity, refusing disclosure” (p. 679); *Derridean rigor/rhizomatic validity*, a form of behaving “via relay, circuit, multiple openings” (p. 680); and *voluptuous/situated validity*, which “embodies a situated, partial tentativeness” and “brings ethics and epistemology together . . . via practices of engagement and self reflexivity” (p. 686). Together, these form a way of interrupting, disrupting, and transforming “pure” presence into a disturbing, fluid, partial, and problematic presence—a poststructural and decidedly postmodern form of discourse theory, hence textual revelation (see also Lather, 2007, for further reflections and disquisitions on validity).

Validity as an Ethical Relationship

As Lather (1993) points out, poststructural forms for validities “bring ethics and epistemology together” (p. 686); indeed, as Parker Palmer (1987) also notes, “every way of knowing contains its own moral trajectory” (p. 24). Alan Peshkin reflects on Nel Noddings’s (1984) observation that “the search for justification often carries us farther and farther from the heart of morality” (p. 105; quoted in Peshkin, 1993, p. 24). The way in which we know is most assuredly tied up with both *what* we know and our *relationships with our research participants*. Accordingly, one of us worked on trying to understand the ways in which the ethical intersects both the interpersonal and the epistemological (as a form of authentic or valid knowing; Lincoln, 1995). The result was the first set of understandings about emerging criteria for quality that were also rooted in the epistemology/ethics nexus. Seven new standards were derived from that search: positionality, or standpoint, judgments; specific discourse communities and research sites as arbiters of quality; voice, or the extent to which a text has the quality of polyvocality; critical subjectivity (or what might be termed intense self-reflexivity; see, for instance, Heron & Reason, 1997); reciprocity, or the extent to which the research relationship becomes reciprocal rather than hierarchical; sacredness, or the profound regard for how science can (and does) contribute to human flourishing; and sharing of the perquisites of privilege that accrue to our positions as academics with university positions. Each of these standards was extracted from a body of research, often from disciplines as disparate as management, philosophy, and women’s studies (Lincoln, 1995).

VOICE, REFLEXIVITY, AND POSTMODERN TEXTUAL REPRESENTATION

Texts have to do a lot more work these days than in the past. Even as they are charged by poststructuralists and postmodernists to reflect on their representational practices, those practices become more problematic. Three of the most engaging, but painful issues are voice, the status of reflexivity, and postmodern/poststructural textual representation, especially as those problematics are displayed in the shift toward narrative and literary forms that directly and openly deal with human emotion.

Voice

Voice is a multilayered problem, simply because it has come to mean many things to different researchers. In former eras, the only appropriate voice was the “voice from nowhere”—the “pure presence” of representation, as Lather (2007) terms it. As researchers became more conscious of the abstracted realities their texts created (Lather 2007), they became simultaneously more conscious of having readers “hear” their informants—permitting readers to hear the exact words (and, occasionally, the paralinguistic cues, the lapses, pauses, stops, starts, and reformulations) of the informants. Today, especially in more participatory forms of research, voice can mean not only having a real researcher—and a researcher’s voice—in the text, but also letting research participants speak for themselves, either in text form or through plays, forums, “town meetings,” or other oral and performance-oriented media or communication forms designed by research participants themselves (Bernal, 1998, 2002). Performance texts, in particular, give an emotional immediacy to the voices of researchers and research participants far beyond their own sites and locales (see McCall, 2000). Rosanna Hertz (1997) describes voice as

a struggle to figure out how to present the author’s self while simultaneously writing the respondents’ accounts and representing their selves. Voice has multiple dimensions: First, there is the voice of the author. Second, there is the presentation of the voices of one’s respondents within the text. A third dimension appears when the self is the subject of the inquiry. . . . Voice is how authors express themselves within an ethnography. (pp. xi–xii)

But knowing how to express ourselves goes far beyond the commonsense understanding of “expressing ourselves.” Generations of ethnographers trained in the “cooled-out, stripped-down rhetoric” of positivist inquiry (Firestone, 1987) find it difficult, if not nearly impossible, to “locate” themselves deliberately and squarely within their texts (even though, as Geertz, 1988, has demonstrated finally and without doubt, the authorial voice is rarely genuinely absent, or even hidden).



