

Karyn Cooper · Robert E. White

Qualitative Research in the Post-Modern Era

Contexts of Qualitative Research

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Qualitative Research in the Post-Modern Era



The authors

While this unique and timely overview of the key foundational thinkers is sufficient reason for any qualitative researcher, new or experienced, to read this book, the questions and activities at the end of each chapter make it an indispensable text for instructors who teach qualitative research methods courses to use with their students.... The art of making the complex accessible takes great skill, and this book has the potential to truly engage and challenge graduate students without confusing them by overusing jargon.... Graduate instructors who take seriously the task of mentoring the next generation of qualitative researchers will definitely want to use this book to provoke their students into thinking multidimensionally about the research that they read and conduct.... The video clips will speak to millennial generation students in a way that typical qualitative research methods textbooks could never hope to do. I think that this will be a very popular textbook in many universities.

Jim Greenlaw
Dean of Education
University of Ontario Institute of Technology

The project was an ambitious undertaking to complete. The sheer energy that has gone into capturing, on video-tape, the top international researchers is commendable. The ability to harness “The Five Contexts” from the works and reflections of these scholars as a “conceptual framework for conducting, understanding and interpreting qualitative research in a variety of disciplines in this postmodern era” is both timely and original.... I think this would be an excellent research text for graduate students in the Social Sciences and Humanities. I expect most scholars would like to have a copy due to the archival nature of the material.... I wish I had this book and access to these research scholars when I was doing post graduate work....

Shawn Northfield
University of Nottingham

The smooth development of this book leads you on a journey through the history and reality of qualitative research. The video-clips add a dimension of hospitality, in that I feel as though I have sat down with each researcher to enjoy a cup of coffee as I learn from their experiences. As a graduate student, I am grateful for the discussions and discoveries that were sparked by these writings. Cooper and White have created a volume of important foundations and precious insights for the beginning researcher.

Lynnette Babin Rankin
Graduate Student
St. Francis Xavier University

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Please be informed that the video-interviews can also be downloaded from <http://extras.springer.com>.

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*In memory
of
Clifford Geertz*



August 23, 1926–October 30, 2006

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Clifford Geertz. Interviewed just 4 months prior to his untimely death, Professor Geertz was responsible, at least in part, for developing ethnographic research within an interpretivist approach. Throughout his distinguished career, he helped to re-cast ethnography through the recognition that the researcher is the major instrument in the data collection and analysis process.

In recognizing this, Professor Geertz would be among the first to say that he was only a small part of a larger movement. His intellect, his humility and his humor will be sorely missed.

Professor Geertz is pictured here in his office at Princeton University, among books piled high on his desk, artifacts from Java and Bali adorning the walls. One of his favorite artifacts was a drawing by his grandson. Behind a refrigerator magnet is a miniature likeness of Wittgenstein, a speech bubble emanating from the head of the philosopher saying, "Hey, Dude." Perhaps Wittgenstein would have approved.

Foreword

This may be a set of volumes for which the field has been waiting. Gathered in one two-volume set are the voices and words of many of the giants in the field of qualitative research and/or critical perspectives. These interviews represent not only where the various interviewees have been, but mark new constructions, new terminologies adopted (e.g., “liquid modernity,” a term pioneered by Zygmunt Bauman) and sometimes new formulations. The figure, entitled “Key Words and Identifiers” (Fig. 2.2) summarizes three major strands in contemporary research, moving between conventional quantitative research, critical perspectives and ideologies, and more widely understood models of qualitative research in the interpretivist (and constructivist) veins.

There are at least three different reasons to delight in the introduction of these volumes to the literature. First, there are summaries of the interviews with figures important to the development of qualitative and critical perspectives on research. One wishes, in fact, to have longer summaries, but the realities of the publishing world make this impossible. Second, the book is a welcome and unique addition to the literature because there are accompanying video clips for each of the interviewees. For those of us who spent many hours – and resources – as junior faculty attempting to locate, get a glimpse of, and hear senior scholars, the photographs and video clips are a treasure. While we cannot say that we have “met” Zygmunt Bauman or Maxine Greene, we will nevertheless know their faces and perhaps have a stronger connection, if we are visual learners, to their ideas and to the scholarly histories from which these ideas spring. Third, these two volumes provide an opportunity, in a sense, to “compress” 30 years of history in qualitative and critical research paradigm development into a rich overview. While this work is not a substitute for extensive reading in the fields, it does serve as a judicious and vital guide to that reading and a sensitive and discerning aid to selection according to readers’ interests and needs.

The offer of these perspectives simultaneously gives us a powerful introduction to some of the “giants on whose shoulders we stand.” More powerful, however, is the set of *voices* which accompany the text. We have not, in the past, as I observed, been able without serious effort and financial resources to *hear* all these voices

speak and, particularly, to hear them speak on the same or similar topics. Now, the video clips accompanying the texts present the fuller (although edited) interviews without the reduction necessary for a printed text. If there is such a text anywhere else, with commentary, summary, author autobiographies, interviewee bibliographies, and accompanying video clips, I am unaware of it. What a delight to be a part of these historical moments, including being able to hear the now-deceased Clifford Geertz speaking about his work and theoretical insights, and to be able, via those video clips, to revisit the voices and themes again and again. Readers, users, teachers, and generations of students will be touched untold times by these voices: the towering anthropologist-methodologist-theoretician Geertz, with his gentle voice on video, the elder but still-generative Maxine Green, Norman Denzin at the height of his powers, the prolific activist/social critic Henry Giroux, and the thoughtful Pinar, with his graciously invitational manner.

Equally useful, for students, researchers, and teachers alike, are the editor/authors' "five contexts" for grasping this complex and dynamic history. First, they discuss the *autobiographical* context, arguing that our own histories and experiences shape our research far more than a rigid hypothetico-deductive model, with its emphasis on an assumed ability to achieve perfect objectivity, would have us believe. Our autobiographies, as individuals and as scholars, create and re-create our research interests, our philosophical predilections, and our paradigmatic stances; until we understand those histories, we will not fully understand who we are or why we do what we do, save in the most superficial way.

Second, Cooper and White explore the *historical* context for the debates surrounding research, and integrate both Freebody's and Pinar's commentary on why qualitative research has taken a back seat to quantitative research in the past half century or more. This historical context is of course interwoven with the third context, the *political* context, where issues of power, control, regulation and other dynamics interweave with paradigm choice (and, unfortunately, with funding decisions throughout the Western world). Their arguments here are buttressed by other literatures regarding "the audit culture", the dangerous nature of knowledge, and the desire of some to contain knowledge, particularly knowledge about the oppressive effects of gender, race, class, national heritage, and ongoing tensions between the West and emerging nation-states.

The fourth context, the *postmodern* context, is perhaps the most fluid of the contexts; Zygmunt Bauman reframes the postmodern context as "liquid modernity," a kind of unfixed and fluctuating transition between unsettled eras. Bauman's terminology reflects Thomas Berry's observation that we are in an era where we are between stories: the old "story" – of who we are and what we are about – no longer works, but the new "story" is not yet in place. For researchers, the most important issue is the nomination of questions that appear to be the most critical at this point in time.

The fifth context, the *philosophical* context, is at the same time the most stable, but also itself in flux. We have Rom Harré's work on the principal outlines of logical positivism, including his incisive criticisms of the goal of achieving objectivity. But we are still trying to construct a research-directed or -oriented form of pragmatism,

and are still attempting to create a meaningful and well-integrated model for mixed methods research for those who wish to pursue such designs.

These five contexts represent a major contribution to ways of thinking about research methods and their more overarching paradigms. As Cooper and White point out, there is much overlap and many border crossings between methods and between paradigms, especially between interpretivist and critical perspectives. We are incredibly fortunate to be the recipients of this work, simply because it provides us with a fresh set of intellectual and mental constructs with which we can teach and do research.

Yvonna S. Lincoln

Preface

Because society has invested extensively in social structures, such as education, to resolve ever larger and more entrenched social problems (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991), research activities in the social sciences and humanities are of paramount significance. Universities and colleges commonly have research departments dedicated to the furthering of such knowledge through both quantitative and qualitative means. Predictably enough, different modes of research have figured prominently at different moments in time (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). For instance, in this postcolonial, postmodern era there has been a renewed focus on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Bauman 2007). Consequently, a multitude of qualitative research methodologies are developing to address the messy, complex, and dynamic nature of inquiry in the postmodern context within which we live.

A number of general qualitative research books on the market provide substantial coverage of research methodologies across disciplines. Some examples of these include *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Flick 2006), *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis* (Merriam 2002), *Qualitative Researching* (Mason 2002), and *Applying Educational Research: A Practical Guide* (Gall et al. 2004). Furthermore, there are multitudes of new and emerging approaches surrounding specific research methodologies: arts-based (Barone and Eisner 1997; Eisner 2002; Greene 1995), life history (Cole and Knowles 2001), and narrative research (Clandinin and Connelly 2000) fit this perspective.

A consequence of such diversity is a richness in specialized thought; for example, *Psychology and Postmodernism* (Kvale 1992), *Hermeneutics and Education* (Gallagher 1992), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Yin 1994), *Poststructuralism and Educational Research*, (Peters & Burbules 2004), and volumes on ethnographic (Carspecken 1996) to phenomenological research (Van Manen 2002). Tomes on educational research (e.g., Creswell 2005) and significant textbooks such as the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, Denzin and Lincoln 2005, 1994) overlap and interpenetrate themes and issues that cut across these perspectives.

However, there tends to be a pattern among qualitative research texts. Two broad genres include conceptual books and methods books. Conceptual books focus on

the foundations and conceptual underpinnings of different paradigms of qualitative research. Some conceptual texts such as *Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical Approaches* (Willis 2007) provide a broad overview of the major contemporary intellectual foundations that guide our thinking about qualitative research. Methods books, on the other hand, emphasize how to do various types of qualitative research. Some of these volumes provide a comprehensive view of a few methodologies, while others develop an overview of numerous methodologies. These genres do not represent mutually exclusive domains, as books on qualitative research often include both of these categories to a greater or lesser extent, together representing “a practical wisdom.”

The fact that qualitative research is changing as a result of postmodern influences, which have changed the way research is interpreted and understood, has prompted questions which have been knocking at the door of qualitative research for some time now: Where is the researcher in the research account? How does the researcher relate to his/her research? How can the researcher who reads qualitative research understand the nuances and complexities in qualitative research? While many books and articles are dedicated to qualitative research, there are few attempts to place it in an autobiographical context (Pinar 1994, 2004) for scholars, for the general public, or for practitioners who have been in the field of research for some time. Historically and traditionally, much qualitative research continues to ignore the important relationship between the person doing the research and the research itself. What seems to be neglected, in many cases, is an acknowledgment of the essential role of the (auto)biographical in the conceptual and intellectual development of qualitative research.

We believe that autobiographical research can lay bare relationships between the lives we live and larger, more important world events, since such research begins with self-reference to elements in time, connecting the personal biography of the individual with perspectives of history. What can we learn from the autobiographies of researchers at the top of their stride who have struggled in order to develop qualitative research? How can this volume help to not only describe, effect, and manage change, but help us to understand, imagine, and affect policies, practices, and procedures related to research?

Because volumes on qualitative research unfortunately may sacrifice conceptual issues for methodological concerns, this book forms part of a series which attempts to do justice to the conceptual frames and methods that guide qualitative research through the autobiographies of renowned scholars across a variety of disciplines. This first volume, which deals with conceptual and theoretical foundations, features excerpts of interview transcripts accompanied by video clips of key scholars in qualitative research, while the second book in the series attends to practical methods that comprise the expanding field of this type of research.

This volume, based on a larger study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, attempts to open up just such interpretive horizons by interviewing distinguished qualitative researchers from various disciplines who provide key insights into the educative role of disciplines relating to qualitative research in education. Five key scholars, William Pinar, Norman Denzin,

Henry Giroux, Zygmunt Bauman, and Maxine Greene, were selected for this first volume because their autobiographical interviews and programs of research led us to develop what we now describe as “The Five Contexts,” a conceptual framework for conducting, understanding, and interpreting qualitative research in a variety of disciplines in this postmodern era.

In this volume, we have also included excerpts from interviews with Raewyn Connell, Peter Freebody, and Elliot Eisner. Not only are these qualitative researchers connected to the ethos and context of a particular era within which they live and engage in research, they also lay bare relationships, specific issues of subjectivity, and interrogate the significance of the individual autobiographical within current historical, political, postmodern, and philosophical perspectives. In the end, is it not the personal story, the autobiography, which gives life to history and its political and philosophical conditions which, in turn, sustain the contexts of qualitative research?

We wrote this series so that researchers of all stripes and, perhaps, consumers of research may gain greater clarity regarding the embodied nature of current qualitative research. It was enlightening to understand that there is more research available to us now than there has ever been before, that many of our top researchers are still among us and that they are so forthcoming, generous, and gracious with the results of their work. Although viewers may not always agree with positions taken within the pages of this book, if readers find that they can articulate a better understanding of qualitative research, then we will have achieved our goal.

Karyn Cooper
Robert E. White

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Acknowledgments

This volume was based on a larger study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada. It was through the generous funding of this project that we, the authors, have been able to attempt to open up interpretive horizons in qualitative research by interviewing distinguished qualitative researchers from various disciplines who provide key insights into the educative role of disciplines relating to qualitative research in general and qualitative research in education in particular.

The writing of this book could not have been completed without help from many different directions. First and foremost we would like to take the opportunity to thank Professor William Pinar for his time, his suggestions, and for his collaborative participation in this project. Also, a number of graduate students from both the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and from St Francis Xavier University (StFX) deserve our thanks. Rebecca Hughes of OISE has helped to shepherd this project along with her significant editing skills. Without Rebecca, we would still be struggling with time codes, paper edits, and the like. Thank you, Rebecca, for all the meetings in strange places at odd times to answer some of the most trivial of video questions. The results speak for themselves. In addition, we would also like to thank J.M. London McNab for assisting with the editing of the video clip entitled “What Is Research?” as well as with sundry other requisites.

Neil Tinker of OISE’s Education Commons set high standards in his work as videographer. Although Neil was unable to finish the project with us, he is responsible for shooting some of the finest footage and is also responsible for some of the subsequent editing. Thank you, Neil. You set a fine example for the interviews that were to come.

OISE’s Education Commons, and in particular Tony Gallina and Alfredo Chow, also deserves a thank you for their untiring assistance with computer issues and access to software programs and video equipment. Without this support, there may not have been a book to write. We are also indebted to Bill Chisholm, Natalie McInnes, Jim Penney, and Sue Waghorn, graduate students from StFX, and Deborah Rogers from OISE, for their contributions to this volume. A note of appreciation is

also due the graduate students from Karyn's qualitative research course for their fine performance of "Research Is What?"

Finally, we owe more than can be repaid to those fine scholars who gave us not only their time, but their wisdom. These fine professionals were unstinting in their appreciation of our work, their advice, and their kindness. These enormous contributions, provided to us by such renowned scholars, is really what this book is all about.

Thanks are also due Shawn Northfield and Stephen Barrett for their reading of the final draft and for their comments. Also, to everyone who helped to make this volume a reality, we thank you and hope that you have enjoyed the adventure as much as we, the authors, have enjoyed it.

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Chapter 1

Toward Understanding Research

Should the starting point for the understanding of history be ideology or politics or religion or economics? Should we try to understand a doctrine from its overt content or from the psychological make-up and the biography of its author? We must seek an understanding from all these angles simultaneously, everything has meaning, and we shall find the same structure of being underlying all relationships. All these views are true provided that they are not isolated, that we delve deeply into history and reach the unique core of existential meaning which emerges in each perspective.

(Merleau-Ponty 1962, xviii–xix)

Introduction

This book is a cross-disciplinary volume, suitable for academics or graduate students interested in concepts and foundations relating particularly to qualitative research in this postmodern era. Through a series of video interviews, we share, in each chapter of this volume, the autobiographies and philosophies of some of the leading qualitative researchers in various fields of research in social sciences and humanities. In addition, we have made liberal use of *YouTube* clips, cartoons, quotations, articles, poetry, and graduate student responses from the teaching of our courses on qualitative research. Along with the students, we, the authors of this text, embarked on a journey of discovery relating to research in general and to qualitative research in particular.

Regardless of the field of study, the process for conducting research shares certain commonalities across all disciplines. To begin with, the researcher focuses on one or more questions for inquiry. The researcher collects, analyzes and interprets the data, and then draws conclusions to be disseminated to a particular audience or to the general public. While data collection and analysis are often simultaneous processes, the basic elements in research are similar and are common to all forms of research (Bogdan and Biklen 2007).

To some degree, however, research methods do vary from one discipline to another, as well as across disciplines. For instance, the key scholars represented in this volume perform their unique research through their own individual contexts, comprised, in part, by their disciplines, autobiographical perspectives, and the era within which they live and engage in qualitative research. For example, William Pinar speaks of the importance of autobiography in the research process while Norman Denzin describes the historical context of qualitative research. For Henry Giroux, political will and agency are of prime importance. Zygmunt Bauman develops the concept of postmodern life, while Maxine Greene takes a long philosophic view of what it means to conduct research. Each of these scholars contributes to an emerging, sustained, and engaging view of what it means to be a researcher in today's society.

This brings into focus the opening quotation that forms the beginning of this chapter. What does this quote mean and what is its significance? Merleau-Ponty (1962) asks if, in order to understand history, we should begin with ideology, politics, religion, or economics. Perhaps this is a rhetorical question but, in case it is not, we may find that all of these aspects of historical underpinnings are not only helpful, but essential to the understanding of contemporary research. By the same token, when he asks if we should understand a doctrine from its overt content or from the psychological makeup and biography of its author, there is a recognition that both concrete and abstract conditions need to be met in order to gain clarity. Merleau-Ponty proceeds to suggest that we must seek understanding from a multiplicity of perspectives in order to gain a truer picture of the nature of anything that we are questioning.

The concept is elegant in its simplicity. Everything contains meaning, and we shall find that this is true of any question that we ask about anything. This is deceptively complex and serves to send us scurrying throughout the world gathering our information puzzle pieces in order to arrive at something that is asymptotic – always almost arriving but never quite achieving true or full understanding. Merleau-Ponty comes to our rescue by noting that all views are true provided that they are not isolated views. We must delve deeply into a multiplicity of perspectives in order to arrive at a core of meaning that each perspective provides.

Why is this important at all? It is important because, in essence, the meaning which emerges from each perspective speaks to some part of the primacy of our very existence. Thus, the search for meaning, for understanding, is therefore essentially an existential undertaking. Simply put, this quote by Merleau-Ponty (1962) represents what this volume is all about. With the aid of a number of video clips from interviews with world-renowned researchers, we have attempted to provide just such a multiplicity of perspectives with regard to qualitative research.

