Introduction: Philosophy and Qualitative Research

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> If the events of September 11, 2001, have proven anything, it's that the terrorists can attack us, but they can't take away what makes us American—our freedom, our liberty, our civil rights. No, only Attorney General John Ashcroft can do that.—Jon Stewart, (after the passage of the Patriot Act) http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/jon_stewart.html

Philosophical rigor and the status quo have always been uneasy companions. In any given time, the less carefully one examines the latter's rallying cries, the safer its existence. Words like "freedom," "meritocracy," "rights," or "security" are more effective weapons when they are left conveniently vague, conveniently malleable. Within qualitative research we have our own rallying cries—terms that carry the weight of the received wisdom of the day—"generalizability," "validity," and "rationality," for example. Given some of the misuses of qualitative research in the past, including the long tendency for the powerful (in academia and elsewhere) to study the powerless (see Trinh T. Minh-ha's work, for example, 2009, as a critique of this tendency), it is important to look carefully at the key concepts and the way these are used in both the practice and theory of qualitative inquiry. What tends to be left out, glossed over, or gone unnoticed in research methods? What is inconsistent or misleading? What has the potential to be empowering or liberating?

We conceived of this book with the idea that critical explorations into the key philosophical issues in qualitative research could throw light on distortions, power relations, hidden assumptions, and possibilities within the field, and could ultimately provide the groundwork for needed conversations. We wanted to do this with rigor, both by building up philosophy and core concepts and by exploring specific practices in qualitative research. The distinction itself between core concepts, philosophy, and specific qualitative inquiry practice is blurred from the outset as philosophy and practice are merely foregrounded or backgrounded in various papers, not divided.

The book, in a way, then, is a statement of hope. We have seen many promising trends in the last few decades as academics from the groups who have traditionally been studied and been spoken for by others in the past—indigenous peoples, women, minorities, gays and lesbians, for example—make their voices heard, as the "other" speaks back, and as the uses to which research is put receive more attention. We have also seen more scrutiny given to the key concepts that define our methods. We see signs that qualitative research may begin to turn the tables on its own history to become not only a tool for emancipation but an effective one, and we want this book to be a part of that trend.

A further goal for the book is to apply the idea of inclusiveness across disciplines, and to begin some needed dialogue. We had noticed that books and journals on research methods had become somewhat specialized and niche driven. We decided to include articles that covered research methods across a range of subject areas. Thus, our interest in the philosophy of research methods was taken up through scholarship that spans various traditions including anthropology, education, law, counseling, language, queer studies, systems theory, and computer technology. We hoped that this inclusive approach that drew us each out of our own fields would provide an opportunity to think more carefully than usual about the terms we used, the background information we took for granted, and the questions we raised.

These basic purposes for the book reveal the critical underpinnings of our efforts, yet even that word "critical" cannot assume an unproblematic status for us. In broad, general terms, we are inviting and taking a critical perspective on qualitative inquiry, which means precisely that we want to refrain from taking the status-quo knowledge for granted, that we want to encourage questioning and dialogue about core philosophical concepts and methodological practices among both researchers and participants, that we want to contribute to emancipatory pursuits in and through social science, and that we acknowledge the pivotal necessity of reflection for inquiry, most particularly reflection on the doing of social science. This, for us, is a hopeful process, opening up possibilities for liberation on both personal and social levels.

We also wanted to encourage dialogues between qualitative and quantitative methodologists. Many of us work in situations where both approaches are used. Yet, many of us have also been reared in the academic milieu of inquiry separation—where people who engage in qualitative and quantitative inquiry are rarely in the same departments and scholarly conversations, even though similar philosophical problems underlie the two general streams of human research—problems of defining the self, meaning, and "knowledge," for example, or of choosing desirable means and ends for research.

Habermas (1984) has suggested that through any one particular research project, we can gain understanding related to the substantive questions at hand, the metatheoretical principles involved in the conduct of the study, and the methodology that was used to address the substantive interests. In the act of doing qualitative research, as in any social science, we bring all of these elements to the table, so to speak, and our inquiry, then, can reciprocally inform each of these elements. Across all three of these domains, the authors who are included in this text take seriously the opportunity to explore and critique taken-for-granted underpinnings in their own inquiry practices. As already indicated, these explorations traverse an array of interests and disciplines, principles, and methodological designs and approaches.

Criticalists are not a monolithic group. In fact, as McLaren and Kincheloe (2008) so aptly pointed out, "Critical theory should not be treated as a universal grammar of revolutionary thought objectified and reduced to discrete formulaic pronouncements or strategies" (p. 404). Kincheloe and McLaren have been major contributors to the field of critical inquiry and have consistently argued that lively dialogue among criticalists should be encouraged. It is our hope that this book benefits that dialogue.

