

5 Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited

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In our chapter for the first edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), we focused on the contention among various research paradigms for legitimacy and intellectual and paradigmatic hegemony. The postmodern paradigms that we discussed (postmodernist, critical theory, and constructivism)¹ were in contention with the received positivist and postpositivist paradigms for legitimacy and with one another for intellectual legitimacy. In the 15 years that have elapsed since that chapter was published, substantial changes have occurred in the landscape of social scientific inquiry. On the matter of legitimacy, we observe that readers familiar with the literature on methods and paradigms reflect a high interest in ontologies and epistemologies that differ sharply from those undergirding conventional social science, including, but not limited to, feminist theories, critical race and ethnic studies, queer theory, border theories, postcolonial ontologies and epistemologies, and poststructural and postmodern work. Second, even those established professionals trained in quantitative social science (including the two of *us*) want to learn more about qualitative approaches because new professionals being mentored in graduate schools are asking serious questions about and looking for guidance in qualitatively oriented studies and dissertations. Third, the number of qualitative texts, research papers, workshops, and training materials has exploded. Indeed, it would be difficult to miss the distinct turn of the social sciences toward more interpretive, postmodern, and critical practices and theorizing (Bloland, 1989, 1995). This nonpositivist orientation has created a context (surround) in which virtually no study can go unchallenged by proponents of contending paradigms. Furthermore, it is obvious that the number of practitioners of new paradigm inquiry is growing daily. The legitimacy of postpositivist and postmodern paradigms is well established and at least equal to the legitimacy of received and conventional paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

On the matter of hegemony, or supremacy, among postmodern paradigms, it is clear that Clifford Geertz's (1988, 1993) prophecy about the "blurring of genres" is rapidly being fulfilled. Inquiry methodology can no longer be

treated as a set of universally applicable rules or abstractions.

Methodology is inevitably interwoven with and emerges from the nature of particular disciplines (such as sociology and psychology) and particular perspectives (such as Marxism, feminist theory, and queer theory). So, for instance, we can read feminist critical theorists such as Virginia Olesen (2000; [Chapter 7](#), this volume) and Patricia Lather (2007) or queer theorists such as Joshua Gamson (2000), or we can follow arguments about teachers as researchers (Kincheloe, 1991) while we understand the secondary text to be teacher empowerment and democratization of schooling practices. Indeed, the various paradigms are beginning to “interbreed” such that two theorists previously thought to be in irreconcilable conflict may now appear, under a different theoretical rubric, to be informing one another’s arguments. A personal example is our own work, which has been heavily influenced by action research practitioners and postmodern and poststructural critical theorists. Consequently, to argue that it is paradigms that are in contention is probably less useful than to probe where and how paradigms exhibit confluence and where and how they exhibit differences, controversies, and contradictions. As the field or fields of qualitative research mature and continue to add both methodological and epistemological as well as political sophistication, new linkages will, we believe, be found, and emerging similarities in interpretive power and focus will be discovered.

Major Issues Confronting All Paradigms

In our chapter in the first edition of this *Handbook*, we presented two tables that summarized our positions, first, on the axiomatic nature of paradigms (the paradigms we considered at that time were positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109, [Table 6.1](#)); and second, on the issues we believed were most fundamental to differentiating the four paradigms (p. 112, Table 6.2). These tables are reproduced here in slightly different form as a way of reminding our readers of our previous statements. The axioms defined the ontological, epistemological, and methodological bases for both established and emergent paradigms; these are shown here in [Table 5.1](#). The issues most often in contention were inquiry aim, nature of knowledge, the way knowledge is accumulated, goodness (rigor and validity) or quality criteria, values, ethics, voice, training (the nature of preparatory work that goes into preparing a researcher to engage in responsible and reflective fieldwork), accommodation, and hegemony; these are shown in [Table 5.2](#). An examination of these two tables will reacquaint the reader with our original

Handbook treatment; more detailed information is, of course, available in our original chapter. Readers will notice that in the interim, Susan Lynham has joined us in creating a new and more substantial version of one of the tables, one that takes into account both our own increasing understandings and her work with us and students in enlarging the frames of reference for new paradigm work.

Since publication of that chapter, at least one set of authors, John Heron and Peter Reason, has elaborated on our tables to include the *participatory/cooperative* paradigm (Heron, 1996; Heron & Reason, 1997, pp. 289–290). Thus, in addition to the paradigms of positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism, we add the participatory paradigm in the present chapter (this is an excellent example, we might add, of the hermeneutic elaboration so embedded in our own view, constructivism; see, e.g., Guba 1990, 1996). Our aim here is to extend the analysis further by building on Heron and Reason’s additions and by rearranging the issues to reflect current thought. The issues we have chosen include our original formulations and the additions, revisions, and amplifications made by Heron and Reason (1997) as well as by Lynham, and we have also chosen what we believe to be the issues most important today. We should note that *important* means several things to us. An important topic may be one that is widely debated (or even hotly contested)—validity is one such issue. An important issue may be one that bespeaks a new awareness (an issue such as recognition of the role of values). An important issue may be one that illustrates the influence of one paradigm on another (such as the influence of feminist, action research, critical theory, and participatory models on researcher conceptions of action within and with the community in which research is carried out). Or issues may be important because new or extended theoretical or field-oriented treatments for them are newly available—voice and reflexivity are two such issues. Important may also indicate that new or emerging treatments contradict earlier formulations in such a way that debates about method, paradigms, or ethics take the forefront once again, resulting in rich and fruitful conversations about what it means to do qualitative work. *Important* sometimes foregrounds larger social movements that undermine qualitative research in the name of science or that declare there is only one form of science that deserves the name (National Research Council, 2002).

Item	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory et al.	Constructivism
Ontology	Naïve realism— “real” reality but apprehensible	Critical realism—“real” reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible	Historical realism— virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time	Relativism—local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/ objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true	Transactional/ subjectivist; value- mediated findings	Transactional/ subjectivist; created findings
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutical/ dialectical

Item	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory et al.	Constructivism
Inquiry aim	Explanation; prediction and control		Critique and transformation; restitution and emancipation	Understanding; reconstruction
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as facts or laws	Nontalsified 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; 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	

Issue	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory et al.	Constructivism	Participatory ^a
Ontology	Naïve realism—“real” reality but apprehensible	Critical realism—“real” reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible	Historical realism—virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time	Relativism—local and specific co-constructed realities	Participative reality—subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and given cosmos
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true	Transactional/subjectivist; value-mediated findings	Transactional/subjectivist; co-created findings	Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; co-created findings
Methodology	Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutical/dialectical	Political participation in collaborative action inquiry; primacy of the practical; use of language grounded in shared experiential context

^a. Entries in this column are based on Heron and Reason (1997).

[Table 5.3](#) reprises the original Table 8.3 but adds the axioms of the participatory paradigm proposed by Heron and Reason (1997). [Table 5.4](#) deals with seven issues and represents an update of selected issues first presented in the old Table 8.4. *Voice* in the 1994 version of [Table 5.2](#) has been renamed *inquirer posture*, and we have inserted a redefined *voice* in the current table.

Issue	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theories	Constructivism	Participatory ^a
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as facts or laws	Non/falsified hypotheses that are probable facts or laws	Structural/historical insights	Individual and collective reconstructions sometimes coalescing around consensus	Extended epistemology: primacy of practical knowing; critical subjectivity; living knowledge
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	In communities of inquiry embedded in communities of practice
Goodness or quality criteria	Conventional benchmarks of "rigor": internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity		Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance and misapprehensions; action stimulus	Trustworthiness and authenticity including catalyst for action	Congruence of experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical knowing; leads to action to transform the world in the service of human flourishing
Values	Excluded—influence denied		Included—formative		
Ethics	Extrinsic—tilt toward deception		Intrinsic—moral tilt toward revelation	Intrinsic—process tilt toward revelation	
Inquirer posture	"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	Primary voice manifest through aware self-reflective action; secondary voices in illuminating theory, narrative, movement, song, dance, and other presentational forms
Training	Technical and quantitative; substantive theories	Technical; quantitative and qualitative; substantive theories	Resocialization; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism, empowerment, and liberation		Coresearchers are initiated into the inquiry process by facilitator/researcher and learn through active engagement in the process; facilitator/researcher requires emotional competence, democratic personality and skills

^a. Entries in this column are based on Heron and Reason (1997), except for "ethics" and "values."