What is Research?

Research by its very nature, in any discipline, is necessarily complex. How, then, can a beginning student, let alone the seasoned researcher, weigh all the complexities that must be considered in order to engage in research without being

overwhelmed by it? Because we believe that interpretation and meaning is so central to the research process, and because understanding impacts our way of being in the world, we begin this next section with the often taken-for-granted question, “What is research?”

When graduate students were asked to respond to the question, “What is research?” their responses were largely predictable. Many students understood research to be very quantitative in nature. As one student responded, “I have always thought that research was about men in white lab coats.” For this student, research was all about using a scientific method to discover something before unknown. This would be evinced through a testable hypothesis in order to prove or disprove a theory. Research, then, for this student had become something that can be measured or replicated.

In order to provide effective measurement, students identified the need for methods and methodologies that could be employed in order to collect information in the form of data. As such, research was expected to involve a sort of precision in terms of methods and what it is trying to uncover through a specific means of inquiry and investigation. In effect, then, research was expected to explain something of “scientific import” and, hence, of social importance through following a series of steps that included “logical planning in order to find facts” and “executing some form of thought process” relating to the hypothesis and data, culminating in a refinement of “distilled understandings” that may relate to “a pattern over time.” Of importance to students was the notion that research was a continuous process to get at “What I really want to know.”

While we began with the question, “What is research?” a more subtle side to this question refers to what or who influences student responses. The comment about the men in white lab coats is quite telling because this points to the proliferation of concepts about the nature of research in the popular culture. This social construction of research appears to emanate from different sources such as media and the popular culture. Television and news reports propagate this view of research as being scientific in nature. This is a view of research that is socially constructed, omnipresent, and purports to be unassailable. Scientific research is replete with statistics and numbers that are taken in by the public as “truth.” Advertisements use statistics to “prove” that their findings are veritable. For example, eight out of ten dentists recommend a particular tooth paste brand.

But do statistics always tell the truth? In the forgoing example, did the dentists represent a sample group? Was it a random sample? Do 80% of *all* dentists recommend this toothpaste? Or was this a selected group, chosen in order to sell a particular brand of toothpaste? Television programs also push the envelope through advanced forensic investigations, statistical hypotheses that test the limits of “the willing suspension of disbelief,” and the assumption that highly technological solutions are infallible. It may not be surprising that the graduate student class, a microcosm of society, came to think of “research” in general as synonymous with “quantitative research.”

Such views dominate the field of research as well, through texts that pertain to the study of research. For example, “Research has one end: the discovery of truth.



Fig. 1.1 “What is research?”

Its purpose is to learn what has never been known before; to ask a significant question for which no conclusive answer has previously been found; and, by collecting and interpreting relevant data, to find an answer to that question” (Leedy and Ormrod 2010, xvi). And again, “Specifically, research is the systematic attempt not only to collect information about an identified problem or question, but also to analyze that information and to apply the evidence thus derived to confirm or refute some prior prediction or statement about that problem” (Hittleman and Simon 2006, 2).

The cartoon presented above provided a jumping-off point for developing further discussion about the nature of research, additional characteristics, as well as how research is conducted, by whom and under what circumstances. Please see Fig. 1.1 – “What is Research?”

After viewing the cartoon, the graduate students were again asked to construct meaning around the concept of “What is research?” When graduate students responded to this cartoon, they produced a variety of responses, interesting in their detail and complexity. Their comments are included as a focal point from which to engage in broader qualitative research questions.

“Post-cartoon” research was considered to be largely about the search for meaning. One student decided that research was not just about “digesting” but trying to gain greater understanding of the “meat” of research. A variety of students believed that research honored its etymological history as it was a “search again,” a repeated ongoing investigation about a particular topic or theme. As such, some students felt that research was never fully finished, as it brings up new ideas, questions, issues, and tensions that add to the existing body of knowledge with the intent of creating future discussions that are, in turn, eventually refined through reflection.

Students suggested that not only is research about seeing the world through a multiplicity of perspectives, it is also about creating a new world through a “peeling back of layers of understanding” and assumptions in order to reach the core, the substrate where ideas are configured and meaning emerges from those configurations. For example, in this cartoon, the lion is not the object of research, but serves to disseminate research. What makes this perspective a novel one is the notion that much research continues to be done by those in power. Here, in this cartoon, the question of who has the most power is palpable. Because of this view of the lion as researcher rather than the researched, some students questioned research biases and the problem of power differentials in research.

Still other students suggested that, when one thinks the research is finished, one is really back at the starting point, thus showing that research is an ongoing individual or collective, necessarily passionate, pursuit and adventure about endless questions. Who knows whether this lion tamer is the lion’s first research subject or not?

On the other hand, research was also considered to be a “set of ideas riddled with jargon” but which could be made more accessible. As the lion in the cartoon avers, research is not always free from political and personal agenda.

It has often been said that, in order to formulate a question or an opinion about anything, one must first have some small smattering of information relating to the question being asked. Why then, did students perceive research to be largely quantitative in nature until they were presented with a cartoon that raises questions about research that are essentially qualitative in nature? Perhaps the difference between what the students were shown and what they had assumed regarding research in general can be attributed to the social construction of research.

To a large part, we believe that learning to do qualitative research might mean unlearning the social construction of “research” and opening oneself to the possibility of employing a different vocabulary and way of structuring the research process. A video clip of five distinguished scholars, interviewed regarding the deceptively simple question, “What is Research?” can be viewed at:

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Qualities of Qualitative Research

These video clips help to inform the discussion about what qualities may be found within qualitative research, across disciplines, according to some of the top qualitative researchers of our time. For instance, Maxine Greene, Elliot Eisner, and William Pinar all introduce the idea that the search for meaning in terms of understanding is of paramount importance, more so even than the explanation of a particular phenomenon. This is directly related to the concept that meaning is socially constructed by individuals interacting with their world, rather than a recognition that truth is a singular and fixed quality from which all understanding of the world emanates. In short, qualitative research considers reality not as a fixed, objective, and constant construct but as a more fluid, ephemeral, and ever-changing thing.

As a result of this mode of conception, there are a multiplicity of constructions of reality, limited only by one's life events, historical facts, culture, and imagination. As such, then, given the interpretive nature of reality, qualitative research has concerned itself with the process of *doing* research, rather than with the results or the products of this type of research. Simply put, this means that qualitative research, while it is concerned with understandings of reality, is more concerned with *how* that reality is arrived at than it is with *what* that reality entails.

To provide an example, Lisa Delpit's (1995) book, *Other People's Children*, shows how qualitative research considers the experiences of people who have been marginalized by the society within which they live. By digging deeply into the meaning of established Language Arts programs, Delpit reveals how popular pedagogical frameworks do not necessarily match the learning needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. She links such frameworks to dominant culture norms and suggests that mismatches can occur when dominant culture educational institutions teach children from nondominant communities. She questions important assumptions about why the field of education is drawn to such pedagogies and why these pedagogies bear such striking family resemblances. She claims that the answers lie in understanding that both learning theory and learning processes are inextricably and profoundly rooted in culture, as Lisa Delpit's own autobiography attests.

Delpit's book is a powerful qualitative research document as it focuses on the meaning of democracy and that agency is central to this process. In the "What is Research?" video clip, Norman Denzin speaks of not writing about culture, but performing culture. He notes that we must consider the way in which culture is performed because this is how culture is enacted and therefore how it contains meaning. Henry Giroux reinforces this notion by commenting that education, like any qualitative research, is a moral and ethical enterprise in which the promotion of agency should be the key focus. In short, "truth" is political.

Since qualitative researchers are primarily concerned with the way that research is conducted rather than by what the research produces in terms of certain truth, the researcher becomes the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. Because the researcher does not stand outside his or her research but is actively involved not only in the research itself but also in the interpretation of the data and

construction of the findings of the research, the researcher must always be ready, willing, and able to identify his or her assumptions pertaining to the study at hand, in whatever form that study may take. This serves as an important safeguard relating to the integrity of the research process itself. Only by questioning one's own assumptions, knowing full well that no one can ever really fully understand the depths of one's own prejudices, opinions, and frames of mind, can a researcher come to an understanding relative to the *quality* of qualitative research, rather than to its external and objective veracity.

This raises the issue of generalizability. Because the qualitative researcher is primarily interested in understanding interpretations of the qualitative research at a particular point in time and in a particular context, it may be safe to suggest that one of the prime concerns of qualitative research is not the generalizability of findings, but the understanding of the phenomenon, which may have general applications in related or subsequent areas of study. Both Maxine Greene and Elliot Eisner underscore this point in the previous video clip.

Also, since qualitative researchers are concerned with the understanding or description of a phenomenon or event, one of the qualities of this type of research is its ability to generate descriptive data – thick description, as Geertz (1973) has termed it – that aids in the interpretation of the data, the findings and the results implied by the research. Consequently, qualitative researchers tend to analyze data inductively. That is, as instruments of their own research, qualitative researchers rely on their judgment, experience, history, social contexts, and constructions of reality in order to generate new or to enhance existing perceptions of events and conditions in the real world. In order to engage with this complex, dynamic, and often untidy aspect of qualitative research, scholars tend to use a variety of methods and perspectives, rather than approaching qualitative research from a single, dogmatic, and pedantic method, in order to envision new possibilities. It is these new possibilities that often leave qualitative researchers with more questions at the end of their research than those with which the research was begun.

In this video clip, William Pinar notes that qualitative research has often been assigned a ranking somewhere below the value of quantitative research. Both Elliot Eisner and Norman Denzin define research in general, before going on to specify some of the characteristics of qualitative research. While this volume concentrates on conceptual and theoretical issues pertaining to qualitative research, we would be remiss to ignore the dialectic between quantitative and qualitative research. This discussion deserves its own chapter. Therefore, beginning with video clips of Raewyn Connell and Peter Freebody, the following chapter attempts to address some of the more subtle nuances that differentiate quantitative and qualitative research.

Selected Annotated Bibliography

Aronowitz, S., & Giroux, H. (1991). *Postmodern education: Politics, culture, and social criticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

In this volume, Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux explain how many of the ideas that represent postmodernism can be applied in any educative curriculum. As such, postmodern educators believe the curriculum can best inspire learning only when school knowledge builds upon tacit knowledge derived from cultural resources that students already possess. In contrast to practices that uncritically transmit apparently unrelated disciplines, the construction of meaning, authority, and subjectivity is governed by ideologies inscribed in language, which offer different possibilities for people to construct relationships for themselves, others, and the larger reality. Knowledge is viewed in the context of power and relationships between writers, readers, and texts, understood as sites where different readings, meanings, and forms of cultural production take place.

Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Cambridge: Policy Press.

The passage from “solid” to “liquid” modernity has created new and unprecedented settings for individual life pursuits, confronting individuals with a series of challenges never before encountered. Social forms and institutions no longer have time to solidify and, therefore, cannot serve as frames of reference for human actions and long-term life plans. Consequently, individuals have to find other ways to organize their lives. They have to splice together an unending series of short-term projects and episodes that cannot generate the kind of sequence to which concepts like “career” and “progress” could meaningfully be applied. Such fragmented lives require individuals to be flexible and adaptable – to be constantly ready and willing to change tactics at short notice, to abandon commitments and loyalties without regret and to pursue opportunities according to their current availability. In liquid modernity, the individual must act, plan actions, and calculate the likely gains and losses of acting or failing to act under conditions of endemic uncertainty.

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, J. G. (Eds.) (2001). *Lives in context: The art of life history research*. Blue Ridge Summit: AltaMira Press.

The reflexive turn in qualitative research has transformed the process of doing life history research. According to this book, an introduction to conducting life history research, the process is now one of mutuality, empathy, sensitivity, and caring. The book carries the novice researcher through the steps of conducting life history research from conceptualizing the project to the various means of presenting results, always with an eye toward understanding the complex relationship between participant and researcher and how that shapes the project. The book is in two parts, each representing a different kind of text. These essays present perspectives and ideas about life history research that have application in a wide variety of inquiry contexts and academic disciplines.

Clandinin, J., & Connelly, M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly draw upon over 20 years of field experience to show how narrative inquiry can be used in educational and social science research.

Tracing the origins of narrative inquiry in the social sciences, they offer new and practical ideas for conducting fieldwork, composing field notes, and conveying research results. Throughout the book, stories and examples reveal a wide range of narrative methods. Engaging and easy to read, *Narrative Inquiry* is a practical resource from experts who have long pioneered the use of the narrative in qualitative research.

Eisner, E. W. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

In this book, Elliot Eisner argues that the arts are critically important means for developing complex and subtle aspects of the mind. He describes how various forms of thinking are evoked, developed, and refined through the arts. These forms of thinking are more helpful in dealing with ambiguities and uncertainties found in daily life than are the formally structured curricula employed today in schools. Offering a rich array of examples, Eisner describes different approaches to the teaching of the arts and the virtues each possesses when well taught. This new perspective, Eisner argues, is especially important today, a time in which mechanistic forms of technical rationality often dominate our thinking about the conduct and assessment of education.

Flick, U., von Kardorff, E., Steinke, I., & Jenner, B. (2004). *A companion to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

This book covers a diverse range of material and offers many practical tips relating to qualitative research. This exciting companion provides an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of the latest writing on every aspect of qualitative research. The volume draws on the work of an array of leading scholars from Europe, Britain, and North America to present a summary of every aspect of the qualitative research process from methods and research styles to examinations of methodological theory and epistemology. It is one of the few surveys of qualitative research to adopt a genuinely international voice. *The Companion to Qualitative Research* includes an introduction to the field, provides examples of how key researchers carried out their research, investigates different methodological and epistemological approaches to the act of researching, and introduces the reader to important practical issues such as ethics and teaching.

Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2004). *Applying educational research: A practical guide* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

This volume is intended for instructors who emphasize teaching students how to locate, read, interpret, and apply the findings of educational research studies. This revision addresses how to design and conduct a research study in more detail. The text includes numerous recent, published research articles involving high-interest problems of educational practice. The chapters, which treat quantitative, qualitative, and applied forms of educational research, stand alone, allowing instructors to choose those they want to cover. This text brings research alive for educators by introducing readers to people who actually “do” research. The book makes no assumptions about readers’ prior knowledge of research or statistics. This text builds student confidence to successfully read research reports.

Gallagher, S. (1992). *Hermeneutics and education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

This book proposes a fourfold typology of hermeneutics and reveals four basic principles in each. Gallagher presents a solid discussion of each position and four principles central to it and searches out parallel standpoints in current educational theory to show how each parallel standpoint can be enriched by hermeneutical reflection. The author succeeds in his objective by showing how a moderate theory of hermeneutics can provide the principles for an educational theory. The author's arguments are clearly expressed, carefully reasoned, and tied to an extremely impressive spectrum of documentation. The breadth of scholarship going into this work, as well as the depth of understanding of the history of hermeneutics, is superb.

Kvale, S. (Ed.). (1992). *Psychology and postmodernism: Inquiries in social construction*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

This groundbreaking book was one of the first to explore the implications of post-modernist ideas for psychology. Authors examine central themes of postmodernism as they relate to psychology and outline the new possibilities for psychology, setting theoretical reformulations alongside implications for psychological practice and method. The book presents critique as well as support for postmodern perspectives, from feminist critique of postmodern "deconstruction" to argument with the usefulness of sharp distinctions between "modern" and "postmodern" psychology. Throughout, the aim of this volume is not only to engage with current key debates about postmodernism but to address them specifically from the standpoint of psychology.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Qualitative Researching bridges the gap between "cook-book" approaches to qualitative research and abstract methodological approaches. Helping the reader to move comfortably between principle and practice, this text is an invaluable introduction to qualitative research. It is a useful aid to accomplished qualitative research practice across the social sciences. Throughout, the author addresses key issues which need to be identified and resolved in the qualitative research process, and through which researchers develop essential skills in qualitative research. The book highlights "difficult questions" that researchers ask themselves in the course of doing qualitative research. It also outlines the implications of different ways of responding to these questions.

Merriam, S. B. & Associates. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Qualitative Research in Practice is a collection of 16 essays exemplifying eight kinds of qualitative inquiry. At the conclusion of each of the 16 exemplar chapters is a short reflective essay written by one or more of the authors that examines a qualitative inquiry issue introduced in the chapter, intended to stimulate discussion about conceptualizing and conducting qualitative inquiry. The book is a unique and

worthwhile compendium. An asset of the book is Merriam's commitment to introducing and showcasing diverse qualitative inquiry discourses. Merriam's commitment to diversity is evident throughout the book. Contributors are both novice and seasoned researchers representing many academic disciplines such as developmental psychology, sociology, cultural studies.

Peters, M. A., & Burbules, N. C. (2004). *Poststructuralism and educational research*. Lanham/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

This book is the third in a series entitled *Philosophy, Theory, and Educational Research*. Modern contemporary research has experienced an explosion of new methodologies and approaches to inquiry over the past number of years. The authors explore what poststructuralism means for authors such as Foucault, Lyotard, Cixous, Derrida, and Haraway, to name a few, and the significance it has for qualitative inquiry. This book takes on a number of central questions and explores the impact of poststructuralism in language that makes the basic issues at stake accessible for a broad readership. The authors highlight the implications of a poststructuralist stance for the conception of the research subject and examine its standards of validity and methods of investigation.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Willis describes numerous relevant aspects of philosophy, empiricism, history, and prevailing political influences. This building of chronology is valuable in understanding the origins of specific schools of thought in relation to specific paradigms of research. *Foundations of Qualitative Research* introduces key theoretical and epistemological concepts in an accessible and non-intimidating style, replete with historical and current real-world examples employed to bring these otherwise difficult concepts to life. Concepts in this volume are supported through synopses of articles. Recommended related articles are available online and offer examples of qualitative research in a variety of approaches. The volume is highly accessible and is useful to novice and practicing qualitative researchers across a variety of disciplines.

Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Robert Yin's comprehensive presentation covers all aspects of the case study method from problem definition, design, and data collection to data analysis and composition, and reporting. Yin also traces the uses and importance of case studies to a wide range of disciplines, from sociology, psychology, and history to management, planning, social work, and education. New to the Third Edition are additional examples of case study research; discussions of developments in related methods, including randomized field trials and computer-assisted coding techniques. It includes added coverage of the strengths of multiple-case studies, case study screening, and the case study as a part of larger multi-method studies, as well as five major analytic techniques, including the use of logic models to guide analysis.

Questions for Further Study

1. What does the Bizarro cartoon suggest regarding qualitative research?
2. How might qualitative research contribute to the Social Sciences and Humanities?
3. Find what you consider to be an excellent qualitative research article or document. Begin a discussion on why this might be so. For example, what excites you or what insights can be gained about the article? Relate your observations back to the article.
4. What similarities and differences are evident between quantitative and qualitative research?
5. What purposes does an annotated bibliography serve?