Some of the important questions that have emerged in critical dialogues of late involve debates about the limits of knowledge, whether and to what extent truth claims can be considered valid, how to represent the voices of "the other," how are socially fluid, cosmopolitan identities to be taken into account in understanding participants, what is the relation between truth and power, and under whose authority can researchers speak. These debates are engaged across the chapters, but do not necessarily find resolution.

We have organized the book in a way that reflects our own principles. Philosophical concepts are explored throughout. In the first section of the book, this is done in a direct and broad way, thinking across qualitative inquiry in general. In the four remaining sections of the book, the examination of core concepts occurs in the context of methodological practices and outcomes. These remaining sections are organized in a fashion that reflects insights from Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987). Habermas makes a theoretical distinction between the coordination of lifeworld activities and the coordination of system-level phenomena. The level of coordination is one of two fundamental ways of distinguishing system from lifeworld. Social integration involves the coordination of action as in a face-to-face context that occurs at one social site (what could be considered a bounded unit), which could be a tribe, a household, a school, a classroom, or an internet blogosphere. This is what many people will think of as "lifeworld"—culture, or that which is intuitively known. Habermas (1984) writes that "Subjects acting communicatively always come to an understanding in the horizon of a lifeworld. Their lifeworld is formed from more or less diffuse, always unproblematic, background convictions" (p. 70). The lifeworld also collects the interpretive work of preceding generations and in this sense is the conservative "counterweight to the risk of disagreement that arises in every actual process of reaching understanding" (p. 70). All activities involve lifeworld milieu, because people monitor themselves as they act, act for values and according to norms and identity commitments, and this we do always. There are two principles for the coordination of action, one based on action orientations and one based on patterns linking large numbers of action consequences to the reproduction, iteration or directional transformation of action conditions. The reason "level" is an appropriate term is that system processes require a macro perspective to be discovered as truly system processes, whereas studies of lifeworld are more micro level (but micro level studies are needed to understand very specifically how system processes associated with cultural reproduction actually occur. According to Habermas (1984, 1987), the system uncouples from the lifeworld in response to the complexities of coordinating social life.

There is always system, but the basis for system *uncoupling* from the lifeworld occurred when "media" like money replaced communication in certain sub-systems of activity like the economy. What makes highly complex social formations distinctive is not that they involve system processes (all societies are also systems) but that systems have uncoupled from lifeworld. The cultural resources necessary for reaching consensus overtax the capacities of social beings in complex societies. For example, we find we cannot bargain for all of our needs by assessing the fair trade of our labor for our consumption. Social integration, then, also involves the coordination of action at a system level, one where the communicative negotiations get fixated through particular formulations. According to Habermas, the system imperatives colonize aspects of the lifeworld, which get turned over to strategic action and a system of causes/effects and action consequences that limit the likelihood of taking yes/no positions. Coordination at this level involves conditions for action, action consequences, and functional relations across actions as effective ways of describing system relations. These three categories capture most conditions for action through which systemic coordination of activity is operationalized within the lifeworld: the distribution of cultural resources/milieu; economic relations; and political relations.

- Cultural Milieu. This has to do with the volition of the actor, but also involves the availability of cultural themes to draw on when acting, the value of the themes identified among cultural others—including the value for one's identity, and the distribution of cultural themes across sites. One's cultural milieu can both resource and constrain action. The distributions of cultural resources and cultural milieu reflect the potential for systemic relations.
- Economic relations. These conditions will primarily be experienced as outside one's volition and they are the basic arrangements involved in how basic needs are distributed and met or not met.
- Political relations. These conditions involve the formalized relations of authority that are widespread in society—laws are the most substantial of these formalized relations.

Habermas's distinction between the lifeworld and the system guides some important distinctions in the conduct of critical qualitative inquiry. Readers will see evidence of this through both the organization and substance of the chapters, though only a few of the chapters specifically advance Habermas's ideas. First off, inquiry into social life varies methodologically between the lifeworld and system levels. When studying the lifeworld, researchers are more inclined to engage in and seek access to the everyday life experiences of participants; but when studying the system, researchers are more inclined to study the distribution of material goods, legal and economic patterns, functions, and unintended consequences of large-scale activities coordinated across time and space. Moreover, there is a difference in the way critique of the status quo is generated. For example, lifeworld critique is facilitated by examining relations of claims to truth made when actors negotiate meaning, whereas system critique is facilitated by examining the ways consequences and effects exceed the intentions of the actors, contradict one another, or limit the potential for understanding. It is also possible to examine the mismatch or relation between analyses of both levels. Habermas (1984, 1987) argues that in complex societies, institutions form a "switching station" between activities coordinated through the lifeworld and activities coordinated through the system. In this text, we do not have system-level analyses, but we have chapters that address the analysis of institutional activities. These chapters provide an opportunity for readers to think about the distinction between lifeworld and system, and the place of institutions in the negotiation of meaning and action-coordination between the lifeworld and the system.