In all cases except inquirer posture, the entries for the participatory paradigm are those proposed by Heron and Reason; in the one case not covered by them, we have added a notation that we believe captures their intention. We make no attempt here to reprise the material well discussed in our earlier

handbook chapter. Instead, we focus primarily on the issues in [Table 5.4](#): axiology; accommodation and commensurability; action; control; foundations of truth and knowledge; validity; and voice, reflexivity, and postmodern textual representation. In addition, we take up the issues of cumulation and mixed methods since both prompt some controversy and friendly debate within the qualitative camp. We believe these issues to be the most important at this time. While we believe these issues to be the most contentious, we also believe they create the intellectual, theoretical, and practical space for dialogue, consensus, and confluence to occur. There is great potential for interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing, or *bricolage*, where borrowing seems useful, richness-enhancing, or theoretically heuristic. For instance, even though we are ourselves social constructivists or constructionists, our call to action embedded in the authenticity criteria we elaborated in *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) reflects strongly the bent to action embodied in critical theorists' and participatory action research perspectives well outlined in the earlier editions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). And although Heron and Reason have elaborated a model they call the *cooperative paradigm*, careful reading of their proposal reveals a form of inquiry that is postpositive, postmodern, and criticalist in orientation.

As a result, the reader familiar with several theoretical and paradigmatic strands of research will find that echoes of many streams of thought come together in the extended table. What this means is that the categories, as Laurel Richardson (personal communication, September 12, 1998) has pointed out, "are fluid, indeed what should be a category keeps altering, enlarging." She notes that "even as [we] write, the boundaries between the paradigms are shifting." This is the paradigmatic equivalent of the Geertzian "blurring of genres" to which we referred earlier, and we regard this blurring and shifting as emblematic of a dynamism that is critical if we are to see qualitative research begin to have an impact on policy formulation or on the redress of social ills.

Our own position is that of the constructionist camp, loosely defined. We do not believe that criteria for judging either "reality" or validity are absolutist (Bradley & Schaefer, 1998); rather, they are derived from community consensus regarding what is "real": what is useful and what has meaning (especially meaning for action and further steps) within that community, as well as for that particular piece of research (Lather, 2007; Lather & Smithies, 1997). We believe that a goodly portion of social phenomena consists of the meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around those

phenomena. The meaning-making activities themselves are of central interest to social constructionists and constructivists simply because it is the meaning-making, sense-making, attributional activities that shape action (or inaction). The meaning-making activities themselves can be changed when they are found to be incomplete, faulty (e.g., discriminatory, oppressive, or nonliberatory), or malformed (created from data that can be shown to be false). We have tried, however, to incorporate perspectives from other major nonpositivist paradigms. This is not a complete summation; space constraints prevent that. What we hope to do in this chapter is to acquaint readers with the larger currents, arguments, dialogues, and provocative writings and theorizing, the better to see perhaps what we ourselves do not even yet see: where and when confluence is possible, where constructive rapprochement might be negotiated, where voices are beginning to achieve some harmony.

Themes of Knowledge: Inquiry Aims, Ideals, Design, Procedures, and Methods					
	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical (+ Feminism + Race)	Constructivism (or Interpretivist)	Participatory (+ Postmodern)
	Realists, "hard science" researchers	A modified form of positivism	Create change, to the benefit of those oppressed by power	Gain understanding by interpreting subject perceptions	Transformation based on democratic participation between researcher and subject
A: Basic Beliefs (Metaphysics) of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms					
Ontology The worldviews and assumptions in which researchers operate in their search for new knowledge (Schwandt, 2007, p. 190). The study of things that exist and the study of what exists (Habeis, Lawson, & Martin, 2007). What is the nature of reality? (Creswell, 2007).	Belief in a single identifiable reality. There is a single truth that can be measured and studied. The purpose of research is to predict and control nature (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991; Merriam, Cahanella, & Baumgartner, 2007).	Recognize that nature can never fully be understood. There is a single reality, but we may not be able to fully understand what it is or how to get to it because of the hidden variables and a lack of absolutes in nature (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007).	Human nature operates in a world that is based on a struggle for power. This leads to interactions of privilege and oppression that can be based on race or ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, mental or physical abilities, or sexual preference (Barnal, 2002; Gross, 1982; Kigore, 2001).	Relativist: Realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Relativism: local and specific constructed and co-constructed realities (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 193). "Our individual personal reality—the way we think life is and the part we are to play in it—is self-created. We put together our own personal reality" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 73). Multiple realities exist and are dependent on the individual (Guba, 1990).	Participative reality: subjective-objective reality, co-created by mind and the surrounding cosmos (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195). Freedom from objectivity with a new understanding of relation between self and other (Hastings, 1994, p. 15). Socially constructed: similar to construction, but do not assume that rationality is a means to better knowledge (Kigore, 2003, p. 34). Subjective-objective reality: Knowers can only be known when known by other knowers. Worldview based on participation and participative realities (Heron & Reason, 1997).

				<p>"Metaphysics that embraces relativity" (Lincoln, 1995, p. 28).</p> <p>"We practice inquiries that make sense to the public and to those we study" (Preissle, 2006, p. 636).</p> <p>Assumes that reality as we know it is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>Epistemology</p> <p>The process of thinking. The relationship between what we know and what we see. The truths we seek and believe as researchers (Bernal, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lynham & Webb-Johnson, 2009; Pallas, 2001).</p>	<p>Belief in total objectivity. There is no reason to interact with who or what researchers study. Researchers should evaluate</p>	<p>Assume we can only approach male nature. Research and the statistics it produces provide a way to make a decision using incomplete data. Interaction with research subjects</p>	<p>Research is driven by the study of social structures, freedom and oppression, and power and control. Researchers believe that</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).</p> <p>Transactional/subjectivist: co-created findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195).</p>	<p>Holistic: "Replaces traditional relation between 'truth' and 'interpretation' in which the idea of truth antedates the idea of interpretation" (Hesholius, 1996, p. 15).</p> <p>Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with co-creators; extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; co-created findings (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195).</p>

A: Basic Beliefs (Metaphysical) of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms Continued					
<p>What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched? (Creswell, 2007).</p>	<p>only the scientific-rigour and not its impact on society or research subjects (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007).</p>	<p>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>the knowledge that is produced can change existing oppressive structures and remove oppression through empowerment (Merriam, 1991).</p>	<p>The philosophical belief that people construct their own understanding of reality; we construct meaning based on our interactions with our surroundings (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).</p> <p>"Social reality is a construction based upon the actor's frame of reference within the setting" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 80).</p> <p>Findings are due to the interaction between the researcher and the subject (Guba, 1996).</p> <p>"We cannot know the real without recognizing our own role as knowers" (Flax, 1990).</p> <p>"Simultaneously empirical, intersubjective, and process-oriented" (Flax, 1990).</p> <p>"We are studying ourselves: studying ourselves and others" (Preissle, 2006, p. 691).</p> <p>Assumes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. The investigator and the object of investigation are linked such that who we are and how we understand the world is a central part of how we understand ourselves, others, and the world (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).</p>	<p>Critical subjectivity. Understanding how we know what we know and the knowledge's consuming relations. Four ways of knowing: (I) experiential, (II) presentational, (III) propositional, and (IV) practical (Heron & Reason, 1997).</p>

				This means we are shaped by our lived experiences, and these will always come out in the knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our subjects.	
Methodology The process of how we seek out new knowledge. The principles of our inquiry and how inquiry should proceed (Schwandt, 2007, p. 190). What is the process of research? (Creswell, 2007).	Belief in the scientific method. Value a "gold standard" for making decisions. Grounded in the conventional hard sciences. Belief in the falsification principle (results and findings are true until disproved). Value data produced by studies that can be replicated (Merriam, 1991).	Researchers should attempt to approximate reality. Use of statistics is important to visually interpret our findings. Belief in the scientific method. Research is the effort to create new knowledge, seek scientific discovery. There is an attempt to ask more questions than positivists because of the unknown variables involved in research. There is a unifying method.	Dialogic/ Dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) Search for participatory research, which empowers the oppressed and supports social transformation and revolution (Merriam, 1991, p. 56).	Hermeneutic, dialectic: Individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with aim of generating one or a few constructions on which there is substantial consensus (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Hermeneutical, dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 195). Hermeneutical discussion (Geertz, 1972). Hermeneutics (interpretation, i.e., recognition and explanation of metaphors) and comparing and contrasting dialectics (resolving disagreements through rational discussion) (Guba, 1996). "Everyday consciousness of reality and its character-like quality pervade politics, the media, and literature" (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 70).	Political participation in collaborative action inquiry, primacy of the practical: use of language grounded in shared experiential context (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 195). Use deconstruction as a tool for questioning prevailing representations of learners and learning in the adult education literature; this discredits the false binaries that structure a communication and challenges the assertions of what is to be included or excluded as normal, right, or good (Kügler, 2021, p. 54). Experiential knowing is through face-to-face learning, learning new knowledge through the application of the knowledge. Democratization and co-creation of both content and method. Engage together in democratic dialogue as co-researchers and as co-subjects (Heron & Reason, 1997).