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Chapter 2

The Qualitative (R)Evolution?

*We are made out of oppositions; we live between two poles...
You don't reconcile the poles, you just recognize them.*

– Orson Welles

Political Considerations

This chapter features explications of some of the more important facets of qualitative research through interviews with several noted scholars, beginning with a video clip by leading researcher Raewyn Connell, who describes research in all of its complexities and contradictions.



Dr. Raewyn Connell

Professor Connell offers a discussion on the dialectic between qualitative and quantitative research. This video clip can be viewed at:

cooperwhite.com
Password: cooperwhite
<http://cooperwhite.com/chapter2.1movie.html>

Professor Connell distinguishes between information and knowledge and suggests that research contains the assembling, organizing, communicating, and disseminating of knowledge. In addition, research in the Social Sciences requires communication between researchers and participants. She believes that *theory*, of some description, is always present in research because concepts shape the types of questions that we research. For example, gaining data relating to how many people are homeless (quantitative research question) is a much different kind of question than attempting to gain insights regarding their quality of life (qualitative research question) while they are homeless. Of course, this is an oversimplification of the differences between the types of questions asked by quantitative or qualitative researchers. However, perhaps it may serve as a small example of not only the importance of procedural questions concerning the assembling, organizing, communicating, and disseminating of knowledge but also how deeply entrenched in political concerns *any* theory may be.

Also, because the results of our research act upon us, theorizing becomes a moment in research rather than a discreet, separate activity. Professor Connell also notes that there is a link between data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This also shapes the kind of research that we pursue because of the type of audience that is selected as the beneficiaries of our dissemination. Therefore, she suggests that research is ultimately a social process, evidenced by highly structured communications. While Professor Connell identifies research as a social process, she intimates that it is highly political as well.

For instance, research formalized through an institution such as a university engenders certain conditions. Typically, after a research question is developed, funding issues must be addressed and a review by an ethics committee is the standard procedure. From this point, data collection and analysis yield findings that may be communicated orally through conference presentations or through publications. There is little leeway for nonstandard forms of research. Because of this, Professor Connell says, we must always strive to set research within a context of social relations, processes, and institutions. According to Connell, this makes research vulnerable to a myriad of social forces which, in today's society, have rendered research problematic.

What this means to researchers, we believe, is that the performing of qualitative research reflects particular relationships regarding power differentials, including what kinds of research is funded, who is studied and why. By way of example, in Canada, how some researchers have studied "natives" has resulted in a variety of

oppressive acts, policies, and procedures. The Indian Residential Schools of the past bear bleak testament to this. This example speaks to a colonial but nonetheless worldwide perspective that views aboriginal peoples as somehow inferior or “other.”

Critical race theory and feminist theory, for example, have helped to reverse this process because of their political emphasis on giving voice to those who have traditionally been excluded from mainstream research studies. We believe that, as a researcher, one must be aware of the impact that the political context exerts upon qualitative research in particular, while also understanding how the role that philosophy, history, (auto)biography, and the postmodern contexts interplay separately and together to create political agendas. In Chap. 5, Henry Giroux discusses the political context of qualitative research in greater detail.

Philosophical Considerations

In her interview, Professor Connell eschews a sharp division between quantitative and qualitative research, as there are elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches that coexist in almost any piece of research. In fact, she notes, what makes a piece of research quantitative or qualitative is the degree of saturation of these two elements within that research. This, then, creates different issues regarding how the information is represented. There are, however, fundamental philosophical differences between these two modes of research. Thus, while there may be some resemblances between qualitative and quantitative research, one type would not likely be mistaken for the other.

Paradigms of Research

As human beings, we are always interpreting. In fact, trying to come to an understanding is our way of being in the world (Gadamer 1960). Research is no different. Whether explicitly stated or not, all research is guided by theoretical orientations or ways of interpreting the world that we call “paradigms.” A paradigm can be viewed as a set of logically related assumptions, concepts, or principles that tend to guide our thinking and the important assumptions that we have about how the world functions.

It is widely recognized that most research is organized around two major paradigms – qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative researchers believe that the nature of reality is socially constructed, that the relationship between the researcher and participants are not mutually exclusive relationships, and that contextual constraints all help to shape inquiry. They seek to know answers to questions that focus on the social construction of experience and how meaning is created. Quantitative researchers, however, emphasize measurement and analysis, and focus on product rather than process. For quantitative researchers, the nature of reality is external and observable within a value-free framework.

As an example of paradigmatic differences, when the authors were in elementary school, Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests were administered to obtain quantitative

results. These tests claimed to be able to statistically measure one's intelligence as a function of one's age. Eventually, more qualitative measures were used to identify a student's capacity for learning. Many students who did well on such tests were of a higher socioeconomic standing than some of their peers who, unfortunately, may not have had the same access to cultural capital.

This example suggests that there were a number of qualitative questions that needed to be asked that were not asked due to the tenor of the times. As such, a number of students may have been deemed less intelligent due more to their personal circumstances than to their capacity for learning. This classic example has not been chosen to vilify quantitative research procedures, as for many situations quantitative research is appropriate for a great many research endeavors. However, in this case, it was the best measure available at the time. Although this example has been chosen as an attempt to reveal some of the problematics involved in doing research, it is important to note that in either case, whether IQ tests were administered or whether other methods were used to gauge learning capacity, both types of researchers were interested in getting at the meaning, even if the term "meaning" had different connotations for each type of researcher. Today, it is much clearer that there are a number of paradigms that one can choose to operate from, depending on one's view of the world (ontology) and how he or she comes to know the world (epistemology).

The two paradigms, qualitative and quantitative, are primarily distinguished from one another by the metaphysical principles of ontology and epistemology that guide work within each paradigm. Ontology refers to what we know to be the nature of reality, while epistemology refers to how we know what we know about that reality and how it is that we represent that reality. While it may be true that researchers operate primarily from one preferred paradigm, it is possible, if not desirable, to recognize that other paradigms exist. In this way, extremes that lead to binary thinking or the exclusion of the continua that exists between most apparently diametrically opposed research questions may be avoided. In any paradigm, it is essential that the researcher recognizes the paradigm within which he or she is operating. Because we are so totally immersed in a particular worldview or paradigm, perhaps one of the most difficult things is to recognize one's own bias.

Perhaps there are as many approaches to research as there are researchers. For example, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005) identify a significant number of research approaches, which incidentally are referred to as paradigms, while Willis (2007), on the other hand, identifies three such approaches.

This diagram (Fig. 2.1) represents the two paradigms of research – quantitative and qualitative. Included in this diagram are three commonly accepted approaches to research. Quantitative research generally makes use of positivist and postpositivist approaches while the interpretivist and critical approaches tend to be used more frequently within the qualitative research paradigm.

As previously noted, positivism and postpositivism, as well as objectivism and empiricism, are approaches to research that generally belong to the quantitative research paradigm. All members of the empirical, positivist, postpositivist, and objectivist family have enough resemblances to make it obvious that they are members of the same family. While some of the methods generally associated with

Paradigms and Approaches to Research

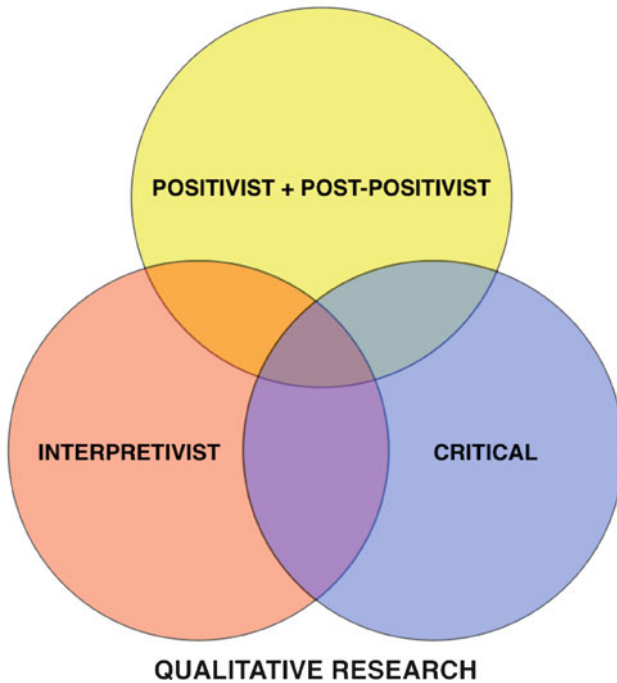


Fig. 2.1 Paradigms and approaches to research

these approaches have been used with some success in qualitative research, for the most part, however, qualitative research remains largely comprised of the interpretivist and critical approaches to research.

Approaches to Qualitative Research

Qualitative research typically is comprised of a multiplicity of approaches that are also inherent in most human endeavors. Consequently, within this paradigm, it is no surprise that many such approaches to qualitative research are commonly accepted by the research community. The two major approaches, interpretivism and critical theory, are highlighted in this section. A more detailed description of a number of qualitative research methodologies relating to each of these approaches can be found in volume two of this series.

Interpretivism, which encompasses a number of more specific and focused movements such as self-study and autobiographical methods, current ethnographic theory, and narrative research, is a response against positivism and empiricism in that the

Key Words and Identifiers In Paradigms and Approaches to Research

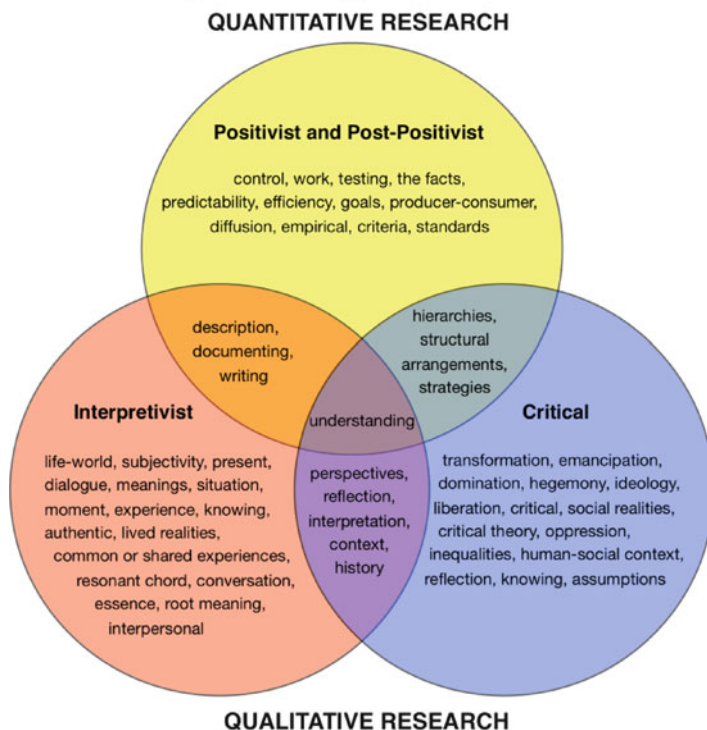


Fig. 2.2 Keywords and identifiers in paradigms and approaches to research

same research methods and methodologies used in the natural sciences are not effective in the social sciences. The interpretivist approach is based on the concept that humans cannot know how the world really is, regardless of research methods used. Interpretivism suggests that the search for generalizable truths and laws about human behavior be abandoned. Instead, concentrating on local understanding through exploring alternative forms of representation can more accurately illuminate and describe questions that we strive to understand (Fig. 2.2).

On the other hand, critical theory is, at heart, ideological. This approach to qualitative research developed from the work of the Frankfurt School, which in its broadest sense also applies to a number of movements such as critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and feminist theory in the social sciences. While critical theory, a modern synthesis that draws from Classical Marxism, remains focused on oppression, this research approach has broadened its perspective to include oppression and marginalization based on a variety of factors, including gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, and work (Willis 2007).

Thus, critical theory emphasizes the need to make domination and subjugation obvious in order to help oppressed groups free themselves. This focus has not only

led critical theorists to use established research methods in quite different ways, it has also led to new methods for performing research within this approach. Critical theory holds out an ideal for what research should be, based on the notion that practice and process are interwoven within this research approach in such a way that those who are oppressed or marginalized may emancipate themselves.

The interpretivist and the critical approaches to qualitative research differ epistemologically. Therefore, each approach offers different reasons or purposes for doing research. For example, an interpretivist would attempt to understand and describe the experience of being homeless from the perspective of the homeless individual, the homeless shelter personnel, or other social agencies involved. A critical approach may investigate how the social institutions of the day are structured so that the interests of some individuals and classes of society are served and perpetuated at the expense of others.

Each approach points to different types of data, methods, and methodologies as being valuable and worthwhile. Furthermore, each approach has distinct ways of generating meaning from the data gathered. Finally, each approach varies with regard to its relationship between research and practice. At the end of the day, none of these qualitative approaches are mutually exclusive domains, as all approaches to qualitative research are characterized by their search for meaning and understanding.

Many of these philosophical issues are dealt with at greater length in Chap. 7 in an interview with Maxine Greene.

Historical Considerations

Over a long period of time, qualitative research has contributed many new concepts and theories that have influenced how history has been envisioned, revised, and ultimately committed to paper. As such, qualitative research has a much longer history than is generally assumed.



Dr. Peter Freebody

Peter Freebody, a leading researcher in literacy education, not only offers some densely interrelated views relating to quantitative and qualitative research, and the historical underpinnings of modern qualitative research, but also speaks about the significance of qualitative research with respect to the understanding of the individual within the historic moment. Here, only a brief and cursory glance at historical elements that shape qualitative research will be provided. Many of these issues are dealt with at greater length in Chap. 4 in an interview with Norman Denzin.

In this video clip, Professor Freebody describes research as being both “science” and “project,” in that qualitative research has made significant theoretical contributions to the Social Sciences by bringing to light some of the most serious issues in sociology, anthropology, and education.

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Historically, across disciplines and geographic locations, there have been groups of researchers who have produced qualitative research accounts that showcased the perspectives of those whose points of view were seldom given voice. For example, the “Chicago School,” a name applied to a group of sociological researchers at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s, shared some common theoretical and methodological assumptions that relied on first-hand data gathering, fieldwork, and single case studies, whether it involved an individual, a group, or a community (Wiley 1979). To illustrate, collections of letters brought to life the suffering of marginalized groups of people such as those in the classic study by Thomas and Znaniecki of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1927). Historically, as now, qualitative research can be very convincing morally and socially in terms of influencing policy and practice.

Freebody also notes that to understand how to think rigorously in qualitative research is also relevant to quantitative research, since the understanding of constructs and concepts also occurs in whatever it is that one chooses to quantify. Even working with preexisting data sets requires qualitative work around conceptual models which are intrinsically qualitative because they pertain to relations between qualities. Just as the previous video clip of Professor Connell suggests, qualitative research practices are covertly, in some cases, embedded within quantitative research. Thus, through the understanding of interrelationships between quantitative and qualitative research, the researcher can gain enhanced clarity in a well-grounded research endeavor, be it qualitative or quantitative.

Peter Freebody also notes that many qualitative researchers appear somewhat defensive about their research, as if qualitative research is little more than a “poor

cousin” to quantitative research. He suggests that qualitative research is often viewed as being less stable and it continues to feel the need to justify its existence. However, this is unfounded, he adds, as observational studies about growth and change by leading theorists such as Charles Darwin and Jean Piaget were not formulated by experimentalists. They were formulated by people observing qualitative experiences and practices. Consequently, Professor Freebody feels there is an “Ancestral Privilege” due to qualitative research, even though this does not mean that it is not modern.

The fact that qualitative researchers feel the need to defend experiential knowledge is not surprising, given what Varela et al. (1991) suggest: “In our present world science is so dominant that we give it the authority to explain even when it denies what is most immediate and direct – our everyday, immediate experience” (12). The privileging of scientific knowledge over personal experiential knowledge has a long and complex history, dating back to Bacon, Descartes, and Locke, who established the theoretical roots of the modern era. We can think of modernism as the conjunction of their projects, as the fusion of the domination of nature with the primacy of method and the sovereignty of the individual (Borgmann 1992). To this end, a rigorous method of science that privileged the rationality of the knowing subject, detached from the conditions of subjectivity, was born. This way of thinking is now so deeply entrenched in our culture that it often goes unchallenged even in texts that purport to be about the subjectivism of interpretation.

In their treatise on the embodiment of knowing, Varela et al. (1991) move beyond this dualist debate. They show us that, in the West, two extreme views, that of scientific knowledge (quantitative) and of experience (qualitative), have operated. They argue that the triumph of scientific knowledge over experience has resulted in “disembodied thought.” The first of the two extremes, that of scientific knowledge, is reminiscent of Descartes, whose project was to sidestep the structures of understanding (prejudice and prejudgment) in favor of an objective, unbiased description. This world view is consistent with the objective, positivistic stance of contemporary science. The second view, that of experience, is one of extreme subjectivism in which the individual mind constructs the world on its own in the absence of the other. One view searches for a recovery of what is “outer” – what is to be found in the world, independent of the knower. The other view searches for a recovery of what is “inner” to the mind of the knower – what is created independently of an external world. Ultimately, Varela et al. (1991), argue for a middle way between objectivism and subjectivism and look at knowing as a continuous oscillation between different modalities. In our view, we do not believe there is one best method, but that all methods are contextually bound, although one method may be more appropriate than another at any given point in time depending upon features and characteristics specific to each phenomenon. In this vein, Varela et al. (1991) enlist the view of the non-Western philosophical tradition of Buddhism, believing that Buddhism and its doctrines of non-dualism may contribute to a less circumscribed view of self and society.

(Auto)Biographical Considerations

Given that one of the criticisms of autobiography (Bullough and Pinnegar 2001) has been that “tipping too far to the self side produces solipsism or confessional, and tipping too far the other way turns into traditional research” we return to Peter Freebody to convey the importance of connecting autobiography to history to convey a thicker description. Dr. Freebody speaks of the significance of qualitative research with respect to the understanding of the individual within the historic moment.

As Professor Freebody reviews a brief history of qualitative research, he notes that quantitative research was a relatively late notion that was conceptually quite radical in its attempt to locate people on a normal distribution curve. He says that thinking organically about human individual and social experience is at odds with normal distribution curves and that this is an implausible way of looking at human behavior. This way of looking at human behavior is largely responsible for the notion that the individual is a collection of relatively stable attributes that can be measured and assessed in the same way that we use techniques to be able to view individuals as biological entities. It is this misjudgment, Professor Freebody suggests, that imbues statistical and positivistic measures with unwarranted social and psychological significance. Consequently, the past century has brought with it a view of the individual possessing stable attributes through the theory of individualization that, particularly in the West, is congruent with more traditional quantitative ways of using computational methods for mapping people. This notion held currency within the society because of the efficacy of statistical information in informing administration and policy. In agreement, Maxine Greene comments on her discomfort, even today, at being asked to quantify human experience by providing scientific proof for such qualitatively based phenomena as notions of the self.