Many social sciences focus, in a privileged way, on either the lifeworld (as hermeneutics and phenomenology do, for examples) or the system (as macroeconomics, macrosociology, or objective sciences do, for examples). When we do social science that focuses on the everyday interactions of people in order to better understand their experiences, we draw on particular methods of data collection and analysis that provide us, as researchers, access to the lifeworld interactions of participants. Sections Two and Three focus on methodological theory and practice involved in understanding the life experiences, interactions, norms, values, distortions, and ideologies entailed in the everyday life engagements of participants. The chapters in Section Two explore core concepts involved in innovative methodologies while wrestling with related problems. For example, focus groups have been considered one of the mainstays of doing qualitative inquiry because of their capacity to elucidate and engage participant experiences. In Chapter 7, Melissa Freeman explores the concept of hermeneutics in relation to focus-group method. The chapters in Section Three focus more specifically on language. The linguistic turn in philosophy and methodology made it clear that social science had often taken language for granted, as if it were merely a tool for communicating knowledge, and as a result, researchers have been looking at language more closely in the last few decades; at its effects on the life experiences of participants, its effects on the researcher's engagement with those life experiences, and its effects on the theoretical resources and constraints embedded in words and word use. In Chapter 12, Benetta Johnson looks closely at the use of the personal pronoun by reconstructing its shifting meaning in personal narratives. Both of these sections concern what we think of as hermeneutic and reconstructive examinations of the culture and experiences of participants. Hermeneutic reconstructive investigations require the researcher to be able to dialogue meaningfully with participants and position-take with them.

The chapters in Section Four involve taking more of a relative outsider, third-person perspective toward institutions, cultural structures, and routines that are not often a part of the horizon of interpretations of which actors might be most immediately aware. This perspective is, in principle, available to participants, but is usually not explicit through the immediate level of face-to-face engagements. It involves reflection on the patterns and routines and effects and conditions of action across time, space, and multiple interactive opportunities. These structures, institutional routines, and conditions for action are drawn upon by actors, but usually in tacit ways. While one instance can constitute and reconstitute cultural structures and systemic effects, no one instance would suffice for capturing the description of these structures and systemic effects as part of a larger process. For example, let's say we are interested in how friends experience their interactions with one another as caring. We might interview the friends and observe them and reconstruct their experiences from the perspectives of how they are experiencing these interactions. However, their experiences will also be riddled with cultural structures, perhaps gendered effects that are not part of the intentional or even experiential awareness of the participants. They might not specifically acknowledge how this was part of their experience. The gendered effects, instead, become visible by looking at how caring actions both function within and are the effects of the interactions. Researchers must engage in different sets of methodological practices in order to get at these functions, consequences, and structures that are situated in specific interactions, but also link interactions across the time and space. We find these are both inclusive and broader than any particular instance of interaction. Thus, the methodological concepts and practices are different from those we see described and exemplified in Sections Two and Three.

In the final section of the book, researchers have explored the possible meaning of doing qualitative research for the participants and for the social world within which inquiry is located. When we first conceived of this section, we thought of it as the "Qualitative Research As…" section. When we engage with participants in researching their lives with them, we are engaging in action that could have meaning for them beyond the goals or questions articulated explicitly as rationale for doing the research. Qualitative research can be particularly mindful of this potential in social science because as researchers we tend to develop relationships with participants, care about them, and take seriously what participating in the research is doing for their lives — not just how the findings of the research will benefit them or the literature. This final section of the book stands as a critique of social science that fails to take into account its own "footprint" in the social worlds through which it treads. For us, the dichotomy between practice and theory is a false one. Exploration into core concepts is not merely an academic pursuit. These concepts are intimately connected to the life experiences of all us. They are substantive concepts in the first place. And, thus, by better understanding them, we better understand our ordinary life experiences. This matters because when we do research, we are not merely examining phenomena of interest, we are making friends, we are conversing, we are sharing concerns, and so forth. As the chapters in this section indicate, our qualitative research can be philosophy, healing, and activism.

In summary, the organization of the book involves highlighting various aspects of the qualitative inquiry process in order to look more closely at its core concepts and practices, encourage dialogue about those concepts and practices, and move toward a more democratic, inclusive, healing, critical social science.

Description of the Text

Philosophical Explorations

Our first section, then, deals with some core philosophical concepts as they pertain to doing qualitative inquiry. The authors whose chapters comprise this section have all pushed on the traditional boundaries of these core concepts, namely, generalizability, intersubjectivity, rationality, reflexivity, validity, and system.