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Table 7.1

I. Transformative Developments		
Approaches	Postcolonial feminist thought	Kim, 2007; Mohanty, 1988, 2003; Spivak, 1988; Trinh, 1989, 1992
	Globalization	Chang, 2001; Dewey, 2008; Fraser, 2005; Guevara, 2009; Kim-Puri, 2005; Lan, 2006; Naples, 2002a,b; Parrenas, 2008; Zimmerman, Litt, & Bose, 2006
	Transnational feminism	Davis, 2007; DeRiviere, 2006; Firdous, 2005; Mendez & Wolf, 2007; Stout, 2008
	Standpoint theory	Collins, 1992, 1998 a,b; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1987, 1993, 2008; Hartsock, 1983, 1997; Naples, 2007; Smith, 1987, 1997; Weeks, 2004
	Postmodern and poststructural deconstructive theory	Clough, 2000; Collins, 1998b; Flax, 1987, 1990; Gannon & Davies, 2007; Haraway, 1991; Hekman, 1990; Lacsamana, 1999; Lather, 2007; Mazzei, 2003, 2004; Pillow, 2003; St.Pierre, 1997b, 2009
Work By and About Specific Groups of Women	Lesbian research	Anzaldúa, 1987, 1990; Connolly, 2006; Kennedy & Davis, 1993; Lewin, 1993, 2009; Mamo, 2007; Merlis & Linville, 2006; Mezey, 2008; Weston, 1991
	Queer theory	Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004; Rupp & Taylor, 2003
	Disabled women	Fine, 1992; Garland-Thompson, 2005; Lubelska & Mathews, 1997; Meekosha, 2005; Mertens, 2009; Petersen, 2006 ; Tregaskis & Goodley, 2005
	Women of color	Acosta, 2008; Anzaldúa, 1990; Chow, 1987; Collins, 1986; Cummins & Lehman, 2007; Davis, 1981; Dill, 1979; Espiritu, 2007; Few, 2007; Glenn, 2002; Green, 1990; hooks, 1990; Majumdar, 2007; Miheuah, 2003 ; Moore, 2008; Tellez, 2008
	Problematizing unremitting whiteness	Frankenberg, 1994; Hurtado & Stewart, 1997
II. Critical Trends		
Endarkening, Decolonizing, Indigenizing Feminist Research		Anzaldúa, 1987; Battiste, 2008; Collins, 2000; Dillard, 2008; Gardiner & Meyer, 2008a; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Segura & Zavella, 2008; Smith, 1999, 2005
Intersectionality		Andersen 2005, 2008; Bhavnani, 2007; Bowleg, 2008; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Collins, 2000, 2008, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Davis, 2008; Denis, 2008; Dill, McLaughlin, & Nieves, 2007; Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Glenn, 2002; Hancock, 2007a,b; McCall, 2005; Risman, 2004; Shields, 2008; Stewart & McDermott, 2004; Warner, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006
III. Continuing Issues		
Problematizing Researcher and Participant		Kahn, 2005; Lather & Smithies, 1997; Lather, 2007; Lincoln, 1993, 1997
Destabilizing Insider-Outsider		Kondo, 1990; Lewin, 1993; Naples, 1996; Narayan, 1997; Ong, 1995; Weston, 1991; Zavella, 1996
Troubling Traditional Concepts	Experience	Scott, 1991

(Continued)



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institutional ethnography (Smith, 2006), feminist qualitative research *in its own right* is well positioned to undertake these challenges. Blended with quantitative research approaches, it is a powerful way to analyze mechanisms of intersectionality in play (Weber, 2007).

■ CONTINUING ISSUES

Problematizing researcher and participants. Recognition grew that the researcher's attributes also enter the research interaction. History and context position both researcher and participant (Andrews, 2002). The subjectivity of the researcher, as much as that of the researched, became foregrounded, blurring phenomenological and epistemological boundaries between the researcher and the researched. This questioned whether being an "insider" gave feminist researchers access to inside knowledge (Collins, 1986; Kondo, 1990; Lewin, 1993; Naples, 1996; Narayan, 1997; Ong, 1995; Williams, 1996; Zavella, 1996). Also questioned were the views that insider knowledge and insider/outsider positions are fixed and unchanging (Kahn, 2005).

Troubling traditional concepts. Also under critical scrutiny were concepts key to feminist thought and research, experience, difference, and the workhorse concept, gender.

Experience. Recognition continues to grow that merely focusing on experience does not account for how that experience emerged (Scott, 1991) and the characteristics of the material, historical, and social circumstances. (For early millennial feminist research that does attend to those circumstances, see Garcia-Lopez, 2008; Higginbotham, 2009). Taking experience in an unproblematic way replicates rather than criticizes oppressive systems and carries a note of essentialism. Moreover, personal experience is not a self-authenticating claim to knowledge (O'Leary, 1997).

Difference. The recognition of difference pulled feminist thinkers and researchers away from the view of a shared gynocentric identity but gave way to concerns about the nature of the concept and whether its use led to an androcentric or imperialistic "othering" (Felski, 1997; hooks, 1990). Some wanted it replaced by such concepts as *hybridity*, *creolization*, and *metisage*, which "not only recognize differences within the subject but also address connections between subjects" (Felski, 1997, p. 12). Others argued that identity cannot be dropped entirely (hooks, 1990). They see differences as autonomous, not fragmented, producing knowledge that accepts "the existence of and possible solidarity with knowledges from other standpoints" (O'Leary, 1997, p. 63).

Gender. Influential reformulations of gender as performative rather than static (Butler, 1990, 1993; West & Zimmerman, 1987)

or wholly constructed (Lorber, 1994) have shifted views away from gender as an individual attribute or biological characteristic. Gender is conceptualized as "done" and "undone" in everyday social interaction (Butler, 2004).¹⁰

Vigorous criticisms highlight conceptual problems. Some argued that Butler's performative conceptualizations draw attention away from practical interventions (Barvosa-Carter, 2001, p. 129), a point echoed in some criticisms of Candace West and Don Zimmerman (Jurik & Siemsen, 2009). Another critique examines whether the "doing gender" perspective obscures inequality in social relations (Smith, 2009).

■ ENDURING CONCERNS

Concerns about bias, validity, voice, the text, and ethical conduct, well explored in an earlier era, continue to produce thoughtful uneasiness. Feminist empiricists and standpoint researchers share these worries, while deconstructionists focus on voice and text. All feminist researchers worry about replicating oppression and privilege.

Bias. Foregoing rigid ideas about objectivity, feminist theorists and researchers earlier opened new spaces around the enduring question of bias. Sandra Harding suggested "strong objectivity," which takes researchers as well as those researched as the focus of critical, causal, scientific explanations (1993, 1996, 1998). Donna Haraway (1997) urged going beyond strong objectivity to diffracting, which turns the researchers' lenses to show fresh combinations and possibilities of phenomena.