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Postmodern Considerations

We believe that this video clip featuring Professor Greene opens a window to such important postmodern questions as how the role of the qualitative researcher may be scripted. This is an important autobiographical consideration because, as Shutz (2000) aptly suggests:

What we are led to believe about ourselves, what we learn about how we are supposed to act, the ways we are taught to frame “problems” and even the tools of reason that we use to solve these problems, do not simply represent neutral skills but are in fact ways of forming us into particular kinds of subjects. “Power” in this vision does not merely suppress or restrict but actually produces actions and desires (216).

The self is one of the things that we have used science to explain, but the answers received have been less than satisfactory because agency and the existential need for human relationships have been compromised in this equation. As postmodern influences have pointed out, if we are taught to frame inquiry “in absentia,” we obtain information that is very different from the knowledge that the researcher gains through recognizing and acknowledging his/her role with respect to the transactional nature of research. It is from the research text that the sense of self is generated and, reciprocally, it is also from the sense of self that the research text is developed. We act and are acted upon. All this is co-created within current postmodern considerations. More will be said about postmodernism through the research of Zygmunt Bauman, presented in Chap. 6.

Postmodernism offers opportunities for the deconstruction of self while also offering significant opportunities for the reconstruction of the self (Barthes 2004). “Self,” in this case, refers not only to the researcher, but to all those who take part in the research up to and including the consumers of the research text. We see the role of autobiography in this volume as at once postmodern, intertextual and operating across disciplines, serving to displace traditional notions of what the author’s role means to the creation of the text.

Five Contexts of Qualitative Research

Through the research text, autobiographical dimensions may become more fully developed through transactions between the individual and the world and through the postmodern, historical, philosophical, and political contexts. These “Five Contexts,” a theoretical framework for conducting, understanding, and interpreting qualitative research in education and in other disciplines, were arrived at inductively as a result of numerous video interviews with world-renowned scholars who added to our understandings not only of them but also of ourselves. It has really been through listening to these leading scholars within qualitative research that has brought us to these five contexts. Each of these simultaneous yet progressive contexts, which form this framework for conducting qualitative research, will be discussed further in this volume, beginning with the Autobiographical Context. The whole receives its definition from the parts and, reciprocally, the parts can only be understood in reference to the whole. Consequently, we have assigned “qualities,” or values, in order to develop a framework that we refer to as the “Five Contexts” for the interpretation of qualitative research.

Selected Annotated Bibliography

Austin, H., Dwyer, B., & Freebody, P. (2002). *Schooling the child: The making of students in classrooms*. London/New York: Routledge Falmer.

The goal of this book is to redefine ways in which common sense and professional understandings about children reconstruct, reaccomplish, and sustain childhood as an experience for young people. The book extends contemporary research and theory by exploring their currency among a highly significant sector of the adult population; school teachers. It is the school, as a key social location, that actively constructs consensual, culturally validated definitions of the Child. This informative, well-structured text documents and critiques contemporary theorizations of childhood. The specific categorization of childhood has extensive implications for the ways in which young “human beings” are treated and for the nature of their participation in social life and, specifically, in the cultural experience.

Breines, I., Connell, R. W., & Eide, I. (Eds.). (2000). *Male roles, masculinities and violence: A culture of peace perspective*. Paris: UNESCO.

This wide-ranging volume offers a variety of works, from case studies to social-scientific research on the connections of traditional masculinity and patriarchy to violence and peace building. Such connections have been, until now, rarely tackled. This book contests the far-too-frequent views in the socialization of boy children that aggressiveness, violence, and force are an acceptable means of expression and contribute to sustainable solutions to conflicts. The initiatives expressed here point toward an exciting gender-balanced, post-patriarchal society for the present millennium. Keywords include Conflict, Culture of peace, Education, Gender equity, Men, Peace, Social development, Social sciences, Violence, War, Women.

Connell, R. W. (2002). *Gender*. Oxford: Polity Press.

This volume represents an impressive attempt at introducing readers to the question of gender from a broad interdisciplinary and international scope. It is an engaging text covering a vast amount of scholarship that is at once intellectually challenging and personal. Connell manages to convey some key trajectories in the sociological analysis of gender succinctly, yet without oversimplifying the sociological approach. In addition, Connell provides accessible summaries of different levels of the social and how these are gendered. Connell remains a steady and reliable guide for the student of gender and society. This is an important and eminently readable guide to a complex and increasingly global interdisciplinary field. Connell discusses both social structure and human agency while tackling debates that span the personal and the political.

Connell, R. W. (2007). *Southern theory: Social science and the global dynamics of knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

In *Southern Theory*, Raewyn Connell presents the case for a new “world social science” that is inclusive of many voices by arguing for a more democratic global recognition of social theory from societies outside the dominant European and North American metropole. Intellectual production of the majority “southern” world is often marginalized and intellectually discredited. Connell shows how social theory about the modern world from peripheral societies is equal in intellectual rigor and is often of greater political relevance to our changing world. These myriad theories offer valuable perspectives crucial to the application of social theory in the

contemporary world, having the power to transform the influence of the metropolitan hegemony on social thought by mutual regard and interaction.

Connell, R., Campbell, C., Vickers M., Welch, A., Foley, D., & Bagnall, N. (2007). *Education, change & society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Written in an engaging manner by Australia's leading sociology and education academics, *Education, Change & Society* is written to assist students in their understanding of how and by what mechanisms contemporary education in Australia operates. The broader issues concerning Australian society are examined in the context of educational institutions and policies, promoting critical reflection and facilitating in-depth analysis. This book presents an overview of the Australian educational system and delves into some of the deeper issues that influence educational policy in Australian society and in the larger world. The writing is well informed and the concepts are presented carefully and in language that is at once engaging and accessible.

Freebody, K., & Freebody, P. (2008). Engaging and critiquing challenge in the process drama classroom: Socio-economic status as topic and resource. In K. Cooper & R. E. White (Eds.), *Critical literacies in action*. Rotterdam: Sense Publications. Advocates and practitioners of critical literacy are critical of aspects of conventional literacy education. It is often this particular kind of literacy education that underpins and legitimates the features of exchanges in which teachers and students engage. The process drama format can provide a setting in which such concerns can be raised with pertinence, guidance, and moral safety, and embodied in temporary commitments – less than personal but more than hypothetical – that can uniquely animate critical educational inquiries into agency, moral reasoning, and social structure.

Freebody, P. R. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: Interaction and practice*. London/Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

This volume offers a comprehensive overview of qualitative approaches to educational research. The text draws upon a broad range of real-life examples to describe and illustrate methods by which educational data may be analyzed. Through a detailed yet concise explanation, the reader is then shown how these methods work and how their outcomes may be interpreted. Each chapter concludes with a set of exercises and questions for further discussion. *Qualitative Research in Education* presents a thorough explanation of the complexities of educational research and demonstrates the importance of placing this knowledge within cultural, linguistic, and sociological contexts. It is an extremely informative text, which constitutes essential reading for those engaged in the research and analysis of educational data.

Freebody, P. (2007). *Literacy education in school: Research perspectives from the past, for the future*. Camberwell: ACER Press.

This work aims to expand our understanding of the nature of literacy at a time when public and private lives have become increasingly literacy-dependent, and

literacy demands more complex and sophisticated. What passes for effective literacy education will differ depending on language, culture, history, and the technologies of communication and knowledge production. It details the complexities associated with defining literacy. Differing versions of literacy education have been constructed in the context of a brief historical exploration of the role of literacy as a force for social and cultural coherence. A summary of current research into how educators have taught young people to crack the codes of literacy in school settings is offered and principles and topics are described for further research in literacy education.

Luke, A., Freebody, P., Lau, S., & Gopinathan, S. (2005). Towards research-based innovation and reform: Singapore schooling in transition. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 25(1), 5–28.

The challenges facing the Singapore education system in the new millennium are unique and unprecedented in Asia. Demands for new skills, knowledge, and flexible competencies for globalized economies and cosmopolitan cultures will require system-wide innovation and reform. But there is a dearth of international benchmarks and prototypes for such reforms. This article describes student background, performance, classroom practices, student artifacts and outcomes, and student longitudinal life pathways. A systematic focus on teachers' and students' work in everyday classroom contexts is the necessary starting point for pedagogical innovation and change. This, it is argued, can constitute a rich multidisciplinary evidence base for educational policy.

Greene, M. (1995). Art and imagination: Reclaiming the sense of possibility. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76(5), 378–382.

Children and young people inhabit a world of fearful moral uncertainty. The prevailing cynicism with regard to values and the feelings of resignation it breeds create an atmosphere at odds with the unpredictability associated with the experience of art. Young people find themselves described as “human resources” rather than persons who are centers of choice and evaluation. Perhaps, it is no wonder that the dominant mood in many classrooms is one of passive reception. Existential contexts of education reach far beyond the classroom, as they have to do with the human condition. Classroom encounters with the arts can move the young to imagine, to extend, and to renew. If the significance of the arts for growth, inventiveness, and problem solving is recognized at last, a desperate stasis may be overcome.

Greene, M. (1994). Carpe diem: The arts and school restructuring. *Teachers College Record*, 95(4), 494–507.

Active learning, meaning-making, critical questioning, storytelling, and authentic assessment are hallmarks of present-day efforts to restructure public schools. The values being articulated are similar to the values sought by those seeking experiential transformation through encounters with the arts. No encounters can release imagination in the way engagement with works of art can release it. Artistic imagination can be fostered if we can set aside a desire for answers, or hope for possession. If that experience includes creative or expressive adventures in any of the art

forms, understanding and the ability to notice, to respond, can only be enhanced. If restructuring our schools is intended as a means of releasing the young to pose their own questions and to be empowered to pursue solutions, informed encounters with the arts are essential.

Greene, M. (1975). *Autobiographical statement*. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualists* (pp. 295–298). Berkeley: McCutchan.

A personal preface to her chapter in the same work, Maxine Greene lived, as child, in a home where intellectualism had no place. Trying to write as a novelist, she journaled pain, sought therapy, and married young. She and her doctor husband had a child. Professor Greene describes her arrival at NYU as an accident and claims to have received her education out of convenience. After receiving her MA in the Philosophy of Education, Maxine Greene shares her path through graduate school as a PhD student and teacher. As accepted publications began, in journals and literature/fiction prefaces, she became editor of the *Teachers College Record*. Professor Greene closes her account with an acknowledgment that she is still not sure what teaching is.

Greene, M. (1972). Defining determinism. *Teachers College Record*, 74(2), 147–154. People perceive themselves as being at the mercy of inscrutable forces described as “the system,” “the establishment,” “technology,” or what is summed up as “technique.” Much the same feeling accompanies a determinist point of view; the belief that everything in the universe is governed by causal laws, that for everything that happens there are conditions such that, given those conditions, nothing else could have happened. The conclusion is then drawn that the individual has no meaningful capacity to will not to do something. For the determinist, uniform laws govern all of nature, including living beings. If the past is fixed and in some sense “necessary” from the vantage point of the present, the future is not. To defy determinism, then, is to become fully conscious of one’s freedom, with all its risks and responsibilities.

Greene, M. (1967). *Existential encounters for teachers*. New York: Random House. Maxine Greene’s *Existential Encounters for Teachers* does not shield one from perplexity and self-doubt nor from unease and discomfiture. With meaning as the nuclear question of the times, she asks if we are going anywhere. And she makes the readers ask the same question of themselves. This book offers encounters to those who can take the risks of becoming and to those who can affirm the responsibility of creating themselves as teachers. Maxine Greene has organized an admirable collection of existential thought with a pertinent relationship to the concerns of the classroom. This book is one more indication that, despite the current cognitive and behavioral emphasis on educational theory, there is a growing response to a more spontaneous humanistic and aesthetic search for new meanings within the field of educational theory.

Questions for Further Study

1. Discuss the quotation that opens this chapter. How does this relate to the chapter and what the noted scholars suggest about the nature of research in general?

2. Compare and contrast Peter Freebody's discussion of quantitative research with that of Raewyn Connell's discussion.
3. What are some of the benefits and drawbacks of each kind of research, qualitative and quantitative?
4. What are some of the ontological conditions that pertain to quantitative and qualitative research?
5. Discuss some of the concerns that Professor Greene identifies about the utility of each paradigm of research?

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Chapter 3

The Autobiographical Context

And, for me, the aspiration of the qualitative researcher is to capture the immediacy and vividness of that dust hanging in the afternoon air that my grandmother pointed out to me.

– Dr. William F. Pinar



Dr. William F. Pinar

As evidenced by the first two chapters, thus far this volume has attempted to develop an understanding of the evolution of qualitative research. In retrospect, we have identified and described five contexts in qualitative research – the autobiographical, the historical, the political, the postmodern, and the philosophical contexts that we hope will assist beginning and practicing researchers in engaging with their research initiatives.

In this chapter we develop more fully the notion of the autobiographical context through a description of what has led each of us, the authors, to a greater understanding of the central role of the autobiographical in qualitative research. This may take the form of a panegyric or a description of similar events from differing viewpoints. As such, the intent is to situate ourselves in the research text.

From here we proceed to an excerpt of a video interview with Dr. William Pinar which includes an account of his autobiography as well as a description of his search for a method for accessing and interpreting one's autobiography. Also included in this chapter is a reprint of one of Professor Pinar's seminal articles on this method, as well as responses to the autobiographical context by graduate students who have taken classes with the authors of this volume.

In attempting to connect further with these elements, we return to our own autobiographies in order to engage with the process described by Professor Pinar. The chapter ends with a brief summary and looks forward to the second context – the historical context.

The Authors' Autobiographical Regressive Moments

This Research that so Consumes Me

Karyn Cooper

I could say that this project, these volumes and notions of the autobiographical come out of a coherent program of research, but suffice it to say that the old adage "Necessity is the mother of invention," is perhaps the "truthful" place to begin....

Several years ago, I was approached by the chair of my department to teach a qualitative research course for graduate students. I must admit that I really had no interest in doing so, partly because I remembered my own experiences with methodology courses as being rather lifeless, and partly because I wondered whether I really had enough general knowledge to teach such an important foundational course. Because I trusted the chair of the department, I believed that he knew what he was doing and so began my survey of qualitative research texts, not just in education but across all disciplines. Although I read many good solid texts and probably could have selected a number of these for the course, in the end I was left with the feeling that something was missing. This was an old familiar feeling, possibly because my own personal narrative/reality has so often been in such sharp contrast with the dominant cultural narrative and possibly because it has been a rare and hence ironic occurrence in schooling when issues questioning our understanding of being are at the heart of educational matters.

Fortunately, I had a privileged doctoral experience in education at the University of Alberta under the supervision of Jean Clandinin. In retrospect, one of the most memorable and perhaps most important opportunities was that I was introduced, through texts or in person, to some of the greatest scholars of our time. Suddenly, questions that deeply concerned the understanding of being were brought into clear focus through studying phenomenology with Max Van Manen, meeting and reading Gadamer, hearing Elliot Eisner speak passionately and finding someone ardent about the life of Virginia Woolf in Bill Pinar. Suddenly, I did not feel so alone.

Life was lived...

Some years later, in surveying the qualitative research texts for the course I was about to teach, I struggled to find what was missing, what was hiding in front of me. I began to imagine how much richer and deeper my qualitative research course would be if my

graduate students could actually hear the words of some of the greatest qualitative researchers of our time. What if they could hear Max Van Manen speak about his phenomenology? Or Bill Pinar discuss autobiographical research? Would it be possible to interview Clifford Geertz or Maxine Greene? It was then that it became evident to me that the life stories of some of the most influential scholars of our time were not to be found within the pages of the countless texts on qualitative research that I had been surveying.

The significance of the (auto)biographical context eventually became even more apparent to me in the words of William Pinar: "By examining the history of ideas in the life of the individuals who formulate them we can begin to understand — and not in the fragmented way which mainstream social science offers — the nature of intellectual development, the process by which the individual learns, the process by which one becomes less parochial, more understanding, more humane" (1994, 120). And so began the dream of collecting the autobiographies of some of the most renowned scholars in qualitative research.

Surmise

Robert E. White

The very first time that I met Elliot Eisner, well over a decade ago, he was striding towards me wearing a light tan-coloured suit. He had just finished giving a presentation at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) which was being held in Montreal, Canada. The year was 1999.

"Excuse me, Dr. Eisner," I stumbled out, completely daunted, "My name is Robert White and I represent the *Journal of Educational Change*. Would you be willing to submit an article to the journal for possible publication?" I do not remember what his response was or whether he ever did submit an article or not, but I was impressed by his graciousness. I had other such experiences with numerous distinguished scholars and I never failed to be impressed.

At the time, I had just embarked upon my doctoral studies at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). I had a long history of teaching in the public school system and it was time for my emancipation, I told myself. At OISE, I had determined that I wanted to receive the very best education possible and that it was up to me to ensure that this occurred. To this end, I took courses with Dr. David Corson, who eventually became my thesis advisor until his untimely death in 2001.

At the same time, Dr. Andy Hargreaves was in the process of developing the aforementioned journal and he was in need of a competent editor. I decided that this was the kind of learning experience that suited me to a tee. Competent or not, I applied for and obtained the editor's position, thus explaining not only my presence but also my mission at the annual AERA convention.

It was this conference that led me to realize three important things about research. Firstly, I came to understand that there is more qualitative research being conducted in this current time than has ever been conducted before. This was less surprising than the next piece of information. The second important piece of information was the realization that the scholars conducting such research were, for the most part, still very much with us. This certainly hastened the disintegration of my belief that research was and had been primarily conducted by scholars who have since passed on. The third and final piece of information that left me speechless was just how gracious and accommodating so many of these extremely accomplished and exceptionally busy scholars were. They, for the most part, took the time they didn't have to make me feel as if my request for an article was of genuine concern to them and that it would be seriously considered.

Let's fast forward several years....

I was still at OISE, still working with the journal and had also begun working with Dr. Karyn Cooper, my esteemed colleague, as one of her graduate assistants. Time passed and I graduated. I moved east to Nova Scotia. Dr. Cooper and I wrote several books together. One day she telephoned me with the possibility of a subsequent book, this one about qualitative research. I seized upon the idea immediately. What a learning opportunity this would be! It has been.