The first chapter is on generalizability, a notably tricky topic in qualitative research. Doctoral students whose dissertations use qualitative methods are often asked to justify their research designs and findings in terms of generalizability by professors on their committees who have quantitative backgrounds. The usual response has been to suggest a new name, originally coined by Lincoln and Guba in 1985—"transferability"—and then provide a few explanations of what transferability entails. In Chapter 2, Staffan Larsson updates and expands upon one of the most widely read journal articles on qualitative research in 2010: "Om generalisering från kvalitativa studier" (On generalization in qualitative research; in Swedish). Larsson carefully explores the concept of generalizability and offers five versions of it that can be applied in qualitative research. It is high time that this difficult concept be given rigorous consideration from the perspective of qualitative social researchers.It is almost a cliché to say that qualitative research involves building relationships. Often times, this claim is left unexamined. In Chapter 3, Michael Gunzenhauser confronts the relational aspects of doing qualitative research by developing the concept of empathy and clarifying its link to both intersubjectivity and knowing. Gunzenhauser takes a philosophical approach to the problematic of understanding how one identifies with their participants through similarity while respecting participant alterity at the same time. He draws our thinking toward what he calls "creative intersubjectivity"—the idea that the research encounter provokes newness of being for all involved (researchers and participants). The encounter carries the possibilities of respecting difference and energizing action. He draws on philosophy (particularly feminist interpretations of philosophy) to address practical aspects of being in relationships with our research participants, even critiquing the idea that emancipatory research goals are sufficient. He uses research exemplars to talk about how subject-to-subject engagements, necessarily involving empathy and care, can produce strong research and, concurrently advance knowledge. Gunzenhauser's unapologetic interest in the affective aspects of our work with participants is inspiring. Gunzenhauser challenges us to think more critically about what it means to care, to have empathy, and to be in relationship with our participants.

"Rationality" is a term that has been much contested and critiqued in qualitative social science over the last few decades. Central to these critiques is a concern for the cultural and social conditions within which something is considered rational. These concerns come sharply into focus when researchers try to study marginalized groups and unusual experiences on the participants' own terms. Lucinda Carspecken discusses ways of knowing and relating to the natural world among a group of environmentalists in Indiana as a lens to highlight some of the values and assumptions that underpin what we tend to unthinkingly define as rationality in mainstream North America. Especially in the case of marginalized ritual or spiritual practice in the industrialized world, it is easy to assume or "see" irrationality, set against a familiar backdrop that we take to be rational. Yet, the very perspectives that are commonly dismissed, even in academia, may throw up possibilities for new and liberating forms of rationality, informed by alternative clusters of values.

"Reflexivity" is one of the more popular concepts regularly identified with contemporary qualitative research. It would be difficult to get an article published in today's qualitative journals without demonstrating "reflexivity," and researchers are taught early on that they need to be reflexive. In Chapter 5, Ian Stronach, Dean Garratt, Cathie Pearce, and Heather Piper explore models of reflexivity that have been specifically linked with qualitative research. Their critique of the models involves both philosophical explorations and practical examinations. The authors draw on how their own Ph.D. students use/misuse reflexive practices in writing their theses. The students' lack of fidelity to reflexive principles led the authors to further explore the concept and nature of reflexivity, which leads them to a new account of "reflexivity" as picturing. To do this, the authors used art, ultimately linking the reflexive nature of art to that of research. This new account retains a more open and fluid structure to be navigated, but not prescribed or specifically defined.

Like generalizability, the concept of validity has been bandied about among qualitative researchers for quite some time, with a proliferation of varying definitions and commitments. Barbara Dennis examines the trends in this discourse and then proposes, against the criticism, a move toward a more inclusive, holistic concept of validity. She reviews a few other scholars who have also proposed a more inclusive validity concept in order to examine the grounds on which their particular holistic views are based. Dennis proposes a model that emerges from the scholarship of Habermas and Phil Carspecken. This model links research validity to meaning and understanding in everyday life. The qualities of validity are explicated as part of describing this holistic, inclusive approach to validity. This approach can be unifying in that its basic principles hold across all varieties of methods and it addresses the variety of issues under the umbrella of the term "validity." Moreover, it eliminates the need for some divisions that have perplexed the validity debates (like pitting objectivity against subjectivity).

In Chapter 6, Sunnie Lee Watson and Bill Watson review the emergence of critical systems theory over the past few decades. After Bertalanffy's groundbreaking work of 1968, *General Systems Theory*, concepts of system branched off in several directions, with some branches eventually intersecting with "chaos theory," now more often named "complexity theory." Critical systems theory could be regarded as a distinctive and highly important branch in that it has managed, in the hands of most of its theorists and practitioners, to avoid the entirely objectified notions of system found elsewhere. It is now a version of systems theory that competes with a few others in the fields of management, institutional analysis, and policy. Sunnie and Bill Watson have provided a chapter that gives an important introduction and overview of the field, along with guidelines for its use in social research.

Exploring Methodological Innovations for Critical Inquiry

New philosophical insights beget new methods and this is the focus of our second section. Some of these new methods critically examine the boundary lines between researcher and researched, researcher and reader, partly by making the researcher more visible and partly by exploring the processes through which meaning is constructed. In place of the traditional model of a passive and objective researcher recording information from active respondents with fixed worldviews, the innovations in this section—conversations, collaborative storytelling and focus groups—acknowledge and explicitly include the active presence of the researcher. Even technological information is reframed as something inherently communicative, rather than as a mysterious substance to be imbibed passively through the senses. In each of the chapters, conceptual development is advanced through the interplay of methodological practice and ideas.