Reflexivity. This recognizes that both participants and researcher produce interpretations that are "the data" (Diaz, 2002) and goes beyond mere reflection on the conduct of the research. Reflexivity demands steady, uncomfortable assessment about the interpersonal and interstitial knowledge-producing dynamics of qualitative research, in particular, acute awareness as to what unrecognized elements in the researchers' background contribute (Gorelick, 1991; Scheper-Hughes, 1983).

Some have reservations; for example, reflexivity may only generate a rehearsal of the familiar, which reproduces hegemonic structures (Pillow, 2003). However, others argue that it facilitates preventing perpetuation of racial and ethnic stereotypes (Few, 2007). Finally, there remain difficult questions of how much and what kinds of reflexivity are possible and how they are realized (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2007).

Validity. Feminist qualitative researchers address validity, also called "trustworthiness," in different ways depending on how they frame their approaches. Those who work in a traditional vein, reflecting the positivist origins of social science (there is a reality to be discovered), will use established techniques. Others



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THE SACRED AND SPIRITUAL NATURE OF ENDARKENED TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST PRAXIS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH¹

Cynthia B. Dillard and Chinwe Okpalaoka

■ I. SANKOFA (GO BACK TO FETCH IT)²

History is sacred because it is the only chance that you have of knowing who you are outside of what's been rained down upon you from a hostile environment. And when you go to the documents created inside the culture, you get another story. You get another history. The history is sacred and the highest, most hallowed songs in tones are pulled into service to deliver that story (Latta, 1992).

Revisiting “Paradigms”

Several years ago, responding to James J. Scheurich and Michelle D. Young’s (1997) *Educational Researcher* article, a number of researchers presented sessions at national meetings, wrote papers, and responded to the challenge inherent in Scheurich and Young’s rather provocative title, “Coloring Epistemologies: Are Our Research Epistemologies Racially Biased?”³ Among other writings, Cynthia Dillard’s (2006a) modest contribution to this paradigm talk became a chapter in her book, *On Spiritual Strivings: Transforming an African American Woman’s Academic Life*. In this chapter, as in the aforementioned discussions, she explored the cultural, political, and spiritual nature of the entire conversation about paradigms and the way that the swirling assumptions and conclusions about their proliferation were mostly carried out at a level of abstraction (and distraction), absent any examination of the ways that racism, power, and politics profoundly shape our research and representations, especially as scholars of color. She spoke to how such exclusion

brings a particularized paradox for scholars of color as we seek to imagine, create and embrace new and useful paradigms from and through which we engage educational research . . . [as] there are deep and serious implications in choosing to embrace paradigms that resonate with our spirit as well as our intellect, regardless of issues of “proliferation” (Dillard, 2006a, pp. 29–30).

She raised up the all too common absence of Black voices and voices of scholars of color in the discussions of the meanings and outcomes of the “coloring” of epistemologies, a discussion that had been carried out as if we did not exist as subjects within the conversation but solely as objects of it, invisible, silent. However well intentioned this discussion may have been, Black people and our thoughts about paradigms were the focus of the steady and often distorted gaze and descriptions of White researchers.

The part of the discussion that still resonates with Dillard most deeply today—and with many students of qualitative research—is the call for scholars of color to turn our attention and desires away from “belonging” to a particular paradigm (or even to the discussion of paradigm proliferation that still often swirls around us but does not include us), but instead to construct and nurture paradigms that encompass and embody our cultural and spiritual understandings and histories and that shape our epistemologies and ways of being.

We see evidence of the same call echoed throughout the literature on qualitative research. Gloria Ladson-Billings’s (2000) handbook chapter, “Racialized Discourses and Ethnic Epistemologies,” contrasts the concept of individualism and



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voices heard. The National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) was one of the first Black feminist organizations with an explicit commitment to confronting the interlocking systems of racism, sexism, and heterosexism that plagued Black women in the United States. Emerging in 1973, the organization was also a forceful response to the lack of attention and regard for Black women's experiences within both the women's movement and within Black power movements witnessed above (Hull, Bell-Scott, & Smith, 1982; Wallace, 1982). By 1974, a spin-off group of U.S. Black feminists formed the Combahee River Collective, focusing on a more radical commitment to the oppressions that Black women still faced in the United States. The mission of this group of women, in comparison to the NBFO's, was to confront these complex systems of oppression through a Black feminist *political movement* (Combahee River Collective, 1982). Rather than project themselves as "firsts" or as pioneers of Black feminism, the collective's members historically acknowledged their work as an extension of the earlier work of Black women activists like Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frances E.W. Harper, Ida B. Wells Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell, whose intellectual and activist work flourished during the antislavery era (Combahee River Collective, 1982). There was also a very strong commitment to spiritually center the work of the Combahee River Collective, both in the sacred approach to seeing and acknowledging the above Black women ancestors and in setting a purpose and vision that sought to transform the social and political milieu away from oppression and toward equality and justice, particularly for U.S. Black women.