Our collaboration had been successful to this point so I was certain that, given equal amounts of determination and sagacity, we would be able to deal with the innumerable challenges associated with this undertaking. The next steps were to get funding for the project and to get a contract for the book that would be produced as a result of this venture. We fashioned a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant that would guarantee funding for 3 years and began making the rounds of our respective universities' research offices. It was at this point that John Blackwell, the research officer for St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, my home base, suggested that we video-tape the people whom we wished to interview. I was dumbfounded! It made perfect sense.

Over the next year, while awaiting precious funds, we cobbled together some money and piloted our first interview. It was with Dr. William F. Pinar, who had agreed to be a collaborator on our SSHRC grant. Dr. Maxine Greene was next. Then our funding arrived and we were able to travel to a variety of other locales to interview a small cadre of world-renowned scholars. The rest is not only history, as they say, it is also (auto)biography.

An Interview with Dr. William F. Pinar

At the beginning of the interview process, William Pinar agreed to an interview in his home in White Rock, British Columbia on August 5, 2005. We asked Professor Pinar about his background, including a footnote about his parents, his schooling, and his earliest influences. During this process, Professor Pinar described how and when he decided to become an academic. He was also asked to describe the process through which he found his way into the field of education, including lived experiences that have had a major influence on his life and work.

After viewing this video clip, graduate students in our respective classes were asked to respond to Professor Pinar's search for a method that adequately captured the autobiographical element that was central to qualitative research. Here are some of the student responses.

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Response by Graduate Students

Graduate students in our respective courses contributed their thoughts regarding the autobiographical context after viewing the excerpt included above:

Through self-reflective meta-cognition, we gain a sense of what it means to be "me" so that we become aware of whose eyes we are actually seeing through. What is here, in the sense of his or her own, is a "project of understanding" self so that we can better understand others. Bill Pinar refers to the importance of solitude and solitary study which is private

while being positioned within and affected by a group or societal experience.... Autobiography situates us as a partner in the shared experience of existence, recognizing the part we play in the dynamics of life. Seeing the dust in the air is personal (Jim Penney).

This “project of understanding” is further illuminated by another graduate student who notes the importance of providing “a raw and personal glimpse” of this researcher’s autobiography:

Bill Pinar’s autobiographical voice gives credence to him as a researcher and provides a raw and personal glimpse of him from a humanistic perspective. Hearing about Pinar’s background...from his earliest memories as a child to his philosophy and aspirations as an adult drew me closer to his lived experiences and allowed me to make my own personal connections in relation to my own lived experiences.... When Pinar mentioned his grandmother drawing his attention to the “dust hanging in the afternoon air”, any reader/viewer could feel that this particular memory of his had a very significant effect on his life, affecting his philosophy as a researcher. When he reminisced about his childhood relationship with his mother and grandmother, it imparted a greater authentic representation of him, both personally and professionally.... Pinar’s peeling back the layers of his life and sharing it with the reader presents a more transparent and intimate account of his worldview.... I felt engaged in the depth of Pinar’s conversation as he shared his very significant and interesting “story” with us (Sue Waghorn).

Such “a framework to bestow a voice to the words” helps us to capture the “essence of the moment” by allowing one to connect one’s own biography to the subject at hand.

The autobiographical context of research establishes a connection between the author and the researcher by providing a framework to bestow a voice to the words. The autobiographical context cultivates a relationship as the author recounts his/her personal story, rather than recalling a detached account of pragmatic facts.... It positions the researcher in the immediacy and reinvention of the moment from the speaker’s unique perspective.... The autobiographical context is the lens through which the story is filtered. It is both a moment of clarity and of discovery. By capturing the essence of the moment, the reader becomes immersed in a private reflection on the author’s identity and gives validity to his/her humanity (Natalie McInnis).

Just as Bill Pinar’s autobiography allows him credence as a researcher, the viewer is able to relate more intimately with the research through a comparison or a contrasting of lived experiences. Most of us search for similar ways of being and meaning. This is an existential issue that unites all humanity. Ultimately, is not the central ideal for qualitative research to provide a renewal of hope for humanity?

To use a metaphor, viewing a work of art without contextualizing it in terms of our knowledge about the artist tends to limit our understanding of the painting itself. It is the “bio-notes” that afford us insight into the inner workings of the artist’s history, his or her own biography and what was occurring at the moment to make this art so captivating. Without such insights, we are left to merely imagine or guess at the contexts behind the painting. As such, the view that we have is necessarily truncated. Why would we not want to know as much about the subject as possible? And, by extension, when it comes to research methodology, the same question rings true.

If it is true that a “good” researcher is aware of his or her own position within the research text, then it is important to have a solid understanding of one’s self, including one’s pre-understanding of the subject at hand. In the video clip presented above, Dr. Pinar describes his regressive-progressive-analytical-synthetical method of reflecting on an autobiography that is historically and relatively accurate while doing justice to the emotions of the individual, situating him/her with respect to the future. In the article that follows, Bill Pinar provides a classic perspective that illuminates his understanding of the process of exploration of autobiography.

While Dr. Pinar’s work may have evolved over time, we believe this framework is still not only valid but also important and effective in helping to situate oneself with regard to one’s research endeavors, whether it be to engage in or to be a discerning consumer of qualitative research. In this seminal article on the autobiography and architecture of self, Dr. Pinar asks, “What do I make of what I have been made?” This is a fitting question in commencing a discussion by Dr. Pinar on the regressive-progressive-analytical-synthetical method, which he describes in “The method of *currere*,” reprinted below from his book entitled *Autobiography, Politics and Sexuality: Essays in Curriculum Theory 1972–1992*, published in 1994.

An Article by William Pinar

The Method of *Currere* (1975)

1.

It is regressive—progressive—analytical—synthetical. It is therefore temporal and conceptual in nature, and it aims for the cultivation of a developmental point of view that hints at the transtemporal and transconceptual. From another perspective, the method is the self-conscious conceptualization of the temporal, and from another, it is the viewing of what is conceptualized through time. So it is that we hope to explore the complex relation between the temporal and conceptual. In doing so we might disclose their relation to the Self and its evolution and education.

2.

I want to try to understand the contribution my formal academic studies make to my understanding of my life. I am taking as hypothesis that I am in a biographic situation, and while in certain ways I have chosen it (and hence must bear responsibility for it), in other ways I can see that it follows in somewhat causal ways from previous situations. I can look at my life in a linear way, acknowledging its actual multidimensional character, but limiting my view to a linear one, to make it more manageable, and I see that this has led to that; in that circumstance I chose that, rejected this alternative; I affiliated with those people, then left them for these, that this field intrigued me, then that one; I worked on this problem, then that one. And if I chart these choices and circumstances on a time line, and then begin to describe (as I remember it now), the transitions from that situation to the one that followed, I see that there is a certain coherence. Not necessarily a logical one, but a lived one, a felt one. The point of coherence is the biography as it is lived: the *lebenswelt*.

What role in this biography do my evolving intellectual interests play? In what ways do they contribute to an understanding of the dominant themes of this biography? In what ways

have they permitted biographic movement, that is, freed one from interests whose life has gone out of them, and drawn one on into areas that excite? What is the relation of these interests and concomitant professional activities to one's private life? I must have no submerged agendas here; I must be willing to impartially describe the relation between my professional work and my personal work, not succumbing to popular attitudes, whether these insist the two must be connected or must remain separate.

There are many related questions, but the predominant one is: what has been and what is now the nature of my educational experience?

By taking as hypothesis that I do not know the answer to this question, I take myself and my existential experience as a data source. The method of data generation is like the psychoanalytical technique of free association. I take a particular question, like why am I involved in the research project which occupies me now? and I record, by pen or recorder, all that occurs to me, regardless how esoteric and hence unrelated the information apparently is. But I get ahead of myself.

My hunch is that by working in the manner I will describe, I will obtain information that will move me biographically, and not only linearly, but multidimensionally. If I take my current perspective, and try to put parentheses around it (so to speak) by recording it, then I have moved to another vantage point. If I write about my biographic situation as I see it (not as I want to see it, although this can be included), then it is as if I have escaped from it. It is there, on the paper in a way, and I am still here, at the typewriter, looking at the print and the conceptualization of the perspective that was mine, and so the place is new. In Sartre's language, I have totalized my situation, and the new sum is where I conceptually (and more inclusively, biographically) am now. Because the view is new, the old problem (say it was a research problem) is seen differently. But because the problem is inherently a partial product of my conceptual apparatus, and because this apparatus functions slightly differently since its operator has moved slightly, the problem itself poses itself differently, and hence the problem is different.

We use an analogous strategy sometimes without thinking about it. If something stumps us, we back off (we say) to do something else, then come at it again later. I am willing to guess that we do this, that is, we allow time to pass before we attempt to reconceive the problem, because we must move on to another level, from where the problem looks different and hence is different, and the solution may then become clear. We left the problem initially because we could not solve it on the conceptual level where we were at first. Perhaps formal studies, like literary theory, or physics, can be utilized to illuminate the myriad of surface ways, and subliminal ways, we evolve through time, how our intellectual interests evolve through time.

3.

Regressive. The first step of the method is regressive. One returns to the past, to capture it as it was, and as it hovers over the present. Let me illustrate.

Listening to this paper being read one can be said to be absorbed in the present. As soon as we have said that seemingly simple statement, we slip into complexity. In which present is one absorbed? Is it the concrete, literal present? That is, is one attending to the sight and sound of Pinar reading, of sitting in a certain chair in a certain room amid others? Or is the present where one dwells what we can call an abstract, conceptual present? Perhaps it is the conceptual reality created by the words that I read, perhaps it is a more private one, and thoughts, your own thoughts "what is this about?" or "who is it I'm to have lunch with today?" or "I must remember to phone home before too late tonight." A survey would probably reveal that the majority dwell in the conceptual present (rather than the concrete present), maybe mine (as I read), probably yours (your ideas of what it is I'm saying, your plans for the next day).

My guess is that to the extent one dwells in a conceptual present, and in the subjective present, is the extent to which one dwells in the past. Not just the literal past, as the memory of arrival last night, which like the literal present often is superficially apparent and just as superficially important.

The biographic past? It is usually ignored. Ignored but not absent. The biographic past exists presently, complexly contributive to the biographic present. While we say it cannot be held accountable for the present, the extent to which it is ignored is probably the extent it does account for what is present.

Unconsciousness perpetuates itself. Hence the formation of habit, of habitual responses to seemingly characteristic stimuli, responses that are to varying degrees (we say) adjustive, or not. The habitual is the surface is the public, the outer, and its strength or the force of habit, is probably positively correlated with unconsciousness and capture by the past. The present then becomes an acting out of the past, the superimposition of past issues and situations and persons onto the present. The complex of habitual responses is constitutive of the present personality. Its predictability is its habituality is its unconsciousness is its pastness.

In all likelihood one is in the past while in the present. The present is then veiled; the past is manifest and apparent, however, so transparently present that it is veiled, and one assumes oneself to be in the present when one is not. To ascertain where one is, when one is, one must locate the past. Locating means identification means bracketing the past. Bracketing means looking at what is not ordinarily seen, at what is taken-for-granted, hence loosening oneself from it. As the past becomes, the present is revealed. So it is we aim at freedom from the past, freedom in the present. Such objectives require entrance into the past as a first step.

One must regress. Not in the commonsensical fear of losing one's hard-won maturity, and becoming infantile. Nor not necessarily involving dramatic and painful character decrystallization, as in the Janovian approach to psychotherapy. [Although it is true that as one leaves the present to enter the past one detaches from one's acculturated character. This detachment is sufficiently subtle as to escape notice, but it does initiate a gradual process of decrystallization and accompanying disclosure of a nonstatic, nonarrested character always in transition.]

Re — back. *Gradi* — to go back. One goes back, and there one finds the past intact. The past is entered, lived in, but not necessarily succumbed to. Because one is not there concretely one is not necessarily vulnerable. One avoids complete identification with the self that was, and hence is able to observe.

That is the point of this phase of the method: to observe oneself functioning in the past. Since the focus of the method is educational experience, one takes special notice of one's past life-in-schools, with one's past life-with-schoolteachers and one's past life-with-books and other school-related artifacts. Observe and record. Include present responses to what is observed.

It is suggested that one return to the schooled beginning, to the elementary years, to wherever one is able to reach. Enter again the classroom, watch the teachers, yourself and your classmates, what you did. More importantly how you did it. From the start did your attention adhere to the public program? To what extent did you absent yourself in fantasy? Did these absences coincide with particular lessons (like geography) and with particular teachers?

Do not attempt to interpret what you observe at this point. Interpretation interrupts presence in the past.

On through the primary grades into junior and senior high school, keeping the observer's focus on the self. The self, in this classroom, with that teacher, these subjects, this response to that teacher, the intervention of parents regarding that situation, and one's response. One's attachment to these subjects, to those teachers; one's disinterest in that field, one's dislike of this teacher.

Athletic and other extracurricular interests if any and their effects upon one's studies. Erotic interests as they impinged upon one's studies. The importance of public conceptions of status. This college or that? The self amidst it all, evolving this way, leaving those friends, taking on these, having these academic interests, then those.

Through the undergraduate years. These courses, those professors. These friends. What sequence?

Autumn. Winter. Spring.

Summer jobs. Building houses in the suburbs, reading Bertrand Russell during lunch breaks. What was on the subject's mind those months? What mood, not visible then perhaps, kept him encapsulated, blurring his view?

School again in the fall. Taking these courses. Studying in the library, trying to in the dormitory. This girl, that friend, the War, anger, hatred, becoming awake, rather thinking oneself awake and knowing but neither awake nor knowing, always thinking, one's physical body absent, mostly.

The major subject finally chosen. On to graduate school. Graduation and a teaching job. Professional meetings. The present moment.

The subject's life, his or her educational life, also his or her life in schools (the disentangling of those terms to come later). It exists still; one re-enters it; one goes back; one regresses; it is there, here, present. Recording it via words; conceptualizing it.

Bringing the past to the present by printing it. The words coalesce to form a photograph. Holding the photograph in front of oneself, one studies the detail, the literal holding of the picture and one's response to it, suggestive of the relation of past to present.

Thus we conclude the first step of the procedure, the regression to the past and the return to the present.

4.

Progressive. Progressive derives from *pro* meaning "before" and *gradi* meaning "to step, go." In this phase we look the other way. We look, in Sartre's language, at what is not yet the case, what is not yet present. We have found that the future is present in the same sense that the past is present. It influences, in complicated ways, the present; it forms the present.

Sit alone, perhaps in a slightly darkened room, in a comfortable chair with a writing table and a pen. Close the eyes, place the attention on the breathing. Take a few slow deep breaths as these are comfortable. The point of these minutes is relaxation. After one is relaxed, one thinks of the future, of tomorrow, of next week, of the new few months, of the next academic year, of the next 3 years and so on. Since our interest is educational experience, gently bring the attention back to matters associated with your intellectual interests, and allow your mind to work free associatively. Record what comes. Try to discern where your intellectual interests are going, the relation between these evolving interests and your private life, between these two and evolving historical conditions. Perhaps you will begin to see something of the interdependent nature of your interests and the historical situation. If you are a teacher, focus on your teaching, on your relationships to students and to colleagues, especially on the emotional content of these, as well as on the intellectual content. Discern where these appear to be going. You might imagine a future, perhaps a year hence or perhaps several years hence; describe it. (It is important in the progressive as well as the regressive moment to free associate, to avoid use of the rational, logical, and critical aspects. Don't, for instance, conclude that an imagined future state is unreasonable. At this stage allow usually buried visions of what is not yet present to manifest.)

Do this for as long as it is comfortable; when resistance occurs take note of its quality and content. Do not force the process.

Return to the chair and this dwelling in imagined future states several times on different days over a period of several days or weeks or months. Such elongation of the experiment reduces the possibility of distortion of temporary preoccupations. Increased is the likelihood that the photographs taken are reflective of more lasting anticipations.

This completes the progression.

5.

Analytical. One takes photographs, and sets them aside. What is left? Describe the biographic present, exclusive of the past and future, but inclusive of responses to them.

For many the present is woven into the fabric of institutional life. Within that historical form, embodied concretely in the building which houses your office and those who are your colleagues and students, what is your present? What are one's intellectual interests? What is one's emotional condition?

To what ideas, what areas of study, which discipline, is one drawn? From what is one repelled? List these. Describe, not interpret these attractions. Photograph the present as if one were a camera, including oneself in the present taking the photograph, and your response to this process.

Description via conceptualization is breaking into parts the organic whole.

Ana — up, throughout. *Lysis* — a loosening. Conceptualization is detachment from experience. Bracketing what is, what was, what can be, one is loosened from it, potentially more free of it, hence more free to freely choose the present, and future.

Study the three photographs. What are they; what is their individuality? What fundamental biographic theme(s) do they express? Why are they as they are?

Interpretation must make more visible what is lived through directly. Interpretation must not subordinate the lived present to an abstract, analytical grid. One's analysis is a constituent element of the present, like the brain a part of the body, not the body a thought in the brain. The biographic present is not part of a conceptual system; the system is an aspect of the present. Juxtapose the three photographs: past, present, future. What are their complex, multi-dimensional interrelations? How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?

6.

Synthetical. *Syn* means "together" and *tithenai* means "to place."

Put them aside.

Then look at oneself concretely, as if in a mirror. Attention on the breath, to underline the biological concreteness of being.

Who is that?

In your own voice, what is the meaning of the present?

What is the contribution of my scholarly and professional work to my present? Do they illumine the present? Obscure it?

Are one's intellectual interests biographically freeing, that is, do they permit, in fact encourage, movement?

Do they point to increased conceptual sophistication and refinement, deeper knowledge and understanding, of both one's chosen field of study and that field's symbolic relation to one's evolving biography? Do they move one to enter new, higher levels of being?

What conceptual gestalt is finally visible? That is, what is one's "point of view?" Can one bracket and thus escape from the conceptual, take it into one's hands as it were, examine it, and see its relation to one's psychological, physical, biographic condition? See its relation to "one's form of life?" This includes one's public and private lives, one's externally observable behavior and the contents of one's stream-of-consciousness.

The physical body may be a concrete manifestation of all that occurs in and through it.

The Self is available to itself in physical form. The intellect, residing in physical form, is part of the Self. The Self is not a concept the intellect has of itself. The intellectual is an appendage of the Self, a medium, like the body, through which the Self and the world are accessible to themselves.

Mind in its place, I conceptualize the present situation.

I am placed together.

Synthesis.

Autobiography by a Graduate Student

In the following excerpt, a graduate student and teacher of yoga utilizes the method set forth in "The method of currere" to reflect on her time in Israel and to situate herself with regard to a future that she would like to embrace. To begin

her autobiographical journey of self-reinterpretation, Deborah Rogers, in essence and in a literal sense, returns home. As Bill Pinar suggests, “Returning home, finding the ‘central truth,’ discovering oneself, however, is only a beginning” (Pinar 1994, 205).