Our first two chapters in this section take commonly used methods—focus groups and interviews—and re-examine them from new philosophical perspectives. In "Meaning Making and Understanding in Focus Groups: Affirming Social and Hermeneutic Dialogue," Melissa Freeman explores the history and range of focus-group methodologies in qualitative research while she also looks at the philosophical frames that inform them. She notes that theories about the self alter the way researchers approach meaning. In particular, she traces the shift in methodology from a data-collection strategy that treats participants' perspectives as fixed and separate, to one that recognizes the active construction and negotiation of meanings within focus-group interactions. Freeman argues for recognition of an embodied, relational self rather than an isolated one. She also advocates Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as a lens through which to understand the dialogic nature of focus groups, and as a basis for focus-group designs that take full advantage of the potential for critical and reflective engagement within them.

In "Conversations as Research: Philosophies of the Interview," Svend Brinkmann offers a model for qualitative research interviews based on conversation rather than the commonly used therapeutic counseling style (which he simultaneously critiques). He looks at the philosophical assumptions embedded in these two approaches and argues for "epistemic" interviewing as an important complement to current conventions of "doxatic" interviewing. The first is a mutual, dialectical process of expanding knowledge through the exchange of ideas, whereas the second is a unidirectional flow of knowledge or opinions from the respondent to the researcher, who remains passive. Brinkmann points out the dangers of drawing out only superficial "common-sense" responses through doxatic interviewing rather than dealing with the assumptions and inconsistencies behind them. He also points out the implicit power of the researcher in this mode, where his or her own perspectives are invisible in the interview, coming into play only behind the scenes, in the process of interpreting the respondents' words. Using a range of interviewing examples, including excerpts from Socrates, Brinkmann explores the democratic and philosophical potential of the underused epistemic style of interview.

Lai Ma's chapter provides a critique of dominant concepts of information and the limited, misleading, and often erroneous epistemological implications of these concepts. Information science is a burgeoning field for sure and the term "information" has become used within a huge number of fields and contexts. Many physicists, for example, have reconceptualized traditional constructs like physical states and physical systems in terms of information. Social theorists of various colors and stripes discuss contemporary societies and the globalization process as "the information age." Information as a concept informs cognitive psychology, learning science, artificial intelligence, and of course information science itself. But Ma shows that in all contexts this word is used as if information were something objective, and this perspective is, in turn, tied to a fairly naïve empiricist epistemology. Ma's chapter gives a careful critical reconstruction of the concept of information and then offers a much more promising way to understand what information is: in terms of hermeneutics and communicative action theory. Ma outlines a critical qualitative research methodology for studies of information.

In "Telling It Like It Is: Creating New Layers of Meaning in My Collaborative Storytelling Practices," Dan Mahoney describes the process of adopting an interpretive, self-reflexive stance in his research based on collaborative storytelling with gay men. He argues that his willingness to dialogue and interact with the research participants and to be explicit about his own part in the process has enabled him to represent more layers of interpretation in their stories. He describes this as analogous to laying down tracks in a music recording — the tracks or layers ranging from the actual textual voices recorded in the transcripts to his own internal dialogue to his "sociologist" voice. He advocates a shift away from the role of an invisible, authoritative author presenting a single narrative towards an engaged and visible author working with highly contextualized meanings. He also situates his own perspective within pragmatic, interpretive and postmodern traditions. Although Mahoney's storytelling deals with "large" themes like love, belonging, and identity, he aims to slow these down, emphasizing "small" everyday occurrences and thus bringing out intimate, particular details and symbols rather than flattening these out in grander, romanticized accounts.

Exploring Methodological Innovations for the Critical Analysis of Language Use

We devote the next section to the use of language. On the one hand, some of the authors look at the way details of personal language use intersect with broader, tacit relationships of power. Examples of this are African American women's use of personal pronouns in the context of a predominantly white campus and the gendered and racialized discourses and performances in the interactions between white female clients, an African American female counselor, and a white female researcher. On the other hand, narrative is explored. For instance, Yi-Ping Huang and Phil Carspecken discuss the relation of negation and narrative in human identity claims; and Amir Marvasti and Christopher Faircloth look at Romantic influences on narrative genres in ethnography and find within them tacit messages that could serve to justify oppression.

These explorations into the analysis of language develop theoretical and methodological refinements necessary to thinking about qualitative inquiry since the linguistic turn (Rorty, 1967).