A. Basic Beliefs (Metaphysical) of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms Continued					
		Distance the researcher to gain objectivity. Use the hypothetical deductive method—hypothesize, deduce, and generalize. (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991; Merriam et al., 2007).		"The construction of realities must depend on some form of consensual language" (Guba & Lincoln, 1995, p. 71). "Stock taking and speculations regarding the future nevertheless help us comprehend the past and the present and aid our choices for the futures we desire" (Preissle, 2004, p. 684). Interpretive approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods (interviewing and observation and analysis of existing texts. (Angen, 2008). These methods ensure an adequate dialog between the researchers and those with whom they interact in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality (Angen, 2008). Generally, meanings are emergent from the research process (Angen, 2008). Typically, qualitative methods are used (Angen, 2008). Hermeneutic Cycle: Actions lead to collection of data, which leads to interpretation of data which spurs action based on data. (Cline-reflex, 2008)	

Themes of Knowledge: Inquiry Aims, Ideals, Design, Procedures, and Methods					
	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical (+ Feminist + Race)	Constructivism (or Interpretivist)	Participatory (+ Postmodern)
9. Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues					
Inquiry aim The goals of research and the reason why inquiry is conducted. What are the goals and the knowledge we seek? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Research should be geared toward the prediction and control of natural phenomena. Demonstrate laws that can be applied to natural order.	Researchers attempt to get as close to the answer as possible. Cannot fully attain reality but can approximate it.	Aim of inquiry is to find the social power structure in an attempt to discover the truth as it relates to social power struggles (Giroux, 1982; Merriam, 1991). Transformation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Stimulate oppressed people to rationally scrutinize all aspects of their lives to recorder their collective existence on the basis of the understanding it provides, which will ultimately change social policy and practice (Fag, 1987).	To understand and interpret through meaning of phenomena (estrained from the joint construction) reconstruction of meaning of lived experience; such understanding is sought to inform praxis (improved practice). Understanding/reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Consensus toward understanding of culture (Geertz, 1973). Scientific generalizations may not fit in solving all problems (Guba, 1996). An approach needed to fill in the gaps between theory and practice (Guba, 1996). The essential message of hermeneutics is that to be human is to mean, and only by investigating the multifaceted nature of human meaning can we approach the understanding of people (Jesselson, 1995).	What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it? What is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known? How can the inquirer... go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known about? What is intrinsically valuable in human life, in particular what sort of knowledge, if any, is intrinsically valuable? (Heron & Reason, 1997).

B. Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues Continued					
Nature of knowledge How researchers view the knowledge that is generated through inquiry research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Hypothesis is verified as fact.	There is a correct single truth, which may have multiple hidden values and variables that prevent ever fully knowing the answer.	Knowledge is viewed as "subjective, emancipatory, and productive of fundamental social change" (Merriam, 1991, p. 53). Rationality is a means to better knowledge. Knowledge is a logical outcome of human interests (Bilgore, 2001). Structural/ historical insights (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Believe knowledge is socially constructed and takes the form in the eyes of the knower rather than being formulated from an existing reality (Bilgore, 2001, p. 51).	The constructed meanings of actors are the foundation of knowledge. Individual and collective reconstructions sometimes coalescing around consensus (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Collective reconstruction coalescing around consensus on meaning of culture (Geertz, 1973). People construct their own understanding of reality (Guba, 1996). "Realities are taken to exist in the form of multiple mental constructions that are socially and experientially based, local and specific, and dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27). Knowledge is cognitively constructed from experience and interaction of the individual with others and the environment (Class Notes, 2008). Subjective and co-created through the process of interaction between the inquirer and the inquired into (Class Notes, 2008). Knowledge is socially constructed, not discovered (Class Notes, 2008). "Observing dialogue allows us to construct a meta-narrative of whole people, not reducing people to parts, but recognizing in the interplay of	Believe knowledge is socially constructed and takes the form in the eyes of the knower rather than being formulated from an existing reality (Bilgore, 2001, p. 51). Extended epistemology: primacy of practical knowing; critical subjectivity; living knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Experiential participation. Propositional knowing. Subjective-objective reality. Practical knowing is knowing how to do something, demonstrated in a skill or competence (Heron & Reason, 1997). The constructed meanings of actors are the foundation of knowledge. Individual and collective reconstructions sometimes coalescing around consensus (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Collective reconstruction coalescing around consensus on meaning of culture (Geertz, 1973). People construct their own understanding of reality (Guba, 1996). "Realities are taken to exist in the form of multiple mental constructions that are socially and experientially based, local and specific, and dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27).

				parts the essence of wholeness. Only then can we begin to imagine the real" (Josselson, 1995, p. 420).	Knowledge is cognitively constructed from experience and interaction of the individual with others and the environment (Epistemology Class Notes). Subjective and co-created through the process of interaction between the inquirer and the inquired into. (Epistemology Class Notes) Knowledge is socially constructed, not discovered (Epistemology class notes)
Knowledge accumulation How does knowledge build off prior knowledge to develop a better understanding of the subject or field? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Seek to find cause-and-effect linkages that can build into a better understanding of the field. This can become law over time through use of the scientific method (Merriam, 1991).	Use statistics and other techniques to get as close as possible to reality. Although it can never be attained, approximations of reality can be made to develop further understanding.	Knowledge accumulation is based on historical perspective and revision of how history is viewed so that it no longer serves as an oppressive tool by those with structural power (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). "Since the 1980s, for example, qualitative inquiry has been much influenced by the poststructural and postmodern developments from the arts and the humanities. These bring a sensitivity to language, especially to linguistic assumptions embedded in disciplinary terminology (e.g. Schaeffer, 1996) that has challenged scholars working in post-positivist, interpretive, and critical traditions" (Preissle, 2006, p. 688).	In communities of inquiry embedded in communities of practice (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). "Mind's conceptual articulation of the world is grounded in its experiential participation in what is present, in what there is . . . Experiential knowing consists of symbolic frameworks of conceptual, propositional knowing" (Heron & Reason, 1997, pp. 277-278).

B: Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues Continued					
Goodness or quality criteria How researchers judge the quality of inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Rigorous data produced through scientific research.	Statistical confidence level and objectivity in data produced through inquiry.	The value is found in the erosion of unearned privileges and its ability to impart action for the creation of a more fair society (Giroux, 1992; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Inter-subjective agreement and reasoning among actors, reached through dialogue; shared conversation and construction. Trustworthiness and authenticity, including catalyst for action (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). "To interrogate objectivity and subjectivity and their relationship to one another" (Preissle, 2006, p. 690).	Congruence of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; leads to action to transform the world in the service of human flourishing (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). Inter-subjective agreement and reasoning among actors, reached through dialogue; shared conversation and construction. Trustworthiness and authenticity, including catalyst for action (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). "To interrogate objectivity and subjectivity and their relationship to one another" (Preissle, 2006, p. 691).
Values What do researchers seek as important products within inquiry research? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Standards-based research; Value is found in the scientific method. Gold standard is scientific rigor.	Can find useful information even if data are incomplete and contain hidden values.	Included, formative (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Researchers seek data that can be transformative and useful in imparting social justice (Giroux, 1992). Value is found in the reasoned reflection and the change in practice (Creswell, 2007).	Are personally relative and need to be understood. Inseparable from the inquiry and outcomes (Class Notes, 2008). Included, formative (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194).	Included, formative (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Values are personally relative and need to be understood (Epistemology Class Notes).

			Values of research produced should include national self-clarity, collective autonomy, happiness, justice, bodily pleasure, play, love, aesthetic self-expression, and other values within these primary values (Fig, 1983).		
Themes of Knowledge: Inquiry Aims, Issues, Design, Procedures, and Methods					
	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical (+ Feminist + Racial)	Constructivism (+ Intergrativist)	Participatory (+ Postmodern)
B: Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues Continued					
Ethics					
The interaction and relationship between the researcher and the subject as well as the effect inquiry research has on populations (Schwandt, 2007).	Belief that the data drive the side effects of any research. The effort is to study nature, not to influence how nature affects populations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Attempt to be as statistically accurate in their interpretation of reality as possible. Effect on others is not taken into account because research is driven to gain accuracy, not influence populations.	Frankfurt School of thought: Research is tied to a specific interest in the development of a society without injustice (Giroux, 1982).	Intrinsic: process tilt toward revelation; special problems (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). Included in all aspects of inquiry and examination of culture (Geertz, 1973).	Intrinsic: process tilt toward revelation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196). Included in all aspects of inquiry and examination of culture (Geertz, 1973).