By the early 1970s, we witnessed a critical intervention of theorizing and knowledge production, as Black feminist literature (including anthologies and fiction) began to be published and find their way to bookstores and bookshelves, both in the U.S. and abroad. This was not simply publishing as an economic intervention in the lives and knowledges of Black women: This was a radical intervention, as these literatures fundamentally shifted and shaped the foundations of Black feminist thought and actions. Toni Cade Bambara's *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (1970), Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Audre Lorde's *Cables to Rage* (1970), Alice Walker's *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983), and a reissue of Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1978) are examples of landmark literary texts that defined and theorized the early Black feminist movement in the United States. As an adolescent African American girl, I felt these early works profoundly, as I sought desperately to define what it meant to be both Black and female in the predominately White schooling contexts of my youth. All of the texts we were required to read centered images of White womanhood as virtuous and worthy of emulation. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* was the standard by which we were asked to aspire, and watching "The Brady Bunch" was the free time text of the day. But my mother's version of Black womanhood (albeit similarly tethered to homemaking and child rearing as Mrs. Brady) was

tied to a simple and explicit truth, manifest in her strict attention to our school lives, homework, and consistent trips to the public library: Education and learning to read the word and the world were the *only* ways to create options for Black women's lives. In her precious free time, my mother read these texts along with me, opening me to a world that in some cases highlighted the harsh realities of her own life as a Black woman, growing up in poverty and during segregation in the United States. In other cases, these words on the page opened something that could exist only in her imagination and our own but that always also existed as *possibilities*. These texts also stirred significant debates and controversies *within* the Black community, especially for Black men, who often resented what they interpreted as direct accusations that they were perpetrators of gender and sexual oppression. Regardless of the consequences, my Mom and I continued to read every story of Black womanhood we could. And I learned how powerful words could be: Black women's literature helped define ourselves for ourselves, and as an oral tradition, it goes back generations. Now, through the voices of Walker, Hurston, and others, as well as the words on the page, we could *see* our definitions and return to them over and over again.

The 1980s brought more radical overtly political texts, responding in part to the birth of woman's studies and specifically Black women's thought and knowledge production "in public." We came to know, through their writings, major Black feminist scholars and activists like Gloria (Akasha) Hull, Barbara Smith, and Patricia Bell-Scott, whose co-edited text (Hull, Bell-Scott, & Smith, 1982), *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, became a pioneering text for Black feminist studies across the United States. This relative proliferation of Black feminist writing in the 1980s also included works like Barbara Smith's *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (1983) and bell hooks's (1981) *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, which focused on the impact of sexism on Black women. But these women also began to bring questions and concerns of sexual identities and spirituality within Black feminism to the forefront. Lorde's *Sister Outsider* (1984) spoke directly to the need for integration and wholeness in Black women's multifaceted identities, including our sexualities. Paule Marshall's *Praisesong for the Widow* (1984) brought to the fore the ways that remembering culture and history as a Black woman is truly a transformative act, particularly from a spiritual perspective.

Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa's *This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color* (1981) was one of the earliest attempts to link the underlying oppressions of women across differences of race, class, sexuality, and culture. Equally important, Anzaldúa brought the scholarship and voices of women of color together in an edited volume that began to speak explicitly about the importance of spirituality, healing, and self-recovery as necessities for women of color across our ethnicities and identities.



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Table 8.1 (Continued)

<i>Considerations for Endarkened Transnational Feminist Research</i>	<i>Some Relevant Questions for the Researcher</i>
Embodies responsibility and respect, different than the cult of womanhood	How have I prepared to study the lives of Black women differently than I would for other women? What would show that I respect the particularities of her understandings and embodiment of cultural norms, geographies, and traditions?
<i>On the sacred nature of experience . . .⁹</i>	
Seeks to recognize multiple experiences outside of one's own	In what ways does the story I'm hearing (or the text I'm reading) map on to my experience and knowings? In what ways is it different? How do I hold those differences as sacred (with reverence), without judgment or denial in their difference?
Recognizes that you can never be the "expert" on another's experience and, thus, must move yourself out of the way to make room for the liberation of others	What does their experience <i>mean</i> to them? Can I <i>hear</i> and <i>imagine</i> the depth of the meaning of their experiences and empathize without trying to "save" another? What does their story mean to me and what emotions/memories does it evoke? How do my emotions mediate (or distort) <i>their</i> intended meaning?
<i>On recognizing African community and landscapes . . .</i>	
Shares the need for alliance and reliance: <i>I am because we are</i>	Where are the recognitions and engagements in this work of an endarkened womanhood that moves between and even beyond nation, culture, sexualities, economic class, language, and so on?
Recognizes the dynamic and shifting landscapes and configurations of identity and social location of groups	How does what I <i>thought</i> I knew about this individual/group match what I am hearing from engagements with him/her/them? Where are the places and people who could provide disconfirming data? Have I sought this out?
Is committed to knowing one another's stories through sustained relationship for the purposes of bettering conditions that may not mirror our own	Can I rest in that place where it is not all/always about me? Are humility, sacrifice, and selflessness at the center of my desire to "know"?
<i>On engaging body, mind, and spirit . . .</i>	
Makes <i>space</i> for mind, body, and spirit to be a part of the work	How have I sought knowledge at a level of intimacy and wholeness (beyond the mind), at the level of the senses, the sensual, and the spiritual? What questions have I asked of myself and another that move toward connections of our spirit? What would happen if I "went there?"
Is reciprocal, as every person is both teacher and taught, changing as we know the other and the other knows us	In what ways are my views of research shifting as a result of my research? What "lessons" have I learned from others in this inquiry? What are the lessons they've learned from me? When someone reads this work, how will they know that I approached this project with reverence?
Requires radical openness and vulnerability	In what ways have I "shown up" for this inquiry? How am I hiding in fear of what I am, what I don't know or misunderstand, or who the other is or what they know?