My Critical Autobiography

Regressive

The glare of the sun reflects off the hot desert sand and shines through the big glass window. Sunlight beats down on my face and warms my entire body. I am sitting in a small green chair behind a little rickety desk. As I continue to stare out the window and daydream about the mystical stories of this land and the history of the earth, my mind wanders with contentment. I know that I have finally made it to a place where I am meant to be. All of my dreams lie in this place and my existence is buried within the ground. I need to dig deep to find my roots. It is up to me to discover them through this, my journey in a foreign land.

When walking the windy cobblestone streets, I look to one side and see an ancient temple wall that is crumbling even though the bricks still look shiny and new. People are praying at the side of the wall so devoutly that it is painful to see. Then to the other side, I see ruins dating back to the Herodian period. Destruction is obvious, yet hope is evident as the pieces of wall are being rebuilt. All around me are vivid images of a diverse people, a rich history and complex lives. I am so stimulated that all my senses are awake to the beauty embedded in these sights. I feel small, surrounded by the incomprehensible greatness of an ancient city. Yet, the honky sounds of clarinets and sweet violins playing Klezmer music are so vibrant and invigorating to the ear that I feel larger than life. The incredible smells of oil and potato crackling in the deep fryer and pica bread baking in the oven brings me to a place of comfort and familiarity. Zesty Middle Eastern food cooking in the middle of streets. Life is grand and I am at the center of it!

This is the year that I went abroad. I am now sitting in a small green chair behind a little rickety desk in a classroom, located in the incredibly hot Middle Eastern desert. I am in the holy city of Jerusalem, where this re-birth of myself began. This is where I begin to question how I relate to the world in light of who I am and the person I hoped so desperately to be. I have begun to assemble, like a puzzle, the different pieces that make up the sum of my parts.

During that year, I learned with incredibly passionate professors who taught me what “good teaching” was all about. The void of feeling uninspired that was lingering within me was beginning to become filled with interest and curiosity. I became hard working and studious, and this motivated me to do even better. I took comfort in academics and learning became the work that inspired me. I began to learn about great Zionist thinkers who had visions of settling the land of Israel that was once lost and of regaining hope for their people; these great figures inspired me profoundly. I studied Jewish law and religion in order to inform myself not only of religious customs that my people have practiced for many centuries but also of the reason why they practiced this way of life. I felt I was no longer a foreigner as I began to practice these customs myself and to develop my personal identity further. Finally, I felt that I could connect with who I am and how I exist in relation to others in this vastly confusing world.

Holocaust Studies have always been of great interest to me, as my family had survived this terrible tragedy. We all understood the value of what it meant to survive and remember, and this has forever impacted the way religion is viewed in our home. The phrase that stays in my head and tells a story as I go through all of life’s moments is that, with every bit of happiness in life, there will still be times when you will need to sadden yourself with the realities of history and, yet, in every sad moment, hope and the willingness to succeed will be present.

I would go to a lecture and hear real stories, directly from the professor’s mouth, well-versed in authentic experiences with the subject matter. I wanted to believe and understand

every word that was said that year, because this was a rare opportunity. Throughout my university years to follow, I may never be able to live in such a place where I could learn and then experience for myself what I had just read. I was internalizing everything that I learned; it was like taking a step back into history by traveling back to a time and place where I wanted to belong.

Progressive

Since that formative moment, where I once came to understand myself and the deep roots of my religious practice and my cultural history, I continue to progress and to invent new interpretations of myself, based on these remembrances of lived experiences. It was in that moment where I began to see myself moving forward and growing as an individual. Through this progression, I continue to reveal the multiple layers of self and the potential I have developed for what lies ahead. Some parts of myself I understand now and some I will begin to know only in the future.

Presently, in the spiritual realm, I hear deep, somber and poetic chanting in my head and I feel my body turned deeply in a direction where only my breathing can allow me to go further. I inhale positivity and exhale frustration. My mind is enlightened by the sight of my body doing something unfamiliar and unpredictable. This peaceful place of self-discovery is like the morning sun rising behind the mountains. As the rays of the sun seep through the cracks of rock, marking the beginning of a new day, I am open to the possibility of reaching “true happiness” and clarity of mind.

My spirituality is now known to me through my yoga practice and no longer through the ancient prayers I once recited. My religion is familiar and important to me but lacks the personal connection that I so strongly desire. I am drawn to the part within myself that encompasses more of the world and not just my people, and I see great purpose in this hopeful space.

I see a place in the world where people can be connected to each other through mind, body and soul. There can be a common understanding of peace and respect, rather than war and hatred. People can demonstrate self-discipline in their lives through a moral code of tolerance, self-control, forgiveness, truth and patience. Things remain calm and yet there is a steady movement towards a force I call “the strength of being.”

I realize that I once existed as a lonely foreigner searching outside of myself to find connections to my past. Moving through life, I was a mere observer while things happened rapidly before me. My desperation to find answers to my “questions of self” became known only through my culture and heritage. Now, as I grapple with my visions of the future, I look inward to see that I am now at the core of this new identity. My yearning to find out who I am was up me to discover. I am more active in this creation than I once realized.

As I walk slowly through the hallways of school, my ears open to the excited sounds of children’s voices and their feet pounding lightly on the floor. I hear laughter in the rooms beside me and, right before me, I see my students smiling at me with wide eyes and hopefulness. I read a story to them about a young family moving away from a rural neighbourhood to come to the big city to fulfill their dreams. I hear gasps of excitement and then a sudden rush of “Ahhhh” as we reach the climax of the story. A short time later, I hear pencils scribbling away on paper and children talking about how they felt when they first moved to Canada.

I think back to my time abroad and wonder if these children believe the words that come out of my mouth just like I did with my professors? Do they sense the authenticity in my teaching that I strive to achieve? Can I create an environment that pushes and stimulates my students to learn more every day just like I did when I was in that little green chair behind that old rickety desk in the middle of the desert?

I envision a world where teaching and learning is a reciprocal relationship; where teachers engage the students deeply. The individual child, as a learner, is valued and the subject matter promotes a strong sense of both uniqueness and self-esteem within the students. The teacher learns from each child’s ideas, heritage, culture and identity. This thoughtful journey

takes both the teacher and student along a path that assists the children in making meaningful connections to their own learning.

Right now, I am at the beginning of my journey in the teaching profession and I hope that, in 10 years from now, the same enthusiasm for this process will still exist within me. I would like to be able to inspire others to do the same, whether I am in a position of leadership within my school or at a system wide level. I know that teaching can be one of the biggest spiritual undertakings and requires curiosity, nurturing, passion and openness. I like to think that I was meant to find this ability within myself because it feels so natural and free. I take great pleasure in being a dreamer and believing in ideals, in the same way that many Zionist thinkers once did. As the great Theodor Herzl once said, "If you will it, it is no fairytale."

Analytical

With every bit of joy in one's life, there is pain. This brings me to a moment that I encounter very often, as I am a spectator of the lives of others. A young handsome groom awaits standing strongly under the canopy beneath the stars. As a beautiful veiled bride comes walking slowly towards the canopy and her groom. As the marriage contract is signed, their love is bound forever. At the end of this traditional Jewish wedding ceremony, the groom steps purposefully upon a glass and the sound of it breaking echoes throughout the holy city of Jerusalem as this new couple takes their first steps in marriage.

Today, as I begin to understand my emerging sense of self, I need to look at how moments of my past have brought me to the place where I presently exist. I am initially struck by how divided the self can be. Just as love can be paired with pain, and hope can rise above destruction, the inner struggles that we encounter can be founded upon competing perceptions of what is actually real.

I realize that so much of my experience is based on binaries that seem to be polar opposites but which may be connected by continua that are not clearly observed. The moment that I first began to realize the growth in myself as an individual, during my year abroad in Jerusalem, was based so much on revealing my identity through my past from a religious, historical and cultural perspective. My new identity lies in a visionary philosophy of yoga that is not religious in nature nor related to my historical or cultural background at all. Even though these two paths may be very different, the quest for understanding and truth remains the same. Yoga and religion are both based on the search for something greater than oneself, in order to forge real connections, spirituality and growth. Hopefully, these inner ideals will, in return, positively influence others.

My experience as a learner in a foreign land, situated within a rugged environment, is influential in my life. I depict myself in this narrative as the only one who exists – sitting on that little green chair behind that old rickety desk in the middle of the desert. This memory represents an organic understanding of what is important to me and how my learning shapes who I am. These feelings will be ever ingrained in my psyche, as it remains one of the happiest moments of my life.

Since then, I have moved far from this memory to my present role as teacher. I am no longer a foreigner. I teach in an optimal environment that is so different in appearance from the tiny classroom in that rugged environment because it is not only abundant with resources, it is situated in the cold, brisk climate of Canada. Even so, I still try to encourage a similar "organic understanding" in my students, in hopes that they may begin to perceive themselves as being shaped by their learning. My passion for teaching is still in evidence as I try to reach my ideal of being an authentic teacher. I automatically associate this word "authentic" with my commitment to bring realness and validity to my teaching.

In my writing, I am highly conscious of the contradictions that are present with me. I look into my family and see death and survival within the context of war, and I also see the peaceful place we live in now. I inhale positivity and exhale frustration as I continue my journey; as a spectator looking outwards at certain moments and, at other times as a participant at the centre of it all. There are moments when I feel small and no one sees me, yet at other times I feel larger than life.

Deborah Britzman's (1998) article, entitled "Queer Pedagogy and Its Strange Techniques," has helped me to understand my quest for identity, a reoccurring theme in all of my previous moments. Perhaps Britzman would argue that I understand my experiences as a product of my education, or as normal needs "that concern a desire for a transparent truth, for stable communities and identities that ignore contradictions" (80). This notion of normalcy, therefore, perpetuates a "production of otherness as central to self-recognition" (82). In light of this, I am constantly trying to understand myself in relation to others. Even though these understandings of others may be reflected in different contexts and may change from moment to moment and, even though I am either on the inside or outside of this self-reflection, I am always looking through a "social, historical and relational ethic" (83) that informs my own "lens of identification." As Britzman suggests, difference is not at the core of true identity but rather the quest for similarity is.

I have spent much time identifying relationally to my education and cultural background and, more specifically, to my yoga practice, family values and teaching. I see clearly that all of these experiences are viewed in relation to others. It is through my construction of these multiple layers of self that the desire to feel included is present and important. This is much the same for any person.

These desires perpetuate the quest for similarity which, at the same time, leads me to feel a deep void in myself, just like the tiny fissures in my desert mountain. These cracks are reminders that, in every moment where I feel truly happy, this necessary sadness exists. Will I ever fully reach a moment of "true happiness?" Or does true happiness include a "necessary sadness?" This burning question is still up to me to answer.

This moment represents another layer of my identity that draws me to work of Madeleine Grumet. After reading her book, entitled, *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (1981), I see many affirmations of self that entails the "you" who thinks me and the "you" whom I think (7). My existence has a social dimension that is reproduced both biologically and ideologically.

Perhaps it is the blending of the perfect combination that I strive for, just like the ingredients in the recipe for the most delicious cake. I look to the ideals of womanhood that Grumet mentions as seen through the contradictions of "the ideal woman, the ideal mother which are extended in the training and work of the ideal teacher" (43). Maybe these ideals or notions of perfection that I strive for are the masks that cover my attempt to achieve the state of "true happiness" that I speak so highly of. If I reach this ideal, will all the questions and contradictions within me then be answered? Or does real truth only reveal itself in an ideal that is unattainable? This quest may continue until I am left with no real closure in my search for true happiness and perfection.

Synthetical

As I put an end to the exhaustive digging and searching, I know that I have finally arrived at a place where I am meant to be, except this place does not exist in a foreign land, in the middle of the desert, behind a little rickety desk, in a small green chair. This new place is where I sit now, on a metal padded chair that is cold and torn. This new desk is not little or rickety, yet it is lopsided and bare. Much bigger than the desk that I once sat behind, it is not grandiose in appearance at all. The view of the sand from my big glass window, where the sun used to shine in to warm my entire body, has been replaced by the sight of a white canopy of snow. I feel the crisp air penetrating the glass, and my body feels cold yet tranquil as my blood flows freely to warm it. There will be no perfect desk or chair and there will be no true happiness. There will be no perfect end to the fairytale, no perfect marriage, and no city that is rebuilt with the sheer hope that it can exist without destruction.

Yes, I realize that my dreams will never be complete or filled with the exact amount of perfection and authenticity. My cake recipe will not be more delicious than the next. It is the digging, the self-realization, the struggles, contradictions within one's identity and the necessary sadness that got me to this place of calm. Yet this calm is filled with uncertainty and fear. Now that my questions are revealed and out in the open, I have reached a new point of

vulnerability. This feeling leads me to push forward as I choose to not sit back passively and let uncertainty and fear overtake my body and paralyze me. I start once again and let my journey begin anew while I explore the portions of “real truth” in the answers to the questions that I once asked.

I am not alone in my quest. Many theorists have investigated these questions and provided me with thoughtful answers. William Doll (1993) looks at knowledge and knowing as apparent in the friction between truth and reality. After reading his work, I am left with the understanding that there is not one truth but rather “multiple ways of interpreting God’s laughter” (155). Doll cites Roily by stating that “power and ability can transform truth from the tentatively felt into the fully experienced” (156). It is my job to explore what I have known in order to transform my truth. So what do I want to experience as I move forward and attempt to put the pieces of myself together? What truth do I want to convey in my own curriculum work, as my students begin to create their own meanings? Their own truths?

Is authenticity another form of truth or realness that no one really has control of? We cannot be passive and sit back and wait for someone to tell us the truth, yet we need to be active in the “discovery of knowledge and the making of meaning” (Doll 1993, 170). William Pinar (1985) states that “self knowledge and authenticity are important for teachers to exemplify and to set the stage for asking: what attitudes and actions are appropriate given this self knowledge?” (204). So, maybe I should reframe my question when thinking of my desire to teach in an authentic way by asking my students, “What do you hold to be true?” then giving them room to deconstruct themselves in order to reconstruct their answers.

Sandoval (2000) speaks of the “differential consciousness” that exists in a third space, one that “precedes and sustains binary oppositions” (148). I do think that, through the power of my actions, I can exist in this third space that Sandoval mentions. If I get there, I might clearly see that things do not present themselves as black or white all the time. From this point on I may be able to see myself in a broader personal, social, cultural and political context. I may find an optimism that is not uncertain or fearful.

As I move forward from this moment, into my quest to discover a third space, I attempt to recreate myself inside action and reflection. As I do this, I will no longer be a lonely foreigner searching outward to find connections to myself but, rather, may become liberated from my search and be calm once again (Deborah Rogers).

The Authors' Autobiographical Moment – Continued

In our previous account of our autobiographical moment, we positioned ourselves with regard to the regressive component of Dr. Pinar’s method of situating oneself autobiographically. We now continue with our exploration of the remaining moments, to assist ourselves in moving forward to the “synthetical” moment of our autobiographical situation of selves.

Progressive. This moment helps us to establish an “ideal” view of what we wish to accomplish. It is an imagining of the future – an ideal future that will be useful in helping us to shape our work to be as authentic as possible. The progressive moment asks, “What could it look like?”

This moment creates or fashions a transition between past and present, while indicating a pathway toward the next stage, the analytical stage, which asks “What does it look like now?” Thus, this momentary connection between the past and present is responsible for temporarily suspending the present in a flight of fancy that has the ability to unleash future potential. By examining our progressive moment in

light of the regressive moment that preceded it, we can begin to envision future possibilities in terms of the present, a present that has not yet been realized in terms of action. Together, the regressive and progressive moments move us toward the analytical moment.

To provide an example, since this volume is premised on developing a deeper understanding of qualitative research, it was through this exercise that our original research questions were generated. We asked, "What does this collection of multiple autobiographical perspectives reveal about qualitative research in general?" More specifically, we asked questions about the importance of "historical moments" within the qualitative research movement, the politics of the times within this movement, as well as the times within which we are currently living and the salient philosophical details behind why we do the research that we do.

Thus, the importance of a solid theoretical grounding is important to all researchers, as is an understanding of their own situations with respect to the qualitative research at hand and to the attitudes and actions appropriate, given this self-knowledge, which allow researchers to engage in their research with hearts and minds. What does an idealized version of the future currently look like to the authors of this volume? Well, first of all, a completed volume would be a fine beginning. An additional volume and visions of a documentary or two have presented themselves. For example, we have envisioned a documentary on the five contexts developed within this volume, as well as a documentary on the process of developing this research project that honors issues relating to technology, funding, institutional boundaries, and barriers as well as finding the fleeting moments needed to commit this enterprise to paper.

Analytical. By discerning where these previous movements are leading, we arrive at the analytical moment. The analytical moment allows us to develop ideas regarding issues that surfaced as we proceeded with our research. Issues such as technology, time, money, the development of the five contexts and life that, as John Lennon suggested, always seems to get in the way when one is busy doing something else.

Of particular interest, as a result of our exploration of the progressive and regressive phases of the autobiographic passage was the thundering realization that we were inexperienced in developing what we hope will be a postmodern volume dedicated to the further understanding of qualitative research. To arrive at this point, however, we have survived numerous disappointments and have overcome many barriers in order to experience the occasional triumph.

To name only one issue, we found that technology promises much and delivers much later. We have survived a series of video editors and have needed to scale our project to the dimensions that are actually able to be realized. We have interviewed scholars who have successfully developed modes and methods of working through "leaning tangles" and have benefitted vicariously from their authentic endeavors. It is our hope that we may pass along their experiences so that others may benefit as we have done.

For example, from an earlier transcript in which we review the process to date, we found that with one interview in particular, we obtained a great deal of

information – far more information than we could possibly use. Simply because we were so involved in the interview ourselves, we were less subject to the necessary “self-monitoring” process that we often see in the “professional” documentaries and interviews. The result is that what appears to be a very short video clip of perhaps 10 min has already been captured, condensed, and virtually reproduced with careful attention to editing out all extraneous “noise.”

Comparing some of the earlier interviews with the developing sensitivity to the “art of the interview” helped us realize that the editing begins with the interview, not on the cutting room floor. While we really wanted to have a conversation with these scholars, we learned that we needed to represent them rather than ourselves and this led us to a notion of our own presence, or the necessary lack thereof, within the interview situation itself. That is to say, the form needed to fit the function.

Synthetical. The synthetical moment is the coming together of the above three movements in a kind of rhythm that is not necessarily concurrent, nor sequential. This is the point that the serious theorizing begins.

Pulling together this multiple autobiographical study may uncover some of the deeper significances associated with engaging in qualitative research in order to create a greater awareness of the multifaceted nature of such research work. The conceptual gestalt that Dr. Pinar speaks of came to us as we began to prepare the following chapter on the historical context. What we were attempting to understand, work through, and deal with was a fundamental issue. It was Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln’s “crisis of representation.”