B: Paradigm Positions on Selected Practical Issues Continued					
Voice					
Who narrates the research that is produced? Qualitative approach: The ability to present the researcher's material along with the story of the research subject (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). What is the language of research? (Creswell, 2007).	The data speak for themselves. Consistent findings from inquiry leads to the researcher being disinterested in effect (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Researchers are to inform populations using the data produced through their inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	The data are created with the intent of producing social change and imparting a social justice that leads to equal rights for all (Giroux, 1982). (Advocate/ Activist).	"Passionate participant" as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Facilitator of multivoice reconstruction of culture (Geertz, 1973). This means that while critical theorists attempt to get involved in their research to change the power structure, researchers in this paradigm attempt to gain increased knowledge regarding their study and subjects by interpreting how the subjects perceive and interact within a social context.	"Passionate participant" as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Facilitator of multivoice reconstruction of culture (Geertz, 1973).
Training					
How are researchers prepared to conduct inquiry research?	Researchers are trained in a technical and very quantitative way (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Prescribe scientific method.	Researchers are trained in a technical and very quantitative way but also have the ability to conduct mixed-methods research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Researchers are trained using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. They study history and social science to understand empowerment and liberation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Resocialization; qualitative and quantitative; history, values of altruism, empowerment, and liberation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196).	Co-researchers are initiated into the inquiry process by facilitator/ researcher and learn through active engagement in the process; facilitator/ researcher requires emotional competence, democratic personality, and skills (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196).
Inquirer posture					
The point of view in which the researcher operates. How does the	Disinterested scientist. Researchers should remain distant from the	Researchers are removed from the process, but concerned about its results.	The researcher serves as an activist and a transformative intellectual. The researcher understands a way	A co-creator of knowledge, of understanding and interpretation of the meaning of lived experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196).	Primary voice manifested through aware self-reflective action; secondary voices in illuminating theory, narrative, movement, song, dance, and other presentational forms (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 196).

researcher approach the inquiry process? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	change process and should not attempt to influence decisions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	of producing a fair society through social justice (Bernal, 2002); Giroux, 1982; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1993).		Can include alternative forms of data representation including film and ethnography (Eaton, 1997).
Accommodation What needs are provided by the inquiry research? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Commensurable: Research has a common unit for study and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194).	Commensurable: Research has a common unit for study and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194).	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).	Incommensurable with positivist and postpositivist; 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).	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).
Hegemony The influence researchers have on others. Who has the power in inquiry and what is required. Presenting definition of reality (Kilgore, 2001).	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.	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).	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).	Seeks recognition and input, offers challenges to preexisting paradigms, aligned with postcolonial aspirations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 194). Postcolonial is in reference to theories that deal with the cultural legacy of colonial rule (Bandhi, 1998).	Power is a factor in what and how we know (Kilgore, 2001, p. 51).

Themes of Knowledge: Inquiry Aims, Ideals, Design, Procedures, and Methods					
	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical (= Feminist + Racial)	Constructivism (= Interpretivist)	Participatory (= Postmodern)
Critical Issues of the Time					
Axiology How researchers act based on the research they produce—also the criteria of values and value judgments especially in ethics (Merriam-Webster, 1997). What is the role of values? (Creswell, 2007).	Researchers should remain distant from the subject so their actions are not have influence on populations—only the laws their inquiry produces (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	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 reality (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Researchers seek to change existing education as well as other social institutions' policies and practice (Bernal, 2002). Attempt to conduct research to improve social justice and remove barriers and other negative influences associated with social oppression (Bernal, 1982).	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). Emancipatory, but longer term, more reflective versus critical theory's desire for immediate results. "Intellectual digestion"	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). What is the purpose for which we create reality? To change the world or participation implies engagement, which implies responsibility. In terms of human flourishing, social practices and institutions need to enforce human associations by integration of these three principles; deciding for others with others and for oneself (Heron & Reason, 1997).
Accommodation and commensurability Can the paradigm accommodate other types of inquiry? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005)	According to Guba and Lincoln, all positivist forms are commensurable. The data.	According to Guba and Lincoln, all positivist forms are commensurable.	There is a priority or rank order to data created by different forms of research. Because critical	Incommensurable with positivistic forms; some commensurability with constructivist, criticalist, and participatory approaches, especially as they merge in liberationist approaches outside the West (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).	Incommensurable with positivistic forms; some commensurability with constructivist, criticalist, and participatory approaches, especially as they merge in liberationist approaches outside the West (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).

Can the results of inquiry accommodate each other? (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Can the paradigms be merged together to make an overarching paradigm? (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).	produced are equal in measure to all other data created (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	The data produced are equal in measure to all other data created (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	researchers want to transform society, critical theory data must come before all other forms. Incommensurable with empirical-analytical epistemologies and accommodates different forms of research paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Skrivic, 1993).	Commensurable with other modern paradigms; exceptions attempt to understand a problem, but not transform (effect a change). Accommodates critical and participatory approaches to understanding of culture (Geertz, 1972). "Qualitative inquiry is composed of multiple and overlapping communities of practice. Many qualitative inquirers are members of several of these communities" (Preissle, 2004, p. 692).	
Action What is produced as a result of the inquiry process beyond the data? How does society use the knowledge generated? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Researchers are to remain strictly objective, therefore do not concern themselves with the action that is produced as a result of inquiry research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).	Researchers are to remain strictly objective, therefore do not concern themselves with the action that is produced as a result of inquiry research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).	The research produced is to impart social change, change how people think, or serve as an examination of human existence (Dreswell, 2007).	Intertwined with validity, inquiry often incomplete without action on the part of participants; constructivist formulation mandates training in political action if participants do not understand political systems (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Must act to be valid or trustworthy. If do not educate participants to act appropriately politically, could actually cause harm to them (accountability in research). Encourages readers to consider the findings presented and understanding of culture that is offered (Geertz, 1972).	Intertwined with validity; inquiry often incomplete without action on the part of participants; constructivist formulation mandates training in political action if participants do not understand political systems (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198).

C: Critical Issues at the Time Continued					
				According to my understanding of the readings, researchers must understand the social context and the culture in which the data are produced to accurately reflect what the data actually mean to the study.	
Control Who dictates how the research is produced and used? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), the control is conducted by the researchers without the input and/or concern of the participants and/or society as a whole.	According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), the control is conducted by the researchers without the input and/or concern of the participants and/or society as a whole.	Critical race theory and critical race/gendered epistemologies demonstrate that within the critical paradigm, control can be shared by the researcher and the subject, and ultimately the subject can have a say in how the research is conducted (Bernal, 2002).	Shared between inquirer and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Without equal or co-equal control, research cannot be carried out.	Shared between inquirer and participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Without equal or co-equal control, research cannot be carried out. Knowledge is an expression of power (Kügers, 2001, p. 59).
Themes of Knowledge: Inquiry Aims, Issues, Design, Procedures, and Methods					
	Postmodern	Postpositivism	Critical (= Feminist + Race)	Constructivism (= Interpretivist)	Participatory (= Postmodern)
C: Critical Issues at the Time Continued					
Relationships to foundations of truth and knowledge Helps make meaning and significance of components.	Postivists believe there is only one truth or reality. Knowledge is the	Postpositivists believe in a single reality; however, they also believe	The foundation of the critical paradigm is found in the struggle for	Anti-foundational (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Refusal to adopt any permanent standards by which truth can be universally known.	Knowledge is founded in transformation and experience as demonstrated through shared research inquiry between the researcher and subject(s) (Epistemology Class Notes).

explicit (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	understanding and control over nature.	it will never fully be understood. Knowledge is the attempt to approximate reality and get as close to truth as possible.	equality and social justice, and social science demonstrates the oppression of people. Knowledge is an attempt to emancipate the oppressed and improve human condition (Fay, 1987).	According to the readings, no approach inquiry from a constructivist viewpoint is to yield to multiple perspectives of the same data.	Knowledge is tentative, multifaceted, not necessarily rational (Kilgore, 2001, p. 59).
Extended considerations of validity (goodness criteria) Bringing ethics and epistemology together (the moral trajectory) (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Validity is found in "gold standard" data, data that can be proven and replicated.	Validity is found in data that can be analyzed and studied using statistical tests. Data can be an approximation of reality.	Validity is found when research creates action for action research or participatory research, which creates the capacity for positive social change and emancipatory community action (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1991).	Extended constructions of validity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Validity is a construct of the development of consensus. Based on participants and inquiry. "Assessment of any particular piece of research, then, may depend on very general expectations, on criteria tailored to the subcategory of approach and on emergent expectations that vary in all areas as the methodology itself changes" (Preissle, 2006, p. 691).	Extended constructions of validity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Validity is found in the ability of the knowledge to become transformative according to the findings of the experiences of the subjects (Epistemology Class Notes).