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culture, critical teachers are scholars who understand the power implications of various educational reforms. In this context, they appreciate the benefits of research, especially as they relate to understanding the forces shaping education that fall outside their immediate experience and perception. As these insights are constructed, teachers begin to understand what they know from experience. With this in mind they gain heightened awareness of how they can contribute to the research on education. Indeed, they realize that they have access to understandings that go far beyond what the expert researchers have produced. In the critical school culture, teachers are viewed as learners—not as functionaries who follow top-down orders without question. Teachers are seen as researchers and knowledge workers who reflect on their professional needs and current understandings. They are aware of the complexity of the educational process and how schooling cannot be understood outside of the social, historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, political, and psychological contexts that shape it. Scholar teachers understand that curriculum development responsive to student needs is not possible when it fails to account for these contexts.

Critical teacher/researchers explore and attempt to interpret the learning processes that take place in their classrooms. “What are its psychological, sociological, and ideological effects?” they ask. Thus, critical scholar teachers research their own professional practice. With empowered scholar teachers working in schools, things begin to change. The oppressive culture created in our schools by top-down content standards, for example, is challenged. In-service staff development no longer takes the form of “this is what the expert researchers found—now go implement it.” Such staff development in the critical culture of schooling gives way to teachers who analyze and contemplate the power of each other’s ideas. Thus, the new critical culture of school takes on the form of a “think tank that teaches students,” a learning community. School administrators are amazed by what can happen when they support learning activities for both students and teachers. Principals and curriculum developers watch as teachers develop projects that encourage collaboration and shared research. There is an alternative, advocates of critical pedagogy argue, to top-down standards with their deskilling of teachers and the dumbing-down of students (Jardine, 1998; Kincheloe, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Macedo, 2006).

Promoting teachers as researchers is a fundamental way of cleaning up the damage of deskilled models of teaching that infantilize teachers by giving them scripts to read to their students. Deskilling of teachers and the stupidification (Macedo, 2006) of the curriculum take place when teachers are seen as receivers, rather than producers, of knowledge. A vibrant professional culture depends on a group of practitioners who have the freedom to continuously reinvent themselves via their research and knowledge production. Teachers engaged in critical practice find it difficult to allow top-down content standards and their poisonous effects to go unchallenged. Such teachers cannot

abide the deskilling and reduction in professional status that accompany these top-down reforms. Advocates of critical pedagogy understand that teacher empowerment does not occur just because we wish it to do so. Instead, it takes place when teachers develop the knowledge-work skills, the power literacy, and the pedagogical abilities befitting the calling of teaching. Teacher research is a central dimension of a critical pedagogy (Porfilio & Carr, 2010).

Teachers as Researchers of Their Students

A central aspect of critical teacher research involves studying students so they can be better understood and taught. Freire argued that all teachers need to engage in a constant dialogue with students, a dialogue that questions existing knowledge and problematizes the traditional power relations that have served to marginalize specific groups and individuals. In these research dialogues with students, critical teachers listen carefully to what students have to say about their communities and the problems that confront them. Teachers help students frame these problems in a larger social, cultural, and political context in order to solve them.

In this context, Freire argued that teachers uncover materials and generative themes based on their emerging knowledge of students and their sociocultural backgrounds (Mayo, 2009; Souto-Manning, 2009). Teachers come to understand the ways students perceive themselves and their interrelationships with other people and their social reality. This information is essential to the critical pedagogical act, as it helps teachers understand how they make sense of schooling and their lived worlds. With these understandings in mind, critical teachers come to know what and how students make meaning. This enables teachers to construct pedagogies that engage the impassioned spirit of students in ways that move them to learn what they do not know and to identify what they want to know (A. Freire, 2000; Freire & Faundez, 1989; Janesick, 2010; Kincheloe, 2008b; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1998; Tobin, in press).

It is not an exaggeration to say that before critical pedagogical research can work, teachers must understand what is happening in the minds of their students. Advocates of various forms of critical teaching recognize the importance of understanding the social construction of student consciousness, focusing on motives, values, and emotions. Operating within this critical context, the teacher-researcher studies students as living texts to be deciphered. The teacher-researcher approaches them with an active imagination and a willingness to view students as socially constructed beings. When critical teachers have approached research on students from this perspective, they have uncovered some interesting information. In a British action research project, for example, teachers used student diaries, interviews, dialogues, and shadowing (following students as they pursue their daily routines at school) to uncover



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Difference in the bricolage pushes us into the hermeneutic circle as we are induced to deal with parts in their diversity in relation to the whole. Difference may involve culture, class, language, discipline, epistemology, cosmology, *ad infinitum*. Bricoleurs use one dimension of these multiple diversities to explore others, to generate questions previously unimagined. As we examine these multiple perspectives, we attend to which ones are validated and which ones have been dismissed. Studying such differences, we begin to understand how dominant power operates to exclude and certify particular forms of knowledge production and why. In the criticality of the bricolage, this focus on power and difference always leads us to an awareness of the multiple dimensions of the social. Freire (1970) referred to this as the need for perceiving social structures and social systems that undermine equal access to resources and power. As bricoleurs answer such questions, we gain new appreciations of the way power tacitly shapes what we know and how we come to know it.