In the first chapter of this section, "Content Inference Fields in Intersubjective Space," Phil Carspecken and Ran Zhang combine intensive theory development with data analysis illustrating the use of the theoretical advances. Carspecken and Zhang reinterpret concepts we are already familiar with, such as "structure," "illocution," "interactive setting," "objectivation," (and more) within a theory of communicative pragmatics and inferential semantics. They invent quite a few new terms in the process: for example, "temporal compression," "illocutionary inference fields," and "intersubjective space." The concept of intersubjective space involves a virtual space involving possible subject positions that involve transpersonal illocutionary and content inferential relations. Intersubjective space is a concept relevant to many things, among them the nature of logic, the commitment and entitlement formations that form during interactions, and recognition and existential needs. Although the theory introduced in this chapter seems very abstract when considered on its own, Carspecken and Zhang show in great detail how this theory captures, in the form of reconstruction, very concrete features of human interaction that participants implicitly understand and make use of. The section on data analysis not only serves to illustrate use of Carspecken and Zhang's theoretical work, it also models various ways of presenting and analyzing recorded human interactions. Back-and-forth displays with columns for different types of codes, nested setting displays, and reconstructed/graphically represented content inference fields are examples of the contributions to method one can find in this chapter.

In Chapter 12, Benetta Johnson explores the use of personal singular and plural pronouns in the talk of African Americans describing their experiences at a predominately white university. Johnson develops the concept of descriptive pronouns that invoke narrative relational structure between the pronoun use and the storyteller. Johnson refuses to take linguistic substitutions for granted and instead turns a microscopic look at their use and does so in order to render a more exacting understanding of her participants' experiences. Her close analysis is both subtle and sophisticated. It stands as a linguistic critique and an exemplar in hermeneutics.

Yi-Ping Huang and Phil Carspecken offer some theoretical considerations of human identity that depart from poststructuralist statements about the nonunity and nonintegrated self (even about the "illusion" of subjectivity in some cases), which they say have not been consistently formulated in relation to the assumptions about knowledge and knowledge claims made by their formulators. The theoretical discussions provided by Huang and Carspecken relocate some of Hegel's philosophical forms, particularly those of "negation," "the negative," and "determinate negation." Unity and integration both are necessarily claimed features of human identity that usually do not manifest as such empirically. The "self" contains a transcending, negative feature that no positive representation can capture. Hegel is put together with Mead, Habermas, Dilthey, and others, and the resulting theoretical themes are then illustrated and further explored through application to self-narrative interviews.

Norm Denzin has pushed symbolic interactionism and pragmatism from inside to develop the concept of performativity and an interest in the performance of meaning for qualitative research. Denzin argues that all meaning is performance and that to understand others is to understand them in the context of performance. These points could be made more precise. This is exactly what Corinne Datchi-Phillips has done in her chapter on performing identity stories in pyschotherapeutic interactions. Datchi-Phillips drew on performative theories of meaning to develop analytic tools useful in conducting critical qualitative research. Her chapter illustrates the tight connection between theory and practice as she explores new ways to comprehend the identity negotiations that occurred between therapist and client across the counseling sessions.

In the last chapter of this section, "Narrative and Genre in Qualitative Research: The Case of Romanticism," Amir Marvasti and Christopher Faircloth explore traditions of romanticism that they see as implicit and common in the narrative genres of ethnography. They argue for careful attention to the process of writing in qualitative research, as well as its content. They note that genres are never neutral or detached from history and that relations of power are embedded in the frames that narratives create. In the case of romanticism they draw out three themes— exoticism, authenticity, and moralism—and show that these tend to gloss over power differentials and reinforce a mainstream, modern conception of individualism, overshadowing alternative moral and social possibilities.

Methodological Explorations of Structural and Institutional Phenomena

Drawing on Habermas's distinction between the lifeworld and the system, structures and institutions are the focus of the five chapters in this next section. As mentioned earlier, Habermas (1987) theorizes that institutions are the switching place between the lifeworld and the system.

Structures are lifeworld phenomena, but they inhabit the social coordination of activities in ways that can be identified as media and outcomes of action not necessarily intended by actors. Structures are often taken up by actors as less reflective resources and constraints on their interpretations that are mostly taken for granted. Structures can be reconstructed across a variety of actions over time and space—they do not exist in time and space. They must be inferred not observed. The reconstruction of cultural structures provides researchers with provisional descriptions of cultural material that has assumed objectified form for its participants. For Giddens, who draws on Marx, action and structure presuppose one another. They are not dualisms, but a duality. The duality of structure relates "to the fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency. . . [in other words, the duality means that] structure is both the medium and outcome of the practices involved in social interaction through both society and culture, conditions for acting and acting." (Giddens, 1979/1990, p. 69). "The reasons actors supply discursively for their conduct in the course of practical queries [even those that come through interviews, for example] stand in a relation of some tension to the rationalization of action as actually embodied within the stream of conduct of the actor" (Giddens, 1979/1990, p. 57). Giddens (1979/1990) produces what he calls a stratification model of social action that has the actor engaged in reflexive monitoring of action and the rationalization and motivation of action set within a context of unacknowledged conditions of action and unintended consequences of action.