G: Critical Issues of the Time Continued					
				Based on this assessment of validity, can it be argued that all data are valid because what may not have meaning to one person could be the foundation of all truth to another? Taking this 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?	
Voice, reflexivity, postmodern textual representations 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). Reflexivity: The process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, "the human instrument" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Only the researcher has a voice; any effort to include the voice of the participants would impact objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Only the researcher has a voice; any effort to include the voice of the participants would impact objectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	The researcher has a voice, but also impacts 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 (Barnet, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).	Voices mixed with participants' voices sometimes dominant; reflexivity serious and problematic; textual representation and extended issue (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 198). Voices mixed, with participants' voices sometimes dominant. Reflexivity is serious and problematic. Researchers do not wish to give direction to study. 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).	Voices mixed; textual representation rarely discussed but problematic; reflexivity relies on critical subjectivity and self-awareness (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 199). Textual: 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).

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). Whose voices are heard in the research produced through the inquiry process? Whose views are presenting and/ or producing the data? (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).					
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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.

Axiology

Earlier, we placed values on the table as an "issue" on which positivists or phenomenologists might have a "posture" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Fortunately, we reserved for ourselves the right to either get smarter or just change our minds. We did both. Now, we suspect that *axiology* should be grouped with basic beliefs. In *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), we covered some of the ways in which values feed into the inquiry process: choice of the problem, choice of paradigm to guide the problem, choice of theoretical framework, choice of major data-gathering and data-analytic methods, choice of context, treatment of values already resident issue within the context, and choice of format(s) for presenting findings. We believed those were strong enough reasons to argue for the inclusion of values as a major point of departure between positivist, conventional modes of inquiry and interpretive forms of inquiry. A second reading of the burgeoning literature and subsequent rethinking of our own rationale have led us to conclude that the issue is much larger than we first conceived. If we had it to do all over again, we would make values or, more correctly, axiology (the branch of philosophy dealing with ethics, aesthetics, and religion) a part of the basic foundational philosophical dimensions of paradigm proposal. Doing so would, in our opinion, begin to help us see the embeddedness of ethics within, not external to, paradigms (see, e.g., Christians, 2000) and would contribute to the consideration of and dialogue

about the role of spirituality in human inquiry. Arguably, axiology has been “defined out” of scientific inquiry for no larger a reason than that it also concerns religion. But defining religion broadly to encompass spirituality would move constructivists closer to participative inquirers and would move critical theorists closer to both (owing to their concern with liberation from oppression and freeing of the human spirit, both profoundly spiritual concerns). The expansion of basic issues to include axiology, then, is one way of achieving greater confluence among the various interpretivist inquiry models. This is the place, for example, where Peter Reason’s (1993) profound concerns with “sacred science” and human functioning find legitimacy; it is a place where Richardson’s (1994) “sacred spaces” become authoritative sites for human inquiry; it is a place—or *the* place—where the spiritual meets social inquiry, as Reason (1993), and later Lincoln and Denzin (1994), proposed some years earlier.

Accommodation, Commensurability, and Cumulation

Positivists and postpositivists alike still occasionally argue that paradigms are, in some ways, commensurable; that is, they can be retrofitted to each other in ways that make the simultaneous practice of both possible. We have argued that at the paradigmatic or philosophical level, commensurability between positivist and constructivist worldviews is not possible, but that within each paradigm, mixed methodologies (strategies) may make perfectly good sense (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, 1982, 1989, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). So, for instance, in *Effective Evaluation* (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), we argued:

The guiding inquiry paradigm most appropriate to responsive evaluation is ... the naturalistic, phenomenological, or ethnographic paradigm. It will be seen that qualitative techniques are typically most appropriate to support this approach. There are times, however, when the issues and concerns voiced by audiences require information that is best generated by more conventional methods, especially quantitative methods.... In such cases, the responsive conventional evaluator will not shrink from the appropriate application. (p. 36)

As we tried to make clear, the “argument” arising in the social sciences was *not about method*, although many critics of the new naturalistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, or case study approaches assumed it was.² As late as

1998, Weiss could be found to claim that “some evaluation theorists, notably Guba and Lincoln (1989), hold that it is impossible to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches responsibly within an evaluation” (p. 268), even though we stated early on in *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (1989) that those claims, concerns, and issues that have *not* been resolved become the advance organizers for information collection by the evaluator: “The information may be quantitative or qualitative. Responsive evaluation does not rule out quantitative modes, as is mistakenly believed by many, but deals with whatever information is responsive to the unresolved claim, concern, or issue” (p. 43).

We had also strongly asserted earlier, in *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985), that

qualitative methods are stressed within the naturalistic paradigm not because the paradigm is antiquantitative but because qualitative methods come more easily to the human-as-instrument. *The reader should particularly note the absence of an antiquantitative stance*, precisely because the naturalistic and conventional paradigms are so often—mistakenly—equated with the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, respectively. Indeed, *there are many opportunities for the naturalistic investigator to utilize quantitative data—probably more than are appreciated*. (pp. 198–199, emphases added)

Having demonstrated that we were not then (and are not now) talking about an antiquantitative posture or the exclusivity of *methods*, but rather about the philosophies of which paradigms are constructed, we can ask the question again regarding commensurability: Are paradigms commensurable? Is it possible to blend elements of one paradigm into another, so that one is engaging in research that represents the best of both worldviews? The answer, from our perspective, has to be a cautious yes. This is so if the models (paradigms, integrated philosophical systems) share axiomatic elements that are similar or that resonate strongly. So, for instance, *positivism* and *postpositivism* (as proposed by Phillips, 2006) are clearly commensurable. In the same vein, elements of *interpretivist/postmodern*, critical theory, constructivist, and participative inquiry fit comfortably together. Commensurability is an issue only when researchers want to “pick and choose” among the axioms of positivist and interpretivist models because the axioms are contradictory and mutually exclusive. Ironically enough, the National Research Council’s 2002 report, when defining their take on science, made this very point clearly and forcefully for us. Positivism (their stance)

and interpretivism (our stance) are not commensurable.

Cumulation

The argument is frequently made that one of the problems with qualitative research is that it is not cumulative, that is, it cannot be aggregated in such a way as to make larger understandings or policy formulations possible. We would argue this is not the case. Beginning with the Lucas (1974, 1976) case study aggregation analyses, developed at Rand Corporation in the 1970s, researchers have begun to think about ways in which similar studies, carried out via qualitative methods with similar populations or in similar contexts, might be cumulated into meta-analyses, especially for policy purposes. This is now a far more readily available methodology with the advent of large databases manageable on computers. Although the techniques have not, we would argue, been tested extensively, it would seem that cumulation of a growing body of qualitative research is now within our grasp. That makes the criticisms of the non-cumulativeness of qualitative research less viable now, or even meaningless.

The Call to Action

One of the clearest ways in which the paradigmatic controversies can be demonstrated is to compare the positivist and postpositivist adherents, who view action as a form of contamination of research results and processes, and the interpretivists, who see action on research results as a meaningful and important outcome of inquiry processes. Positivist adherents believe action to be either a form of advocacy or a form of subjectivity, either or both of which undermine the aim of objectivity. Critical theorists, on the other hand, have always advocated varying degrees of social action, from the overturning of specific unjust practices to radical transformation of entire societies (Giroux, 1982). The call for action—whether in terms of internal transformation, such as ridding oneself of false consciousness, or of external social transformation (in the form, for instance, of extended social justice)—differentiates between positivist and postmodern criticalist theorists (including feminist and queer theorists). The sharpest shift, however, has been in the constructivist and participatory phenomenological models, where a step beyond interpretation and *verstehen*, or understanding, toward social action is probably one of the most conceptually interesting of the shifts (Lincoln, 1997, 1998a, 1998b).

For some theorists, the shift toward action came in response to widespread nonutilization of evaluation findings and the desire to create forms of

evaluation that would attract champions who might follow through on recommendations with meaningful action plans (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, 1989). For others, embracing action came as both a political and an ethical commitment (see, e.g., Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Christians, 2000; Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Schratz & Walker, 1995; Tierney, 2000). Whatever the source of the problem to which inquirers were responding, the shift toward connecting action with research, policy analysis, evaluation, and social deconstruction (e.g., deconstruction of the patriarchal forms of oppression in social structures, which is the project informing much feminist theorizing, or deconstruction of the homophobia embedded in public policies) has come to characterize much new-paradigm inquiry work, both at the theoretical and at the practice and *praxis-oriented* levels. Action has become a major controversy that limns the ongoing debates among practitioners of the various paradigms. The mandate for social action, especially action designed and created by and for research participants with the aid and cooperation of researchers, can be most sharply delineated between positivist/postpositivist and new-paradigm inquirers. Many positivist and postpositivist inquirers still consider action the domain of communities other than researchers and research participants: those of policy personnel, legislators, and civic and political officials. Hard-line foundationalists presume that the taint of action will interfere with or even negate the objectivity that is a (presumed) characteristic of rigorous scientific method inquiry.