While this is only one example of the benefit of using the autobiographical method, many others began to surface as we progressed through each stage of the research process. It was through this process that we also became aware of the gradual development of the five contexts that we have foregrounded in this volume.

Summary

This chapter has been both a pleasure and a challenge to write. It has attempted to detail Dr. William F. Pinar’s approach to autobiography. This is significant because the situation of oneself with respect to the research at hand, particularly research of the qualitative kind, is essential to the understanding of the researcher’s position with regard to that research, the assumptions held, and the suppositions examined. Because the researcher is the main research instrument in the construction of the study and in the analysis of the data, an understanding of oneself and what one brings to the research is essential. It is also important for the readers of research accounts to be able to view the research through the same lens as the researcher. Dr. Pinar’s method allows this to occur both as a subjective frame for the researcher and as an objective frame for the reader.

The chapter has offered a video clip of Dr. Pinar describing his formative years and has provided a brief description of the autobiographical context in William

Pinar's own words. Graduate students' comments on the video clip have completed this section of the chapter.

We, the authors of this volume, have also used this approach to situate ourselves within the autobiographical context. The regressive phase of the method has been viewed individually. Then, a graduate student has utilized the method in order to situate herself with respect to her own teaching and learning. Subsequently, the authors have returned to describe some of the issues that we have become aware of during our own glimpse into the progressive, analytical, and synthetical phases of Dr. Pinar's method.

The final point on this journey of introspection was the recognition that embodying our work in a way that does justice to the scholars we are interviewing will be a continuing challenge because we are not trying to uncover the "one truth" so much as to gain a deeper understanding of qualitative research in general. This brings us to Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln's work and the investigation of how best to engage with qualitative texts. Because the writing process is not straightforward, this process begs the issue of representation and hearkens to the following chapter which includes a discussion of the "crisis of representation" within the Historical Context.

Selected Annotated Bibliography – William F. Pinar

Pinar, W. F. (2005). From statesmanship to status: The absence of authority in contemporary curriculum studies. *Journal of American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies*.

This article is essentially a review of the perspectives of two leading scholars within curriculum studies. William Pinar bases his review on two of their recent book publications. Theodore Sizer, former Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, wrote *The Red Pencil*, and David F. Laboree, a Professor at Stanford University, authored *The Trouble with Ed Schools*. In the first book, Sizer identifies three crucial areas in which policy discussion about public education has been dangerously silent. In the second book, Professor Laboree, a sociologist and historian of education examines historical developments and contemporary factors that have resulted in the unenviable status of schools of education. Generally, Pinar recognizes the instability and vulnerability within the field of curriculum studies.

Pinar, W. F. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

In his book *What Is Curriculum Theory?*, William Pinar presents an in-depth analysis of the myriad of interpretations, perspectives, and influences impacting on the curriculum in the twenty-first century Western educational contexts. The work synthesizes complex theorizing and discourse which will challenge many readers. This book is not meant to be a comprehensive introduction to curriculum studies. This volume attempts to make audible the voices of others, to underscore the fact that the field is no "solo performance." Curriculum theory is a complex, sometimes cacophonous, chorus. Dr. Pinar suggests that, "... when the academic

field of education is under savage attack by politicians, it is incumbent upon us to maintain our professional dignity by reasserting our commitment to the intellectual life of our field.”

Pinar, W. F. (2004). Rocket man. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 20(2), 7–14. William Pinar makes his point through a compilation of direct quotations and indirect references to the theories of fellow scholars regarding straight males’ tendencies toward homophobia. It is suggested that if (white) straight men dissociate from their own bodies, then it is expected that the acknowledgment of another man’s body is a homosexual act. Pinar explores this concept and others through his sensitive treatment of his subject matter. As he explores issues relating to homosexuality and homophobia, Dr. Pinar also deals with relevant side issues that have implications for gender, race, customs, and traditions within the context of current North American culture.

Pinar, W. F. (2004). The synoptic text today. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 20(10), 7–22.

William Pinar calls for the creation of synoptic textbooks for teachers as a new form of contemporary curriculum studies research. Referring to *The Gender of Racial Politics and Violence in America* as an example, he suggests that, by creating interdisciplinary synopses of educational significance on specific topics, teachers will know more about the subjects they teach as well as other related issues. He argues that under the current right-wing administration, it is important to reassert commitment to the academic field of education, particularly in academic subjects that speak to social and subjective reconstruction, an issue that is becoming more relevant in education as time goes by.

Pinar, W. F. (2004). The birth of Bergamo and JCT: Toward an archive of feeling and the creation of a counter educational culture on curriculum studies. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 20(4), 7–18.

With reference to political agendas, William Pinar recounts past struggles the field of curriculum has faced, which he termed “the reconceptualization.” He looks to Kuhn’s theories to support his belief that survival of the field requires flexibility in thinking. Thomas Samuel Kuhn, an American intellectual who wrote extensively on the history of science and developed several important notions in the sociology and philosophy of science, made several important contributions to our understanding of the progress of knowledge. These contributions include the concept of periodic “paradigm shifts which open up new approaches to understanding and the idea that scientists can never divorce their subjective perspective from their work.”

Pinar, W. F. (Ed.). (2003). *International handbook of curriculum research*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Association Inc.

The International Handbook of Curriculum Research is the first collection of reports on scholarly developments and school curriculum initiatives worldwide. This collection, containing 34 essays on 28 nations and framed by 4 introductory chapters, provides a panoramic view of the state of curriculum studies globally. As a whole, this comprehensive, precedent-setting volume contributes significantly to

the internationalization of curriculum studies and the formation of a worldwide field of curriculum studies. As such, this handbook assists the field of curriculum studies in negotiating terrain currently divided between contemporary social science and the humanities.

Pinar, W. F. (2003). Dispelling the curse: Comments on Stephen Haynes' Noah's Curse. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 19(4), 159–163.

Pinar applauds and reviews *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (Haynes 2002). Noah's Curse must be recognized as one of the most innovative and enlightening studies of the Biblical defense of American slavery ever published. The dubious legend of Noah, as Stephen R. Haynes points out, is still with us, along with the Confederate symbols flying over public places and fundamentalists denouncing racial mixing. Dr. Pinar situates this volume in relation to his own work on gendered and anti-racist education and the destruction of hegemonic white masculinity. He approves of Haynes' (2002) interdisciplinary approach and appreciates the parallels drawn between the descendants of Noah's son's and the "corporate development of mankind."

Pinar, W. F. (2001). *The gender of racial politics and violence in America: Lynching, prison rape, and the crisis of masculinity*. New York: Peter Lang.

William F. Pinar elucidates the great "American dilemma," that "peculiar" institution of racial subjugation, especially its gendered and specifically "queer" psychosexual dynamics. Explicating in detail two imprinting episodes in American racial history, lynching and prison rape, Pinar argues that the gender of racial politics and violence in America is in some fundamental sense "queer." Perhaps not since Gunnar Myrdal's 1944 classic *An American Dilemma* has a book appeared as synoptic and unsettling as *The Gender of Racial Politics and Violence in America*. This book will be of interest to students in education, cultural studies, African American studies, women's and gender studies, and history studies.

Pinar, W. F. (1998). *The passionate mind of Maxine Greene: "I am...not yet."* London: Falmer.

Maxine Greene is arguably the most important philosopher of education in the USA today, but until now she has not been the subject of sustained scholarly analysis and investigation. This study of Green's contribution is organized from several points of view: studies of her four books; studies of the intellectual and aesthetic influences upon her theory; and her influence on the various specialization within the broad field of education – the teaching of English, arts education, philosophy of education, curriculum studies, religious education, cognitive theory, and theory of teaching. The book opens and concludes with Maxine Greene's own autobiographical statements.

Pinar, W. F. (1999). Response: Gracious submission. *Educational Researcher*, 28(11), 14–15.

This article is only one of a string of academic debates between William G. Wraga and William F. Pinar. Dr. Wraga reflects on the historical evolution of the field, specifically the era of reconceptualization. Referring to Pinar's work of the late 1970s/early 1980s, Wraga (1998/1999) points out the limitations of Pinar's earlier

work, offering an alternative perspective that challenges the separation from theory and practice within the field of curriculum studies. The longstanding argument between advocates of curriculum development and critical curriculum studies acknowledges that both advocacies possess certain strengths and limitations. Pinar's position is that schools are no longer under the jurisdiction of curriculum theorists and that multiple stakeholders have created curriculum gridlock.

Pinar, W. F. (1994). *Autobiography, politics and sexuality: Essays in curriculum theory 1972–1992*. New York: Peter Lang.

Autobiography, Politics and Sexuality asserts the viability of autobiography as a tool of study, not only in the area of curriculum and instruction, but in any kind of qualitative research endeavor. As an alternative to the sterile style of curriculum studies that dominated the field at one time, William Pinar has reconceptualized curriculum studies in a more organic, flexible, and exciting way which honors the immediacy and complexity of students, teachers, and their relationships by taking into account their lives as they live them. In the same vein, this book is a useful tool in assisting graduate students, researchers, and educators across all disciplines to situate themselves with respect to the qualitative research within which they engage. *Autobiography, Politics and Sexuality* is a classic in the field of education studies and, indeed, in the pursuit of qualitative research in general.

Pinar, W. F. (1992). Dreamt into existence by others: School reform and curriculum theory. *Theory into Practice*, 31(3), 226–235.

A community of scholars in a field is renewed by its common history, its common basis of skills, and its examination of commonly held problems. The expression of commonality does not eliminate debate or disagreement, but it does set a foundation for continuing dialogue. Pinar describes how politicians today are blaming educators for the economic difficulties in the USA. A recap of education over the years demonstrates how schools have historically been representative of the necessary skills to function in society. He illustrates how “who you are” is constantly being restructured related to others and factors in one's past experience, as well as the perceived individual that one hopes to become. Pinar considers this imbalance as academic racism.

Pinar, W. F., & Irwin, R. L. (Eds.). (2004). *Curriculum in a new key: The collected works of Ted T. Aoki*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Curriculum in a New Key: The Collected Works of Ted T. Aoki brings together the work of one of the most prominent curriculum scholars in Canada, Ted T. Aoki. His themes of reconceptualizing curriculum; language, culture, and curriculum; and narrative influenced numerous scholars around the world. Aoki's *oeuvre* is utterly unique – a complex interdisciplinary configuration of phenomenology, post-structuralism, and multiculturalism that is both theoretically and pedagogically sophisticated and speaks directly to teachers, practicing and prospective. *Curriculum in a New Key: The Collected Works of Ted T. Aoki* is an invaluable resource for graduate students, professors, and researchers in curriculum studies and for students, faculty, and scholars of education generally.

Pinar, W. F., & Pautz, A. (1998). Construction scars: Autobiographical voice in biography. In C. Kridel (Ed.), *Writing educational biography: Explorations in qualitative research* (pp. 61–72). New York: Taylor & Francis.

The concept of voice has been evocative in contemporary discourse. In the efforts to understand curriculum as political, racial, genderized, and autobiographical, *voice* has been used extensively and has been, to some extent, appropriated. This chapter describes the history of voice in terms of the autobiographical. “Construction scars” refers to the difficulty in developing a transparent process that leads to an authentic representation of voice. Further discussed are issues of merging genres and conflicted voices. Perhaps by drawing on the multiplicity of the voices surrounding us, we can find ways to negotiate and fulfill these calls.

Questions for Further Study

1. How does the autobiographical influence one’s stance as a researcher? What are *you* truly passionate about and how is this reflected in your research?
2. What are the most significant autobiographical details that help define your research interests and who you are as a researcher? Consider your ideas, beliefs, and opinions about a research issue that you are interested in investigating. Identify personal or professional experiences and/or theoretical perspectives that inform these ideas, beliefs, and opinions.
3. Consider the legacy represented in William Pinar’s father’s comment, “Whatever you get out of life, get understanding.” What is a mantra that could be significant in guiding your own research? Why?
4. Consider William Pinar’s comments about the place and value of qualitative research, particularly with respect to quantitative research. What are some of the similarities and differences between quantitative and qualitative methods of research?
5. Apply William Pinar’s “Regressive, Progressive, Analytical, Synthetical Method” to yourself or to a particular researcher you are interested in understanding. As a result of using this method, what new understandings do you arrive at?

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Chapter 4

The Historical Context

Can we begin now to reconstruct history in ways that interrupt history so that, the next time around, it won't be performed the way it has been?

– Dr. Norman K. Denzin



Dr. Norman K. Denzin

This chapter deals with the historical context of performing qualitative research in postcolonial times. It acknowledges the evolutionary and revolutionary nature of qualitative research. The chapter begins with an African proverb, and then proceeds to examine Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln's article relating to the eight historical moments in qualitative research. A video clip featuring Norman Denzin situates the historical context within qualitative research in general. The chapter concludes with a selected annotated bibliography and questions for further study.

An African Proverb

The following proverb may be a useful entry point for engaging a discussion relating to the evolution of qualitative research. This proverb was chosen because of its simplicity and power in referring to the nature of research within a particular historical context, specifically colonial research. While some elements of “colonial” research are still very much present, this type of research has gradually given way to “post-colonial” research which recognizes such important issues as the presence of the researcher in the research text. The following proverb represents the difference between these two kinds of research and provides grounds for further discussion about the relationship of the researcher to that which is researched:

Until the lion has his own historian, the hunter will always be the hero.

One point of interest in this proverb is the power differential evident within the bounds of the quotation. Simply said, in any cultural exchange, the group with the most power is the group who writes the “official” version of historical events.

This proverb has sparked much useful debate in our graduate classes and students are frequently drawn toward a discussion of the type of research that was, and to a certain extent still is, conducted that tends to objectify a particular group under study. The quotation points to the prevalence of colonial research that has been the traditional way of doing research in times past. Current research has eschewed objectification in order to embrace parity, to a greater or lesser extent, for individuals and groups of individuals who are now participants within, rather than the objects of, cultural studies. Just as this has evolved over the last half century, there has been a newer burgeoning recognition that the researcher and the researched are both a part of cultural interpretation. Currently, as a result of the efforts by individuals such as Clifford Geertz, Norman Denzin, Yvonna Lincoln, and a host of other researchers and scholars, this type of research has slowly given way to the current view of research in postcolonial times.

An Article by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln

In order to gain increased clarity around some of the issues relating to the historical context of qualitative research, we have reprinted an excerpt from the introduction to their landmark volume, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition*. In this excerpt, Denzin and Lincoln discuss the eight moments of qualitative research as it moves from colonial to postcolonial research, and draw our attention to the postmodern acceleration of the final four historical moments. In addition, the crisis of representation is carefully articulated in terms of representation, legitimation, and praxis.

The History of Qualitative Research

The history of qualitative research reveals that the modern social science disciplines have taken as their mission “the analysis and understanding of the patterned conduct and social processes of society” (Vidich and Lyman 2000, p. 37). The notion that social scientists

could carry out this task presupposed that they had the ability to observe this world objectively. Qualitative methods were a major tool of such observations.¹

Throughout the history of qualitative research, qualitative investigators have defined their work in terms of hopes and values, “religious faiths, occupational and professional ideologies” (Vidich and Lyman 2000, p. 39). Qualitative research (like all research) has always been judged on the “standard of whether the work communicates or ‘says’ something to us” (Vidich and Lyman 2000, p. 39), based on how we conceptualize our reality and our images of the world. Epistemology is the word that has historically defined these standards of evaluation. In the contemporary period, as we have argued above, many received discourses on epistemology are now being reevaluated.

Vidich and Lyman’s (2000) work, on the history of qualitative research covers the following (somewhat) overlapping stages: early ethnography (to the 17th century), colonial ethnography (17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century explorers), the ethnography of the American Indian as “Other” (late-19th- and early-20th-century anthropology), community studies and ethnographies of American immigrants (early 20th century through the 1960s), studies of ethnicity and assimilation (midcentury through the 1980s), and the present, which we call the *eighth moment*.

In each of these eras, researchers were and have been influenced by their political hopes and ideologies, discovering findings in their research that confirmed their prior theories or beliefs. Early ethnographers confirmed the racial and cultural diversity of peoples throughout the globe and attempted to fit this diversity into a theory about the origins of history, the races, and civilizations. Colonial ethnographers, before the professionalization of ethnography in the 20th century, fostered a colonial pluralism that left natives on their own as long as their leaders could be co-opted by the colonial administration.

European ethnographers studied Africans, Asians, and other Third World peoples of color. Early American ethnographers studied the American Indian from the perspective of the conqueror, who saw the lifeworld of the primitive as a window to the prehistoric past. The Calvinist mission to save the Indian was soon transferred to the mission of saving the “hordes” of immigrants who entered the United States with the beginnings of industrialization. Qualitative community studies of the ethnic Other proliferated from the early 1900s to the 1960s and included the work of E. Franklin Frazier, Robert Park, and Robert Redfield and their students, as well as William Foote Whyte, the Lynds, August Hollingshead, Herbert Gans, Stanford Lyman, Arthur Vidich, and Joseph Bensman. The post-1960 ethnicity studies challenged the “melting pot” hypotheses of Park and his followers and corresponded to the emergence of ethnic studies programs that saw Native Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans attempting to take control over the study of their own peoples.

The postmodern and poststructural challenge emerged in the mid-1980s. It questioned the assumptions that had organized this earlier history in each of its colonizing moments. Qualitative research that crosses the “postmodern divide” requires the scholar, Vidich and Lyman (2000) argue, to “abandon all established and preconceived values, theories, perspectives... and prejudices as resources for ethnographic study” (p. 60). In this new era the qualitative researcher does more than observe history; he or she plays a part in it. New tales from the field will now be written, and they will reflect the researchers’ direct and personal engagement with this historical period.

Vidich & Lyman’s analysis covers the full sweep of ethnographic history. Ours is confined to the 20th and 21st centuries and complements many of their divisions. We begin with the early foundational work of the British and French as well as the Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, Berkeley, and British schools of sociology and anthropology. This early founda-

¹ In this sense all research is qualitative, because “the observer is at the center of the research process” (Vidich and Lyman 2000, p. 39).

tional period established the norms of classical qualitative and ethnographic research (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Rosaldo 1989; Stocking 1989).

The Eight Moments of Qualitative Research

As we have noted above, we divide our history of qualitative research in North America in the 20th century and beyond into eight phases, which we describe in turn below.

The Traditional Period

We call the first moment the traditional period (this covers the second and third phases discussed by Vidich and Lyman 2000). It begins in the early 1900s and continues until World War II. In this period, qualitative researchers wrote “objective,” colonizing accounts of field experiences that were reflective of the positivist scientist paradigm. They were concerned with offering valid, reliable, and objective interpretations in their writings. The “Other” whom they studied was alien, foreign, and strange.