Ontologically Speaking

A central dimension of the bricolage that holds profound implications for critical research is the notion of a critical ontology (Kincheloe, 2003a). As bricoleurs prepare to explore that which is not readily apparent to the ethnographic eye, that realm of complexity in knowledge production that insists on initiating a conversation about what it is that qualitative researchers are observing and interpreting in the world, this clarification of a complex ontology is needed. This conversation is especially important because it has not generally taken place. Bricoleurs maintain that this object of inquiry is ontologically complex in that it cannot be described as an encapsulated entity. In this more open view, the object of inquiry is always a part of many contexts and processes; it is culturally inscribed and historically situated. The complex view of the object of inquiry accounts for the historical efforts to interpret its meaning in the world and how such efforts continue to define its social, cultural, political, psychological, and educational effects.

In the domain of the qualitative research process, for example, this ontological complexity undermines traditional notions of triangulation. Because of its in-process (processual) nature, interresearcher reliability becomes far more difficult to achieve. Process-sensitive scholars watch the world flow by like a river in which the exact contents of the water are never the same. Because all observers view an object of inquiry from their own vantage points in the web of reality, no portrait of a social phenomenon is ever exactly the same as another. Because all physical, social, cultural, psychological, and educational dynamics are connected in a larger fabric, researchers will produce different descriptions of an object of inquiry depending on what part of the fabric they have focused on—what part of the river they have seen. The more unaware observers are of this type of complexity, the more reductionistic the knowledge they produce

about it. Bricoleurs attempt to understand this fabric and the processes that shape it in as thick a way as possible (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

The design and methods used to analyze this social fabric cannot be separated from the way reality is construed. Thus, ontology and epistemology are linked inextricably in ways that shape the task of the researcher. The bricoleur must understand these features in the pursuit of rigor. A deep interdisciplinarity is justified by an understanding of the complexity of the object of inquiry and the demands such complications place on the research act. As parts of complex systems and intricate processes, objects of inquiry are far too mercurial to be viewed by a single way of seeing or as a snapshot of a particular phenomenon at a specific moment in time.

This deep interdisciplinarity seeks to modify the disciplines and the view of research brought to the negotiating table constructed by the bricolage (Jardine, 1992). Everyone leaves the table informed by the dialogue in a way that idiosyncratically influences the research methods they subsequently employ. The point of the interaction is not standardized agreement as to some reductionistic notion of “the proper interdisciplinary research method” but awareness of the diverse tools in the researcher’s toolbox. The form such deep interdisciplinarity may take is shaped by the object of inquiry in question. Thus, in the bricolage, the context in which research takes place always affects the nature of the deep interdisciplinarity employed. In the spirit of the dialectic of disciplinarity, the ways these context-driven articulations of interdisciplinarity are constructed must be examined in light of the power literacy previously mentioned (Friedman, 1998; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Lemke, 1998; Pryse, 1998; Quintero & Rummel, 2003).

In social research, the relationship between individuals and their contexts is a central dynamic to be investigated. This relationship is a key ontological and epistemological concern of the bricolage; it is a connection that shapes the identities of human beings and the nature of the complex social fabric. Bricoleurs use multiple methods to analyze the multidimensionality of this type of connection. The ways bricoleurs engage in this process of putting together the pieces of the relationship may provide a different interpretation of its meaning and effects. Recognizing the complex ontological importance of relationships alters the basic foundations of the research act and knowledge production process. Thin reductionistic descriptions of isolated things-in-themselves are no longer sufficient in critical research (Foster, 1997; Wright, 2003b).

The bricolage is dealing with a double ontology of complexity: first, the complexity of objects of inquiry and their being-in-the-world; second, the nature of the social construction of human subjectivity, the production of human “being.” Such understandings open a new era of social research where the process of becoming human agents is appreciated with a new level of sophistication. The complex feedback loop between an



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understand—and communicate—a cultural register about, as Arundhati Roy (2001) has so eloquently written, “what it’s like to lose your home, your land, your job, your dignity, your past, and your future to an invisible force. To someone or something you can’t see” (p. 32)—stories about what it’s like to hate and feel despair, anger, and alienation in a world bursting at the seams as it struggles to reinvent itself and its dominant mythologies (see Denzin & Giardina, 2006). How can we come to see more clearly how “understanding is constituted by the cultural experiences embedded in [our] research” (Berry & Warren, 2009, p. 601) acts made meaningful by and through the “dynamic and dialectical relation of the text and body” (Spry, 2001, p. 711)?

Our answer, we believe, is that the best qualitative inquiries of physical culture—those that intercede on antihumane structures, practices, and symbolic acts within cultures of the active body—make use of *both* physical and ideological praxis to, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) posit, *articulate* the human experience with these broader contextual forces. These connections are meant to highlight “any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985, p. 105). Most often situated within Hall’s (1996) work, the idea of the metaphoric lorry in conceptualizing the dialectic theory and method of articulation is quite helpful in understanding such a practice:

“Articulate” means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an “articulated” lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. An articulation is thus the form of the connections that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute, and essential for all time. You have to ask under what circumstances *can* a connection be forged or made. (pp. 141–142; emphasis in original)

Or, as Jennifer Daryl Slack (1996) puts it, articulation is *both* that connection between broader contextual formations and the empirical transference we seek to establish and, at the same time, the methodological *episteme* under which we operate. On the articulation of context and practice, and with particular regard to the ways in which practice produces context, Slack writes: “The context is not something *out there*, within which practices occur or which influence the development of practices. Rather, identities, practices, and effects generally constitute the very context in which they are practices, identities, or effects” (p. 125, emphases in original).