Control

Another controversy that has tended to become problematic centers on *control* of the study: Who initiates? Who determines salient questions? Who determines what constitutes findings? Who determines how data will be collected? Who determines in what forms the findings will be made public, if at all? Who determines what representations will be made of participants in the research? Let us be very clear: The issue of control is deeply embedded in the questions of voice, reflexivity, and issues of postmodern textual representation, which we shall take up later, *but only for new-paradigm inquirers*. For more conventional inquirers, the issue of control is effectively walled off from voice, reflexivity, and issues of textual representation because each of those issues in some way threatens claims to rigor (particularly objectivity and validity). For new-paradigm inquirers who have seen the preeminent paradigm issues of ontology and epistemology effectively folded into one another, and who have watched as methodology and axiology logically folded into one another (Lincoln, 1995, 1997), control of an inquiry seems far less problematic, except insofar as inquirers seek to obtain

participants' genuine participation (see, e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1981, on contracting and attempts to get some stakeholding groups to do more than stand by while an evaluation is in progress). Critical theorists, especially those who work in community organizing programs, are painfully aware of the necessity for members of the community or research participants to take control of their futures (see, e.g., Lather, 2007). Constructivists desire participants to take an increasingly active role in nominating questions of interest for any inquiry and in designing outlets for findings to be shared more widely within and outside the community. Participatory inquirers understand action controlled by the local context members to be the aim of inquiry within a community. For none of these paradigmatic adherents is control an issue of advocacy, a somewhat deceptive term usually used as a code within a larger metanarrative to attack an inquiry's rigor, objectivity, or fairness.

Rather, for new-paradigm researchers, control is a means of fostering emancipation, democracy, and community empowerment and of redressing power imbalances such that those who were previously marginalized now achieve voice (Mertens, 1998) or "human flourishing" (Heron & Reason, 1997). Control as a controversy is an excellent place to observe the phenomenon that we have always termed "Catholic questions directed to a Methodist audience:" We use this description—given to us by a workshop participant in the early 1980s—to refer to the ongoing problem of illegitimate questions: questions that have no meaning because the frames of reference are those for which they were never intended. (We could as well call these "Hindu questions to a Muslim" to give another sense of how paradigms, or overarching philosophies—or theologies—are incommensurable, and how questions in one framework make little, if any, sense in another.) Paradigmatic formulations interact such that control becomes inextricably intertwined with mandates for objectivity. Objectivity derives from the Enlightenment prescription for knowledge of the physical world, which is postulated to be separate and distinct from those who would know (Polkinghorne, 1989). But if knowledge of the social (as opposed to the physical) world resides in meaning-making mechanisms of the social, mental, and linguistic worlds that individuals inhabit, then knowledge cannot be separate from the knower but rather is rooted in his or her mental or linguistic designations of that world (Polkinghorne, 1989; Salner, 1989).

Foundations of Truth and Knowledge in Paradigms

Whether or not the world has a "real" existence outside of human experience of that world is an open question. For modernist (i.e., Enlightenment,

scientific method, conventional, positivist) researchers, most assuredly there is a “real” reality “out there,” apart from the flawed human apprehension of it. Furthermore, that reality can be approached (approximated) only through the utilization of methods that prevent human contamination of its apprehension or comprehension. For foundationalists in the empiricist tradition, the foundations of scientific truth and knowledge about reality reside in rigorous application of testing phenomena against a template as devoid as instrumentally possible of human bias, misperception, and other “idols” (Francis Bacon, cited in Polkinghorne, 1989). As Donald Polkinghorne (1989) makes clear:

The idea that the objective realm is independent of the knower’s subjective experiences of it can be found in Descartes’s dual substance theory, with its distinction between the objective and subjective realms.... In the splitting of reality into subject and object realms, what can be known “objectively” is only the objective realm. True knowledge is limited to the objects and the relationships between them that exist in the realm of time and space. Human consciousness, which is subjective, is not accessible to science, and thus not truly knowable. (p. 23)

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 truth can be universally known. As one of us has argued, truth—and any agreement regarding what is valid knowledge—arises from the relationship between members of some stakeholding community (Lincoln, 1995). Agreements about truth may be the subject of community *negotiations* regarding what will be accepted as truth (although there are difficulties with that formulation as well; Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Or agreements may eventuate as the result of a *dialogue* that moves arguments about truth claims or validity past the warring camps of objectivity and relativity toward “a communal test of validity through the argumentation of the participants in a discourse” (Bernstein, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1989; Schwandt, 1996). This “communicative and pragmatic concept” of validity (Rorty, 1979) is never fixed or unvarying. Rather, it is created by means of a community narrative, itself subject to the temporal and historical conditions that gave rise to the community. Thomas A. Schwandt (1989) has also argued that these

discourses, or community narratives, can and should be bounded by moral considerations, a premise grounded in the emancipatory narratives of the critical theorists, the philosophical pragmatism of Richard Rorty, the democratic focus of constructivist inquiry, and the “human flourishing” goals of participatory and cooperative inquiry.

The controversies around foundationalism (and, to a lesser extent, essentialism) are not likely to be resolved through dialogue between paradigm adherents. The likelier event is that the “postmodern turn” (Best & Kellner, 1997), with its emphasis on the social construction of social reality, fluid as opposed to fixed identities of the self, and the partiality of all truths, will simply overtake modernist assumptions of an objective reality, as indeed, to some extent, it has already done in the physical sciences. We might predict that, if not in our lifetimes, at some later time, the dualist idea of an objective reality suborned by limited human subjective realities will seem as quaint as flat-earth theories do to us today.

Validity: An Extended Agenda

Nowhere can the conversation about paradigm differences be more fertile than in the extended controversy about validity (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990; Kvale, 1989, 1994; Ryan, Greene, Lincoln, Mathison, & Mertens, 1998; Scheurich, 1994, 1996). Validity is not like objectivity. There are fairly strong theoretical, philosophical, and pragmatic rationales for examining the concept of objectivity and finding it wanting. Even within positivist frameworks, it is viewed as conceptually flawed. But validity is a more irritating construct, one neither easily dismissed nor readily configured by new-paradigm practitioners (Angen, 2000; Enerstvedt, 1989; Tschudi, 1989). Validity cannot be dismissed simply because it points to a question that has to be answered in one way or another: Are these findings sufficiently authentic (isomorphic to some reality, trustworthy, related to the way others construct their social worlds) that I may trust myself in acting on their implications? More to the point, would I feel sufficiently secure about these findings to construct social policy or legislation based on them? At the same time, radical reconfigurations of validity leave researchers with multiple, sometimes conflicting, mandates for what constitutes rigorous research. One of the issues around validity is the conflation between method and interpretation. The postmodern turn suggests that no method can deliver on ultimate truth and, in fact, “suspects all methods,” the more so the larger their claims to delivering on truth (Richardson, 1994). Thus, although one might argue that some methods are more suited than others for conducting research on human

construction of social realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), no one would argue that a single method—or collection of methods—is the royal road to ultimate knowledge. In new-paradigm inquiry, however, it is not merely method that promises to deliver on some set of local or context-grounded truths; it is also the processes of interpretation.

Thus, we have two arguments proceeding simultaneously. The first, borrowed from positivism, argues for a kind of rigor in the application of method, whereas the second argues for both a community consent and a form of rigor-defensible reasoning, plausible alongside some other reality that is known to author and reader in ascribing salience to one interpretation over another and in framing and bounding the interpretive study itself. Prior to our understanding that there were, indeed, two forms of rigor, we assembled a set of methodological criteria, largely borrowed from an earlier generation of thoughtful anthropological and sociological methodological theorists. Those methodological criteria are still useful for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that they ensure that such issues as prolonged engagement and persistent observation are attended to with some seriousness.

It is the second kind of rigor, however, that has received the most attention in recent writings: Are we *interpretively* rigorous? Can our co-created constructions be trusted to provide some purchase on some important human phenomenon? Do our findings point to action that can be taken on the part of research participants to benefit themselves or their particular social contexts?

Human phenomena are themselves the subject of controversy. Classical social scientists would like to see *human phenomena* limited to those social experiences from which (scientific) generalizations may be drawn. New-paradigm inquirers, however, are increasingly concerned with the single experience, the individual crisis, the epiphany or moment of discovery, with that most powerful of all threats to conventional objectivity, feeling, and emotion and to action. Social scientists concerned with the expansion of what count as social data rely increasingly on the experiential, the embodied, the emotive qualities of human experience, which contribute the narrative quality to a life. Sociologists such as Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner (2000) and Richardson (2000), qualitative researchers such as Ronald Pelias (1999, 2004), and psychologists such as Michelle Fine (see Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000) and Ellis (2009) concern themselves with various forms of autoethnography and personal experience and performance methods, both to overcome the abstractions of a social science far gone with quantitative descriptions of human life and to capture those elements that make life conflictual, moving, and problematic. For purposes of this discussion, we

believe the adoption of the most radical definitions of social science is appropriate because the paradigmatic controversies are often taking place at the edges of those conversations. Those edges are where the border work is occurring, and accordingly, they are the places that show the most promise for projecting where qualitative methods will be in the near and far future.