Moreover, studying institutions provides a way for researchers to see how people are negotiating, navigating, and engaging with system-level imperatives. The authors examine the way states and legal institutions influence everyday life, through laws and legal methods of interpretation, through textbooks/texts, and other cultural products where the coordination of human activity is carried out through institutional, structural, and systematic means. Concomitantly, these authors examine how people draw on and negotiate these influences on their activities. Making these influences, resources, and constraints explicit involves a set of methodological principles, concepts, and tools and it is this with which we find the authors of these chapters wrestling. Two of the chapters—one by J. Debora Hinderliter Ortloff and the other by

Barbara Dennis—involve an analysis of cultural structures). In their respective chapters, Nurit Stadler and Beverly Stoeltje examine complicated authority structures as employed through legal systems and religious texts respectively. In her chapter, Rebecca Riall demonstrates the mutual benefit and necessity of integrating anthropological approaches to qualitative research (reflecting more of a lifeworld account of social life) with legal studies (reflecting more of a structural and systematic account of social life). While these studies all use lifeworld data, they push into provisional descriptions of social coordination. In the first chapter of this section, Nurit Stadler reports on her study of the inner workings of an "ultra-Orthodox Jewish community" called Haredi. She found little methodological literature to guide her, particularly with respect to how fundamentalist community members tend to appropriate spiritual texts. Stadler's honest account of her ethnographic experiences and decisions fills a much needed gap in the scholarship about how one goes about studying fundamentalist institutions in an ethical manner. Honoring the scriptural mode of life emphasized within the community, Stadler collaborated with Haredi yeshiva to develop a canon-infused approach that delivered insights relevant to understanding Haredi. The enforced boundary between outsiders and insiders was traversed and Stadler was able to capture subtle in-group diversity with respect to how texts were interpreted.

Debora Ortloff did a textual analysis of German textbooks with an interest in articulating possible state intentions regarding diversity as they might be expressed both through policy and through state-adopted texts. Ortloff argues that the traditional hermeneutic interests of qualitative researchers are often complicated by concerns that are better grasped at a structural level. She advances framing theory as a way to explicate cultural structures. The structural analysis links the discourse of texts with the cultural milieu and educational messages associated with the specific substance of the texts, illustrating the interpretive basis of textbook analyses. Ortloff wanted to deal with the question of how any given ethnographic or qualitative research example or finding is connected to a systematically coordinated set of activities. To do this, Ortloff reconstructs structures from empirical data instead of fitting data to existing theories about systemic and cultural phenomena of interest.

Beverly Stoeltje uses the example of Asante queen mothers' courts in Ghana to show the importance of context in researching legal institutions. The courts handle conflicts that arise over custom—verbal agreements and commonly held norms and penalties—and frequently deal with claims made by women. The role of customary legal institutions, she argues, tends to be understated in academia. Among the Asante, they provide a voice and an audience for ordinary people, and also often enable women to use traditionally female ways of speaking to their advantage. Stoeltje gives a beautifully detailed description of court procedures, emphasizing local understandings of the process and the roles of the people involved. She also describes some of the specific conventions involved in doing research there. She argues for the importance of understanding Ghana's particular history and its dual-gender traditions of queen mother chieftaincy. Its courts, she claims, offer an essential space for agency and negotiation, despite operating within a formerly colonized state that has adopted many more typically Western models of governance.

Rebecca Riall offers narratives about two researchers—an attorney and a qualitative social researcher, showing the contrasting perspectives assumed in each process. She illustrates her arguments further with examples from Native American treaty law, showing how what are assumed to be the facts of a legal argument often include highly subjective interpretations and definitions, and how legal investigations tend to preclude social contexts and implications because of an emphasis on precedent. As a result, essential information can be lost. In treaty law, the legal documents that still provide precedents were negotiated in contexts of highly uneven power between the Euro-American powers and the Native nations in question. This is reflected in assumptions that rights of various kinds, and even sovereignty itself, have been "given," by European and United States governments to Indian nations, rather than recognized. Riall's chapter vividly shows the impact of research style and research conventions on findings, and she argues that each of the two approaches—legal research and qualitative social research —has something to offer the other. Social research can potentially help fill in some of the injustice and misinformation embedded in legal struggles over native sovereignty, and may also provide groundwork for building new legal theory that is both more emancipatory and more practical.

Barbara Dennis studied a group of friends and their experiences caring for and with one another. Her original analysis provided a thorough description of what the friends would have said they experienced. And yet, there was an un(der)-acknowledged set of patterns that were part of the description of the caring that was not precisely or easily told through the narratives as they were. Articulating these structures is not an explanatory effort, but a descriptive effort. The descriptions move beyond, without excluding, the hermeneutic analysis of the experiences and activities of the friends. This structural analysis gets at the cultural conditions through which the friends interacted, particularly with respect to how they cared for one another through those interactions. The analysis of structures draws on Gidden's (1979/1990) ideas on the analysis of structures and agency as elaborated by Carspecken (1996).