Thus is our *physical* cultural studies project not simply an exercise in context mapping or abstracted corporeal cartography, but a method of using the political and politicized body to directly engage and interact with human activity; that is, an

articulatory praxis that produces, and is produced by, social, political, and economic context/s. Furthermore, if we are to emerge from the tautological impasses of our structural Marxist forbearers, then we must break free from the determinism of early Marxist-inspired social thought, instead placing value on the idea that the cultures of the body are neither *necessarily correspondent* to the overdetermining structural realm (much like the economic base determining the superstructure) nor *necessarily noncorrespondent* (culture as autonomous from economic relations) (see Hall, 1985; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). In other words, and rephrasing Andrews (2002), we might say that the structure and influence of the body in any given conjuncture is a product of intersecting, multidirectional lines of articulation between forces and practices that compose the social contexts. The very uniqueness of the historical moment or conjuncture means there is a condition of no necessary correspondence, or indeed noncorrespondence, between physical culture and particular forces (i.e., economic). Forces do determine *givenness* of physical practices; however, their determinacy cannot be guaranteed in advance (p. 116).

While there are no necessary guarantees that the body will be produced in predictable ways, this is not to suggest that the weight of social, political, and economic structures is not always already bearing down on the body. To rework Karl Marx, and later C. Wright Mills (1959), *we make our own cultural physicalities, but not under conditions of our choosing*. To ignore this fundamental dialectic is at once to abstract the body and to depoliticize its existence. Amid the tides of the academic-industrial complex, decontextualized or antidialectic analyses of the body are *made political*. To feign political neutrality is itself a political act, one that bolsters the hegemony of a natural, taken-for-grantedness of the formations of contemporary life—as the radical historian, Howard Zinn (1996), famously reminded us, “you can’t be neutral on a moving train.” Informed by Richard Johnson’s (1987) formulation of (British) cultural studies, Andrews (2008) makes this point clear: “Physical Cultural Studies researchers must remain vigilant in their struggle against ‘the disconnection’ that will surely occur if we produc[e] studies in which physical cultural forms are divorced from contextual analyses of ‘power and social possibilities’” (p. 58). In critically studying the cultures *of* the body, we seek to better understand context *through* bodily practice, as well as the oppressive and liberatory potential of the human body as constrained by contextual forces.

As such, we should strive to produce or elicit a public pedagogy that peculiarizes the banalities of political and politicized bodies. Indeed, by revealing the social constructedness of the historical contexts acting on cultures of the body, those working on/in physical culture should foster critical consciousness among both those individuals whose social, cultural, and economic status is inextricably linked to past cultures of alienation and exploitation and those individuals whose lives continue to be challenged as a result. Ben Carrington (2001) makes this



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Coffey (1999) identifies that “In certain places taking part in the physicality of the setting may well be part of gaining insight or understanding into that setting.” As I began to notice changes to *my* body, I came to notice—and to better understand—comments I had been hearing all along from my research participants about a “derby body,” and, specifically, a “derby butt”—it was only in and through *my* body that I was able to make sense of those bodies performing around me. (p. 8, emphases ours)

Donnelly expresses the thorough-going use of knowledge produced by and through *her* researching body to better understand the aperçutive bodily interactions, feelings, and physicalities experienced by her research participants. Acting as what Cornel West (1991) would term a critical moral agent—one who “understands that the consequences of his or her interventions into the world are exclusively political, judged always in terms of their contributions to a politics of liberation, love, caring and freedom” (Denzin & Giardina, 2006)—Donnelly (and Mears, Giardina, and others doing similar work) is not merely presenting an engaging yet anecdotal look at body politics observed during her accounts of derby life. Rather, she illustrates how, for critical agents and provocateurs of cultural studies, “the body is implicated in the roles and relationships of fieldwork both in terms of how our body becomes part of our experience of the field and in the necessity (albeit often implicit) . . . to learn the skills and rules of embodiment in the particular social setting” (Coffey, 1999, p. 73).

By necessarily situating the researcher’s physical body in and among bodies—sharing experiences of the physical ways in which we experience fieldwork—we are better able, as the examples above make clear, to elucidate the politics of gender, exclusion/inclusion, and corporeality acting upon and within these spaces of physical culture. In so doing, as Elin Diamond (1996) notes, we enable the incisive critique and reflexive re-evaluation of cultural contexts through one’s own subjectivity (a subjectivity that, Kakali Bhattacharya, 2009, notes is “full of contradictions, inconsistencies, tensions, voices, and silences . . . [of] fractured shifts, border crossings, and negotiations between spaces” [p. 1065]). *But to do so ultimately means that the researcher’s body (and self-perceptions thereof) is made vulnerable to, and by, the politically iniquitous circumstances into which the body has been thrust.* This we address in the following section.

■ V. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE PHYSICAL (CULTURAL STUDIES) BODY

As we put forth in the section above, we believe the best critical analyses of the corporeal are those that envisage the body through both dialectically imaginative techniques and a conscientious, often stifling, self-awareness of researcher and research

act (see Langellier, 1999). As such, to convolute our simple social worlds—to excavate the plural dimensions of social life—we need to both make use of *and also reflect on* how our own bodies frame and are framed by the critical cultural analyses we undertake. In other words, we need to locate our vulnerable bodies within spatial praxes and be insatiably reflexive in how that (re)location produces new dimensions, complex relations, and new bodily epistemologies.