Whither and Whether Criteria

At those edges, several conversations are occurring around validity. The first and most radical is a conversation opened by Schwandt (1996), who suggests that we say “farewell to criteriology” or the “regulative norms for removing doubt and settling disputes about what is correct or incorrect, true or false” (p. 59); this has created a virtual cult around criteria. Schwandt does not, however, himself say farewell to criteria forever; rather, he resituates and resuscitates social inquiry, with other contemporary philosophical pragmatists, within a framework that transforms professional social inquiry into a form of practical philosophy, characterized by “aesthetic, prudential, and moral considerations as well as more conventionally scientific ones” (p. 68). When social inquiry becomes the practice of a form of practical philosophy—a deep questioning about how we shall get on in the world and what we conceive to be the potentials and limits of human knowledge and functioning—then we have some preliminary understanding of what entirely different criteria might be for judging social inquiry.

Schwandt (1996) proposes three such criteria. First, he argues, we should search for a social inquiry that “generate[s] knowledge that complements or supplements rather than displac[ing] lay probing of social problems,” a form of knowledge for which we do not yet have the *content*, but from which we might seek to understand the aims of practice from a variety of perspectives, or with different lenses. Second, he proposes a “social inquiry as practical philosophy” that has as its aim “enhancing or cultivating *critical* intelligence in parties to the research encounter,” critical intelligence being defined as “the capacity to engage in moral critique.” And finally, he proposes a third way in which we might judge social inquiry as practical philosophy: We might make judgments about the social inquirer-as-practical-philosopher. He or she might be “evaluated on the success to which his or her reports of the inquiry enable the training or calibration of human judgment” (p. 69) or “the capacity for practical wisdom” (p. 70). Schwandt is not alone, however, in wishing to say “farewell to criteriology,” at least as it has been previously conceived. Scheurich (1997) makes a similar plea, and in the same vein, Smith (1993) also argues that validity, if it is to survive at all, must be radically reformulated if it is ever to serve phenomenological research well (see also

Smith & Deemer, 2000).

At issue here is not whether we shall have criteria, or whose criteria we as a scientific community might adopt, but rather what the nature of social inquiry ought to be, whether it ought to undergo a transformation, and what might be the basis for criteria within a projected transformation. Schwandt (1989; also personal communication, August 21, 1998) is quite clear that both the transformation and the criteria are rooted in dialogic efforts. These dialogic efforts are quite clearly themselves forms of “moral discourse”: Through the specific connections of the dialogic, the idea of practical wisdom, and moral discourses, much of Schwandt’s work can be seen to be related to, and reflective of, critical theorist and participatory paradigms, as well as constructivism, although Schwandt specifically denies the relativity of truth. (For a more sophisticated explication and critique of forms of constructivism, hermeneutics, and interpretivism, see Schwandt, 2000. In that chapter, Schwandt spells out distinctions between realists and nonrealists and between foundationalists and nonfoundationalists far more clearly than it is possible for us to do in this chapter.) To return to the central question embedded in validity: How do we know when we have specific social inquiries that are faithful enough to some human construction that we may feel safe in acting on them, or, more important, that members of the community in which the research is conducted may act on them? To that question, there is no final answer. There are, however, several discussions of what we might use to make both professional and lay judgments regarding any piece of work. It is to those versions of validity that we now turn.

Validity as Authenticity

Perhaps the first nonfoundational criteria were those we developed in response to a challenge by John K. Smith (see Smith & Deemer, 2000). In those criteria, we attempted to locate criteria for judging the processes and *outcomes* of naturalistic or constructivist inquiries (rather than the application of methods; see Guba & Lincoln, 1989). We described five potential outcomes of a social constructionist inquiry (evaluation is one form of disciplined inquiry, alongside research and policy analyses; see Guba & Lincoln, 1981), each grounded in concerns specific to the paradigm we had tried to describe and construct and apart from any concerns carried over from the positivist legacy. The criteria were instead rooted in the axioms and assumptions of the constructivist paradigm, insofar as we could extrapolate and infer them. Those authenticity criteria—so called because we believed them to be hallmarks of authentic, trustworthy, rigorous, or “valid” constructivist or phenomenological inquiry—were fairness, ontological

authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 245–251). *Fairness* was thought to be a quality of balance; that is, all stakeholder views, perspectives, values, claims, concerns, and voices should be apparent in the text. Omission of stakeholder or participant voices reflects, we believe, a form of bias.

This bias, however, was and is not related directly to the concerns of objectivity that flow from positivist inquiry and that are reflective of inquirer blindness or subjectivity. Rather, this fairness was defined by deliberate attempts to prevent marginalization, to act affirmatively with respect to inclusion, and to act with energy to ensure that all voices in the inquiry effort had a chance to be represented in any texts and to have their stories treated fairly and with balance. *Ontological and educative authenticity* were designated as criteria for determining a raised level of awareness, in the first instance, by individual research participants and, in the second, by individuals about those who surround them or with whom they come into contact for some social or organizational purpose. Although we failed to see it at that particular historical moment (1989), there is no reason these criteria cannot be—at this point in time, with many miles under our theoretic and practice feet—reflective also of Schwandt’s (1996) “critical intelligence,” or capacity to engage in moral critique. In fact, the authenticity criteria we originally proposed had strong moral and ethical overtones, a point to which we later returned (see, e.g., Lincoln, 1995, 1998a, 1998b). It was a point to which our critics strongly objected before we were sufficiently self-aware to realize the implications of what we had proposed (see, e.g., Sechrest, 1993).

Catalytic and tactical authenticities refer to the ability of a given inquiry to prompt, first, action on the part of research participants and, second, the involvement of the researcher/evaluator in training participants in specific forms of social and political action if participants desire such training. It is here that constructivist inquiry practice begins to resemble forms of critical theorist action, action research, or participative or cooperative inquiry, each of which is predicated on creating the capacity in research participants for positive social change and forms of emancipatory community action. It is also at this specific point that practitioners of positivist and postpositivist social inquiry are the most critical because any action on the part of the inquirer is thought to destabilize objectivity and introduce subjectivity, resulting in bias. The problem of subjectivity and bias has a long theoretical history, and this chapter is simply too brief for us to enter into the various formulations that either take account of subjectivity or posit it as a positive learning experience, practical, embodied, gendered, and emotive. For purposes of this discussion, it is enough to say that we are persuaded that objectivity is a chimera: a

mythological creature that never existed, save in the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower.

Validity as Resistance and as Poststructural Transgression

Richardson (1994, 1997) has proposed another form of validity, a deliberately “transgressive” form, the *crystalline*. In writing experimental (i.e., nonauthoritative, nonpositivist) texts, particularly poems and plays, Richardson (1997) has sought to “problematize reliability, validity, and truth” (p. 165) in an effort to create new relationships: to her research participants, to her work, to other women, to herself (see also Lather, who seeks the same ends, 2007). Richardson says that transgressive forms permit a social scientist to “conjure a different kind of social science ... [which] means changing one’s relationship to one’s work, *how* one knows and tells about the sociological” (p. 166). To see “how transgression looks and how it feels,” it is necessary to “find and deploy methods that allow us to uncover the hidden assumptions and life-denying repressions of sociology; resee/refeel sociology. Reseeing and retelling are inseparable” (p. 167). The way to achieve such validity is by examining the properties of a crystal in a metaphoric sense. Here we present an extended quotation to give some flavor of how such validity might be described and deployed:

I propose that the central imaginary for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle—a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we *see* depends upon our angle of repose. Not triangulation, crystallization. In postmodernist mixed-genre texts, we have moved from plane geometry to light theory, where light can be *both* waves *and* particles. Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity” (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. (Richardson, 1997, p. 92)

The metaphoric “solid object” (crystal/text), which can be turned many ways, which reflects and refracts light (light/multiple layers of meaning), through which we can see both “wave” (light wave/human currents) and “particle” (light as “chunks” of energy/elements of truth, feeling, connection, processes of the research that “flow” together), is an attractive metaphor for validity. The properties of the crystal-as-metaphor help writers and readers alike see the interweaving of processes in the research: discovery, seeing, telling, storytelling, representation.

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 simulacra/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).

Specific textual experimentation can help; that is, composing ethnographic work in various literary forms—Richardson's poetry and plays are good examples, or Lather and Chris Smithies's (1997) *Troubling the Angels*—can help a researcher to overcome the tendency to write in the distanced and abstracted voice of the disembodied “I.” But such writing exercises are hard work. This is also work that is embedded in the practices of reflexivity and narrativity, without which achieving a voice of (partial) truth is impossible.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human as instrument” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). It is, we would assert, the critical subjectivity discussed early on in Peter Reason and John Rowan's edited volume, *Human Inquiry* (1981). It is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself. Reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with ourselves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting

(Alcoff & Potter, 1993). Shulamit Reinharz (1997), for example, argues that we not only “*bring* the self to the field ... [we also] *create* the self in the field” (p. 3). She suggests that although we all have many selves we bring with us, those selves fall into three categories: research-based selves, brought selves (the selves that historically, socially, and personally create our standpoints), and situationally created selves (p. 5). Each of those selves comes into play in the research setting and consequently has a distinctive voice.