The Critical Engagement of Qualitative Inquiry in the Social World

And finally, we look at what qualitative research does in practice. We look at how it engages with the world and at some of the recent uses to which it has been put. "Inquiry which aspires to the name 'critical' must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or public sphere within the society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavor unembarrassed by the label 'political' and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness" (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2007, p. 406). This last section of the book addresses the question of "What are the effects of your research for the world?" The chapters in this section exemplify a few of the many possibilities for qualitative research, for example, qualitative research as philosophy and as healing. This section reflects an intersection of metatheoretical principles, substantive interests, and methodological promise. Qualitative inquiry, in its direct engagement with participants, has the special opportunity to be part of a transformative potential. In recent decades, feminists have asked researchers to think about the difference between doing research *on* subjects and doing research *with* participants. Researchers cannot rest content with producing answers to research questions on a substantive level, and must also hold themselves accountable to understanding the effects of their research for the people with whom they are working.

There is not much written on doing qualitative inquiry with children, but the first chapter in this final section is an exception. Alba Lucy Guerrero and Mary Brenner each conducted studies with vulnerable youth using media. It was important to both of them to engage in research that was capable of benefiting their child participants as well as the larger society. By reflecting on their two studies, Guerrero and Brenner are able to locate ways in which their studies had an impact on the lives of the children who participated in their research, including issues that posed challenges for them as researchers.

Grace Giorgio shares with us her personal hope for and experiences with the healing potential of qualitative research. She begins with a story about how her own published research on lesbian relational battering brought her face-to-face with this healing possibility. In this chapter, she explores the characteristics of qualitative research that make it particularly well-suited to healing possibilities. She examines qualitative inquiry with her eye toward healing and trauma. Readers will find this honest and openly compassionate way of thinking about and doing qualitative research is critical in the most personal way. This chapter proposes, by example, an alternative to the aloof, unengaged researcher, with a more positivist approach to inquiry. This inspiring chapter makes it impossible to embark on a qualitative research endeavor without imaging its healing possibilities.

Kip Kline writes on the relationship of philosophy to ethnography, specifically his ethnography of hip hop artistry. As Kline argues, qualitative methodology is unavoidably philosophical. First, Kline carefully details the way metatheoretical concepts were employed ethnographically. Minimally speaking, ethnography will involve philosophical claims about what meaning is and how the social world is conceptualized. Then, of course, there will be philosophical underpinnings related to the substantive interests of inquiry. Kline explores the Habermasian concepts he drew on as metatheory as well as other philosophical concepts that were entailed in the way he was engaging with the data. Then, Kline illustrates how the hip hop artists he worked with were doing philosophy on the street. Kline argues that doing philosophy through critical ethnography is a way to better understand the philosophy of everyday lived experiences.

The book ends with a chapter on participatory action research or PAR, which is explicitly conducted in terms of its meaning for participants. PAR was developed originally through the work of Orlando Fals-Borda in Columbia. Taking issue with dominant views of social research taught in developed nations like Europe and the United States, Fals-Borda formulated a way to do research that combines it with community-based decision making and mobilization for change. PAR has taken root in Australia under the hands of Kemis and McTaggert and also, in different ways, in England. In this chapter, Doris Santos, a fellow Columbian and friend of the late Orlando Fals-Borda, reviews the history of PAR. The breadth of her knowledge and work in the field situates her as uniquely capable to produce this history. Doris Santos has applied PAR in a number of innovative and social important studies of her own. Her chapter reviews the key tenets of PAR, its history, and offers a new interpretation of it by making links with the philosophy of Hannah Arendt.

Conclusion

This book reflects a conversation among a diverse collection of scholarship. The authors are united in their insistence on calling the status quo into question and their willingness to reflect on their own practices. In fact, many of the chapters were developed precisely out of such reflections and openness. Peter McLaren (1986) once wrote that researchers should be willing to be "wounded in the field" and one way researchers interpret that call is to examine their research claims, their epistemological beliefs, and their personal commitments in order to better understand what they are doing. One way to encourage such a process among scholars is to invite dialogue across diverse perspectives. As we were editing the various chapters, we found our own ways of thinking called into question. We did not immediately agree even with each other about such things as the extent to which we should use the word "critical." Our work is not equally affiliated with Habermas or feminism or other critical perspectives…. This is true across authors and among ourselves as editors of the text. Our commitments and passions for understanding one another and for locating our social science in a trajectory of hope may find different sources, varied potentials, unfamiliar interests, and all of this is for the good. Inevitably and importantly arguments will emerge. With a concerted focus on philosophical concepts we intend to provide substance for the debates of practice and theory.

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