Carrington’s (2008) work on racialized performativity, reflexivity, and identity is especially instructive of this position, as he interrogates (his own) black masculinity and the differently arrayed and performed iterations of black bodiedness he experienced during his research on and with a “black” cricket team in Leeds, England (e.g., as a black south Londoner being “read” by his older West Yorkshire teammates as “black British” rather than the “authentic” Caribbean-based identity they saw themselves as holding). In moving to problematize the signification of blackness itself, revealed to us through deeply personal and self-reflexive accounts of his position “in, but not fully of” the particular black cultural space within which he was located during his time as a participant-observer of the cricket club, he acknowledges that the crux of the matter was that:

I was coming to terms with my own black Britishness. . . . I started to engage those “most personal” aspects of my self; that is, I began to think about what it meant for me to be “black.” . . . [M]y experiences in the field were proving difficult as I negotiated field relations in which my blackness was being questioned. The personal diary began to take the form of self-reflexive questions: How black *am* I? Am I *black* enough? What does such a question even mean? (pp. 434–435, emphases in original)

Susanne Gannon (2006), invoking the work of Roland Barthes, might say of Carrington’s weighty confessional that his work reveals how “the lived body is a discursive and multiple but very present space where we do not go looking for any ‘sacred originary’ but for traces and unreliable fragments” (p. 483) through which to “foreground the dialogic relationship between the self and his or her tenuous and particular social/cultural/historical locations” (p. 477). Or, as Coffey (1999) would say,

[He is] engaged in a practice of writing and *rewriting* the body. This does not only include the writing of *other* bodies, as performers and physical entities of the social world. We are also engaged in responding to and writing our *own* bodies—as well or sick or fit or hurting or exposed or performing. (p. 131, our emphases)

Carrington is not alone in publicly confronting his inter-subjective bodily tensions as he works through its embodied politics. Exposing us to a similar dilemma, Silk (2010) unmasks—if not openly questions—his research act in relation to his consuming identity within spectacularized space



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could also cite most of our massive research methodology apparatus as partially zombified. I am not a major fan of television, but when I choose to watch a documentary, I often am impressed by how much more I get from it than from the standard sociological research tract. Yet the skills of a good documentary maker are rarely the topics of research methods courses, even though these skills—from scriptwriting and directing to camera movements and ethics—are the very stuff of good 21st-century research. And yes, some research seems to have entered the world of cyberspace, but much of it simply replicates the methods of quantitative research, making qualitative research disciplined, quantitative, and antihumanistic. Real innovation is lacking. Much research at the end of the 20th century—to borrow Beck's term again—truly was zombie research (Beck, 2003).

Table 11.1 suggests some links between social change and social research styles. The background is the authoritative scientific account with standard research protocols. As the social world changes, so we may start to sense new approaches to making inquiries. My concern in this chapter is largely with the arrival of queer theory.

■ A REFLEXIVE INTRODUCTION

How research is done takes us into various language games—some rational, some more contradictory, some qualitative, some quantitative. The languages we use bring with them all manner of tensions. Although they sometimes help us chart the ways we do research, they often bring their own contradictions and problems. My goal here is to address some of the incoherencies I have found in my own research languages and inquiries and to

suggest ways of living with them. Although I will draw widely from a range of sources and hope to provide some paradigmatic instances, the chapter inevitably will be personal. Let me pose the key contradiction of my inquiries. (We all have our own.)

The bulk of my inquiries have focused on sexualities, especially lesbian and gay concerns, with an ultimate eye on some notion of sexual justice. In the early days, I used a relatively straightforward symbolic interactionism to guide me in relatively straightforward fieldwork and interviewing in and around London's gay scene of the late 1960s. At the same time, I engaged politically, initially with the Homosexual Law Reform Society and then with the Gay Liberation Front in its early years. I read my Becker, Blumer, Strauss, and Denzin! At the same time, I was coming out as a young gay man and finding my way in the very social world I was studying. More recently, such straightforwardness has come to be seen as increasingly problematic. Indeed, there was always a tension there: I just did not always see it (Plummer, 1995).

On one hand, I have found myself using a language that I increasingly call that of critical humanism, one allied to symbolic interactionism, pragmatism, democratic thinking, storytelling, moral progress, redistribution, justice, and good citizenship (Plummer, 2003). Inspirations range from Dewey to Rorty, Blumer to Becker. All of these are quite old and traditional ideas, and although I have sensed their postmodernized affinities (as have others), they still bring more orthodox claims around experience, truths, identities, belonging to groups, and a language of moral responsibilities that can be shared through dialogues (Plummer, 2003).

By contrast, I also have found myself at times using a much more radicalized language that nowadays circulates under the name of queer theory. The latter must usually be seen as at odds

Table 11.1 Shifting Research Styles Under Conditions of Late Modernity

<i>Current Social Changes</i>	<i>Possible Changes in Research Style</i>
Toward a late modern world	Toward a late modern research practice
Postmodern/fragmentation/pluralization	The 'polyphonic' turn
Mediatization	The new forms of media as both technique and data
Stories and the death of the grand narrative	The storytelling/narrative turn
Individualization/choices/unsettled identities	The self-reflexive turn
Globalization-glocalization hybridization/ diaspora	The hybridic turn: decolonizing methods (L. T. Smith, 1999)
High tech/mediated/cyborg/post-human	The high-tech turn
Knowledge as contested	The epistemological turn
Postmodern politics and ethics	The political/ethical turn
The network society	Researching flows, mobilities, and contingencies
Sexualities as problematic	The queer turn



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