Reflexivity—as well as the poststructural and postmodern sensibilities concerning quality in qualitative research—demands that we interrogate each of our selves regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and staged around the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form our own lives. We must question ourselves, too, regarding how those binaries and paradoxes shape not only the identities called forth in the field and later in the discovery processes of writing, but also our interactions with respondents, in who we become to them in the process of *becoming* to ourselves (Mayan, 2009). Someone once characterized qualitative research as the twin processes of “writing up” (fieldnotes) and “writing down” (the narrative). But D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly (1994) have made clear that this bitextual reading of the processes of qualitative research is far too simplistic. In fact, many texts are created in the process of engaging in fieldwork.

As Richardson (1994, 1997, 2000) makes clear, writing is not merely the transcribing of some reality. Rather, writing—of all the texts, notes, presentations, and possibilities—is also a process of discovery: discovery of the subject (and sometimes of the problem itself) and discovery of the self.³

There is good news and bad news with the most contemporary of formulations. The good news is that the multiple selves—ourselves and our respondents—of postmodern inquiries may give rise to more dynamic, problematic, open-ended, and complex forms of writing and representation. The bad news is that the multiple selves we create and encounter give rise to more dynamic, problematic, open-ended, and complex forms of writing and representation. Among the various proposals for textual presentations, it is occasionally difficult to know to which proposals we should be attending; while it is often a matter of specific model (e.g., critical feminist studies, queer theories, hybrid theorists, postcolonial theorists, and the like) to which we are theoretically, philosophically, and morally inclined, it is nevertheless a buffet of wildly rich fare, and some choices must be made. Often such choices are made on the basis of both the needs of our research participants and coresearchers and the needs of our intended audiences.

Postmodern Textual Representations

There are two dangers inherent in the conventional texts of scientific method: They may lead us to believe the world is rather simpler than it is, and they may reinscribe enduring forms of historical oppression. Put another way, we are confronted with a crisis of authority (which tells us the world is “this way” when perhaps it is some other way, or many other ways) and a crisis of representation (which serves to silence those whose lives we appropriate for our social sciences, and which may also serve subtly to re-create *this* world, rather than some other, perhaps more complex, but just one; Eisner, 1997). Catherine Stimpson (1988) has observed:

Like every great word, “representation/s” is a stew. A scrambled menu, it serves up several meanings at once. For a representation can be an image visual, verbal, or aural.... A representation can also be a narrative, a sequence of images and ideas.... Or, a representation can be the product of ideology, that vast scheme for showing forth the world and justifying its dealings. (p. 223)

One way to confront the dangerous illusions (and their underlying ideologies) that texts may foster is through the creation of new texts that break boundaries; that move from the center to the margins to comment on and decenter the center; that forgo closed, bounded worlds for those more open-ended and less conveniently encompassed; that transgress the boundaries of conventional social science; and that seek to create a social science about human life rather than *on* subjects.

Experiments with how to do this have produced “messy texts” (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). Messy texts are not typographic nightmares (although they may be typographically nonlinear); rather, they are texts that seek to break the binary between science and literature; to portray the contradiction and truth of human experience; to break the rules in the service of showing, even partially (Flax, 1990), how real human beings cope with both the eternal verities of human existence and the daily irritations and tragedies of living that existence. Postmodern representations search out and experiment with narratives that expand the range of understanding, voice, and storied variations in human experience. As much as they are social scientists, inquirers also become storytellers, poets, and playwrights, experimenting with personal narratives, first-person accounts, reflexive interrogations, and deconstruction of the forms of tyranny embedded in representational practices

(see Richardson, 2000; Tierney & Lincoln, 1997).

Representation may be arguably the most open-ended of the controversies surrounding phenomenological research today because the ideas of what constitutes legitimate inquiry are expanding and, at the same time, the forms of narrative, dramatic, and rhetorical structure are far from being either explored or exploited fully and because we know that there is extensive slippage between life as lived and experienced and our ability to cast that life into words that exhibit perfect one-to-one correspondence with that experience. Words, and therefore any and all representations, fail us. Because, too, each inquiry, each inquirer, brings a unique perspective to our understanding, the possibilities for variation and exploration are limited only by the number of those engaged in inquiry and the realms of social and intrapersonal life that become interesting to researchers. The only thing that can be said for certain about postmodern representational practices is that they will proliferate as forms and they will seek and demand much of audiences, many of whom may be outside the scholarly and academic world. In fact, some forms of inquiry may never show up in the academic world because their purpose will be use in the immediate context, for the consumption, reflection, and use of local or indigenous audiences. Those that are produced for scholarly audiences will, however, continue to be untidy, experimental, and driven by the need to communicate social worlds that have remained private and “nonscientific” until now.

A Glimpse of the Future

The issues raised in this chapter are by no means the only ones under discussion for the near and far future. But they are some of the critical ones, and discussion, dialogue, and even controversies are bound to continue as practitioners of the various new and emergent paradigms continue either to look for common ground or to find ways in which to distinguish their forms of inquiry from others.

Some time ago, we expressed our hope that practitioners of both positivist and new-paradigm forms of inquiry might find some way of resolving their differences, such that all social scientists could work within a common discourse—and perhaps even several traditions—once again. In retrospect, such a resolution appears highly unlikely and would probably even be less than useful. This is not, however, because neither positivists nor phenomenologists will budge an inch (although that, too, is unlikely), or because the reinscription of stern positivist “science” abounds, with even

more rancorous pronouncements about qualitative research than we have heard in previous decades. Rather, it is because, in the postmodern (and post-postmodern) moment, and in the wake of poststructuralism, the assumption that there is no single “truth”—that all truths are but partial truths; that the slippage between signifier and signified in linguistic and textual terms creates representations that are only and always shadows of the actual people, events, and places; that identities are fluid rather than fixed—leads us ineluctably toward the insight that there will be no single “conventional” paradigm to which all social scientists might ascribe in some common terms and with mutual understanding. Rather, we stand at the threshold of a history marked by multivocality, contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms. At some distance down this conjectural path, when its history is written, we will find that this has been the era of emancipation: emancipation from what Hannah Arendt calls “the coerciveness of Truth,” emancipation from hearing only the voices of Western Europe, emancipation from generations of silence, and emancipation from seeing the world in one color.

We may also be entering an age of greater spirituality within research efforts. The emphasis on inquiry that reflects ecological values, on inquiry that respects communal forms of living that are not Western, on inquiry involving intense reflexivity regarding how our inquiries are shaped by our own historical and gendered locations, and on inquiry into “human flourishing,” as Heron and Reason (1997) call it, may yet reintegrate the sacred with the secular in ways that promote freedom and self-determination. Egon Brunswik, the organizational theorist, wrote of “tied” and “untied” variables—variables that are linked, or clearly not linked, with other variables—when studying human forms of organization. We may be in a period of exploring the ways in which our inquiries are both tied and untied, as a means of finding where our interests cross and where we can both be and promote others’ being, as whole human beings.

Notes

1. There are several versions of critical theory, just as there are several varieties of postmodernism, including classical critical theory, which is most closely related to neo-Marxist theory; postpositivist formulations, which divorce themselves from Marxist theory but are positivist in their insistence on conventional rigor criteria; and postmodernist, poststructuralist, or constructivist-oriented varieties. See, for instance, Fay (1987), Carr and Kemmis (1986), and Lather (1991). See also Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) and Kincheloe and McLaren (2000).

2. For a clearer understanding of how methods came to stand in for paradigms, or how our initial (and, we thought, quite clear) positions came to be misconstrued, see Lancy (1993) or, even more currently, Weiss (1998, esp. p. 268).

3. For example, compare this chapter with, say, the work of Richardson (2000) and Ellis and Bochner (2000), where the authorial voices are clear, personal, vocal, and interior, interacting subjectivities. Although some colleagues have surprised us by correctly identifying which chapters each of us has written in given books, nevertheless, the style of this chapter more closely approximates the more distanced forms of “realist” writing rather than the intimate, personal “feeling tone” (to borrow a phrase from Studs Terkel) of other chapters. Voices also arise as a function of the material being covered. The material we chose as most important for this chapter seemed to demand a less personal tone, probably because there appears to be much more “contention” than calm dialogue concerning these issues. The “cool” tone likely stems from our psychological response to trying to create a quieter space for discussion around controversial issues. What can we say?

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