Here is Malinowski (1967) discussing his field experiences in New Guinea and the Trobriand Islands in the years 1914–15 and 1917–18. He is bartering his way into field data:

Nothing whatever draws me to ethnographic studies.... On the whole the village struck me rather unfavorably. There is a certain disorganization...the rowdiness and persistence of the people who laugh and stare and lie discouraged me somewhat.... Went to the village hoping to photograph a few stages of the bara dance. I handed out half-sticks of tobacco, then watched a few dances; then took pictures — but results-were poor...they would not pose long enough for time exposures. At moments I was furious at them, particularly because after I gave them their portions of tobacco they all went away, (quoted in Geertz 1988, pp. 73–74)

In another work, this lonely, frustrated, isolated field-worker describes his methods in the following words:

In the field one has to face a chaos of facts...in this crude form they are not scientific facts at all; they are absolutely elusive, and can only be fixed by interpretation.... Only laws and generalizations are scientific facts, and field work consists only and exclusively in the interpretation of the chaotic social reality, in subordinating it to general rules. (Malinowski 1916/1948, p. 328; quoted in Geertz 1988, p. 81)

Malinowski’s remarks are provocative. On the one hand they disparage fieldwork, but on the other they speak of it within the glorified language of science, with laws and generalizations fashioned out of this selfsame experience.

During this period the field-worker was lionized, made into a larger-than-life figure who went into the field and returned with stories about strange peoples. Rosaldo (1989) describes this as the period of the Lone Ethnographer, the story of the man-scientist who went off in search of his native in a distant land. There this figure “encountered the object of his quest... [and] underwent his rite of passage by enduring the ultimate ordeal of ‘fieldwork’” (p. 30). Returning home with his data, the Lone Ethnographer wrote up an objective account of the culture studied. This account was structured by the norms of classical ethnography. This sacred bundle of terms (Rosaldo 1989, p. 31) organized ethnographic texts around four beliefs and commitments: a commitment to objectivism, a complicity with imperialism, a belief in monumentalism (the ethnography would create a museum like picture of the culture studied), and a belief in timelessness (what was studied would never change). The Other was an “object” to be archived. This model of the researcher, who could also write complex, dense theories about what was studied, holds to the present day.

The myth of the Lone Ethnographer depicts the birth of classic ethnography. The texts of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Margaret Mead, and Gregory Bateson are still carefully studied for what they can tell the novice about fieldwork, taking field notes, and writing theory. But today the image of the Lone Ethnographer has been shattered. Many scholars see the works of the classic ethnographers as relics from the colonial past (Rosaldo 1989, p. 44).

Whereas some feel nostalgia for this past, others celebrate its passing. Rosaldo (1989) quotes Cora Du Bois, a retired Harvard anthropology professor, who lamented this passing at a conference in 1980, reflecting on the crisis in anthropology: “[I feel a distance] from the complexity and disarray of what I once found a justifiable and challenging discipline.... It has been like moving from a distinguished art museum into a garage sale” (p. 44).

Du Bois regards the classic ethnographies as pieces of timeless artwork contained in a museum. She feels uncomfortable in the chaos of the garage sale. In contrast, Rosaldo (1989) is drawn to this metaphor because “it provides a precise image of the postcolonial situation where cultural artifacts flow between unlikely places, and nothing is sacred, permanent, or sealed off. The image of anthropology as a garage sale depicts our present global situation” (p. 44). Indeed, many valuable treasures may be found in unexpected places, if one is willing to look long and hard. Old standards no longer hold. Ethnographies do not produce timeless truths. The commitment to objectivism is now in doubt. The complicity with imperialism is openly challenged today, and the belief in monumentalism is a thing of the past.

The legacies of this first period begin at the end of the 19th century, when the novel and the social sciences had become distinguished as separate systems of discourse (Clough 1998, pp. 21–22). However, the Chicago school, with its emphasis on the life story and the “slice-of-life” approach to ethnographic materials, sought to develop an interpretive methodology that maintained the centrality of the narrated life history approach. This led to the production of texts that gave the researcher-as-author the power to represent the subject’s story. Written under the mantle of straightforward, sentiment-free social realism, these texts used the language of ordinary people. They articulated a social science version of literary naturalism, which often produced the sympathetic illusion that a solution to a social problem had been found. Like the Depression-era juvenile delinquent and other “social problems” films (Roffman and Purdy 1981), these accounts romanticized the subject. They turned the deviant into a sociological version of a screen hero. These sociological stories, like their film counterparts, usually had happy endings, as they followed individuals through the three stages of the classic morality tale: being in a state of grace, being seduced by evil and falling, and finally achieving redemption through suffering.

Modernist Phase

The modernist phase, or second moment, builds on the canonical works from the traditional period. Social realism, naturalism, and slice-of-life ethnographies are still valued. This phase extended through the postwar years to the 1970s and is still present in the work of many (for reviews, see Wolcott 1990, 1992, 1995). In this period many texts sought to formalize qualitative methods (see, e.g., Bogdan and Taylor 1975; Cicourel 1964; Filstead 1970; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Lofland 1971, 1995; Lofland and Lofland 1984, 1995; Taylor and Bogdan 1998).² The modernist ethnographer and sociological participant observer attempted rigorous qualitative studies of important social processes, including deviance and social control in the classroom and society. This was a moment of creative ferment.

A new generation of graduate students across the human disciplines encountered new interpretive theories (ethnomethodology, phenomenology, critical theory, feminism). They were drawn to qualitative research practices that would let them give a voice to society’s underclass. Postpositivism functioned as a powerful epistemological paradigm. Researchers attempted to fit Campbell and Stanley’s (1963) model of internal and external validity to constructionist and interactionist conceptions of the research act. They returned to the texts of the Chicago school as sources of inspiration (see Denzin 1970, 1978).

A canonical text from this moment remains *Boys in White* (Becker et al. 1961; see also Becker 1998). Firmly entrenched in mid-20th-century methodological discourse, this work

² See Lincoln and Guba (1985) for an extension and elaboration of this tradition in the mid-1980s, and for more recent extensions see Taylor and Bogdan (1998) and Cresswell (1998).

attempted to make qualitative research as rigorous as its quantitative counterpart. Causal narratives were central to this project. This multimethod work combined open-ended and quasi-structured interviewing with participant observation and the careful analysis of such materials in standardized, statistical form. In his classic article “Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation,” Howard S. Becker (1958/1970) describes the use of quasi-statistics:

Participant observations have occasionally been gathered in standardized form capable of being transformed into legitimate statistical data. But the exigencies of the field usually prevent the collection of data in such a form to meet the assumptions of statistical tests, so that the observer deals in what have been called “quasi-statistics.” His conclusions, while implicitly numerical, do not require precise quantification. (p.31)

In the analysis of data, Becker notes, the qualitative researcher takes a cue from more quantitatively oriented colleagues. The researcher looks for probabilities or support for arguments concerning the likelihood that, or frequency with which, a conclusion in fact applies in a specific situation (see also Becker 1998, pp. 166–170). Thus did work in the modernist period clothe itself in the language and rhetoric of positivist and postpositivist discourse.

This was the golden age of rigorous qualitative analysis, bracketed in sociology by *Boys in White* (Becker et al. 1961) at one end and *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser and Strauss 1967) at the other. In education, qualitative research in this period was defined by George and Louise Spindler, Jules Henry, Harry Wolcott, and John Singleton. This form of qualitative research is still present in the work of scholars such as Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Ryan and Bernard (2000).

The “golden age” reinforced the picture of qualitative researchers as cultural romantics. Imbued with Promethean human powers, they valorized villains and outsiders as heroes to mainstream society. They embodied a belief in the contingency of self and society, and held to emancipatory ideals for “which one lives and dies.” They put in place a tragic and often ironic view of society and self, and joined a long line of leftist cultural romantics that included Emerson, Marx, James, Dewey, Gramsci, and Martin Luther King, Jr. (West 1989, chap. 6).

As this moment came to an end, the Vietnam War was everywhere present in American society. In 1969, alongside these political currents, Herbert Blumer and Everett Hughes met with a group of young sociologists called the “Chicago Irregulars” at the American Sociological Association meetings held in San Francisco and shared their memories of the “Chicago years.” Lyn Lofland (1980) describes this time as a

moment of creative ferment — scholarly and political. The San Francisco meetings witnessed not simply the Blumer-Hughes event but a “counterrevolution.”... a group first came to...talk about the problems of being a sociologist and a female...the discipline seemed literally to be bursting with new...ideas: labelling theory, ethnomethodology, conflict theory, phenomenology, dramaturgical analysis, (p. 253)

Thus did the modernist phase come to an end.

Blurred Genres

By the beginning of the third phase (1970–1986), which we call the moment of blurred genres, qualitative researchers had a full complement of paradigms, methods, and strategies to employ in their research. Theories ranged from symbolic interactionism to constructivism, naturalistic inquiry, positivism and postpositivism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, critical theory, neo-Marxist theory, semiotics, structuralism, feminism, and various racial/ethnic paradigms. Applied qualitative research was gaining in stature, and the politics and ethics of qualitative research — implicated as they were in various applications of this work — were topics of considerable concern. Research strategies and formats for reporting research ranged from grounded theory to the case study,

to methods of historical, biographical, ethnographic, action, and clinical research. Diverse ways of collecting and analyzing empirical materials were also available, including qualitative interviewing (open-ended and quasi-structured) and observational, visual, personal experience, and documentary methods. Computers were entering the situation, to be fully developed as aids in the analysis of qualitative data in the next decade, along with narrative, content, and semiotic methods of reading interviews and cultural texts.

Two books by Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) and *Local Knowledge* (1983), defined the beginning and the end of this moment. In these two works, Geertz argued that the old functional, positivist, behavioral, totalizing approaches to the human disciplines were giving way to a more pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended perspective. This new perspective took cultural representations and their meanings as its points of departure. Calling for “thick description” of particular events, rituals, and customs, Geertz suggested that all anthropological writings are interpretations of interpretations.³ The observer has no privileged voice in the interpretations that are written. The central task of theory is to make sense out of a local situation.

Geertz went on to propose that the boundaries between the social sciences and the humanities had become blurred. Social scientists were now turning to the humanities for models, theories, and methods of analysis (semiotics, hermeneutics). A form of genre diaspora was occurring: documentaries that read like fiction (Mailer), parables posing as ethnographies (Castaneda), theoretical treatises that look like travelogues (Levi-Strauss). At the same time, other new approaches were emerging: poststructuralism (Barthes), neopositivism (Philips), neo-Marxism (Althusser), micromacro descriptivism (Geertz), ritual theories of drama and culture (V. Turner), deconstructionism (Derrida), ethnomethodology (Garfinkel). The golden age of the social sciences was over, and a new age of blurred, interpretive genres was upon us. The essay as an art form was replacing the scientific article. At issue now was the author’s presence in the interpretive text (Geertz 1988). How can the researcher speak with authority in an age when there are no longer any firm rules concerning the text, including the author’s place in it, its standards of evaluation, and its subject matter?

The naturalistic, postpositivist, and constructionist paradigms gained power in this period, especially in education, in the works of Harry Wolcott, Frederick Erickson, Egon Guba, Yvonna Lincoln, Robert Stake, and Elliot Eisner. By the end of the 1970s, several qualitative journals were in place, including *Urban Life and Culture* (now *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*), *Cultural Anthropology*, *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *Qualitative Sociology*, and *Symbolic Interaction*, as well as the book series *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*.

Crisis of Representation

A profound rupture occurred in the mid-1980s. What we call the fourth moment, or the crisis of representation, appeared with *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Marcus and Fischer 1986), *The Anthropology of Experience* (Turner and Bruner 1986), *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986), *Works and Lives* (Geertz 1988), and *The Predicament of Culture* (Clifford 1988). These works made research and writing more reflexive and called into question the issues of gender, class, and race. They articulated the consequences of Geertz’s “blurred genres” interpretation of the field in the early 1980s.⁴

Qualitative researchers sought new models of truth, method, and representation (Rosaldo 1989). The erosion of classic norms in anthropology (objectivism, complicity with colo-

³ Greenblatt (1997, pp. 15–18) offers a useful deconstructive reading of the many meanings and practices Geertz brings to the term *thick description*.

⁴ These works marginalized and minimized the contributions of standpoint feminist theory and research to this discourse (see Behar 1995, p. 3; Gordon 1995, p. 432).

nialism, social life structured by fixed rituals and customs, ethnographies as monuments to a culture) was complete (Rosaldo 1989, pp. 44–45; see also Jackson 1998, pp. 7–8). Critical theory, feminist theory, and epistemologies of color now competed for attention in this arena. Issues such as validity, reliability, and objectivity, previously believed settled, were once more problematic. Pattern and interpretive theories, as opposed to causal, linear theories, were now more common, as writers continued to challenge older models of truth and meaning (Rosaldo 1989).

Stoller and Olkes (1987, pp. 227–229) describe how they felt the crisis of representation in their fieldwork among the Songhay of Niger. Stoller observes: “When I began to write anthropological texts, I followed the conventions of my training. I ‘gathered data,’ and once the ‘data’ were arranged in neat piles, I ‘wrote them up.’ In one case I reduced Songhay insults to a series of neat logical formulas” (p. 227). Stoller became dissatisfied with this form of writing, in part because he learned “everyone had lied to me and...the data I had so painstakingly collected were worthless. I learned a lesson: Informants routinely lie to their anthropologists” (Stoller and Olkes 1987, p. 9). This discovery led to a second — that he had, in following the conventions of ethnographic realism, edited himself out of his text. This led Stoller to produce a different type of text, a memoir, in which he became a central character in the story he told. This story, an account of his experiences in the Songhay world, became an analysis of the clash between his world and the world of Songhay sorcery. Thus Stoller’s journey represents an attempt to confront the crisis of representation in the fourth moment.

Clough (1998) elaborates this crisis and criticizes those who would argue that new forms of writing represent a way out of the crisis. She argues:

While many sociologists now commenting on the criticism of ethnography view writing as “downright central to the ethnographic enterprise” [Van Maanen 1988, p. xi], the problems of writing are still viewed as different from the problems of method or fieldwork itself. Thus the solution usually offered is experiments in writing, that is a self-consciousness about writing. (p. 136)

It is this insistence on the difference between writing and fieldwork that must be analyzed....

In writing, the field-worker makes a claim to moral and scientific authority. This claim allows the realist and experimental ethnographic texts to function as sources of validation for an empirical science. They show that the world of real lived experience can still be captured, if only in the writer’s memoirs, or fictional experimentations, or dramatic readings. But these works have the danger of directing attention away from the ways in which the text constructs sexually situated individuals in a field of social difference. They also perpetuate “empirical science’s hegemony” (Clough 1998, p. 8), for these new writing technologies of the subject become the site “for the production of knowledge/power...[aligned] with...the capital/state axis” (Aronowitz 1988, p. 300; quoted in Clough 1998, p. 8). Such experiments come up against, and then back away from, the difference between empirical science and social criticism. Too often they fail to engage fully a new politics of textuality that would “refuse the identity of empirical science” (Clough 1998, p. 135). This new social criticism “would intervene in the relationship of information economics, nation-state politics, and technologies of mass communication, especially in terms of the empirical sciences” (Clough 1998, p. 16). This, of course, is the terrain occupied by cultural studies.

...Richardson and St. Pierre develop the above arguments, viewing writing as a method of inquiry that moves through successive stages of self-reflection. As a series of written representations, the field-worker’s texts flow from the field experience, through intermediate works, to later work, and finally to the research text, which is the public presentation of the ethnographic and narrative experience. Thus fieldwork and writing blur into one another. There is, in the final analysis, no difference between writing and fieldwork. These two perspectives inform one another.... In these ways the crisis of representation moves qualitative research in new and critical directions.

The Triple Crisis

The ethnographer's authority remains under assault today (Behar 1995, p. 3; Gupta and Ferguson 1997, p. 16; Jackson 1998; Ortner 1997, p. 2). A triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis confronts qualitative researchers in the human disciplines. Embedded in the discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism (Vidich and Lyman 2000), these three crises are coded in multiple terms, variously called and associated with the *critical interpretive*, *linguistic*, *feminist*, and *rhetorical* turns in social theory. These new turns make problematic two key assumptions of qualitative research. The first is that qualitative researchers can no longer directly capture lived experience. Such experience, it is argued, is created in the social text written by the researcher. This is the representational crisis. It confronts the inescapable problem of representation, but does so within a framework that makes the direct link between experience and text problematic.

The second assumption makes problematic the traditional criteria for evaluating and interpreting qualitative research. This is the legitimation crisis. It involves a serious rethinking of such terms as *validity*, *generalizability*, and *reliability*, terms already retheorized in postpositivist (Hammersley 1992), constructionist-naturalistic (Guba and Lincoln 1989, pp. 163–183), feminist..., interpretive and performative (Denzin 1997, 2003), poststructural (Lather 1993; Lather and Smithies 1997), and critical discourses.... This crisis asks, How are qualitative studies to be evaluated in the contemporary, poststructural moment? The first two crises shape the third, which asks, Is it possible to effect change in the world if society is only and always a text? Clearly these crises intersect and blur, as do the answers to the questions they generate (see Ladson-Billings 2000; Schwandt 2000; Smith and Deemer 2000).

The fifth moment, the postmodern period of experimental ethnographic writing, struggled to make sense of these crises. New ways of composing ethnography were explored (Ellis and Bochner 1996). Theories were read as tales from the field. Writers struggled with different ways to represent the "Other," although they were now joined by new representational concerns (Fine et al. 2000). Epistemologies from previously silenced groups emerged to offer solutions to these problems. The concept of the aloof observer was abandoned. More action, participatory, and activist-oriented research was on the horizon. The search for grand narratives was being replaced by more local, small-scale theories fitted to specific problems and specific situations.

The sixth moment, postexperimental inquiry (1995–2000), was a period of great excitement, with AltaMira Press, under the direction of Mitch Allen, taking the lead. AltaMira's book series titled *Ethnographic Alternatives*, for which Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner served as series editors, captured this new excitement and brought a host of new authors into the interpretive community. The following description of the series from the publisher reflects its experimental tone: "*Ethnographic Alternatives* publishes experimental forms of qualitative writing that blur the boundaries between social sciences and humanities. Some volumes in the series...experiment with novel forms of expressing lived experience, including literary, poetic, autobiographical, multivoiced, conversational, critical, visual, performative and co-constructed representations."

During this same period, two major new qualitative journals began publication: *Qualitative Inquiry* and *Qualitative Research*. The editors of these journals were committed to publishing the very best new work. The success of these ventures framed the seventh moment, what we are calling the methodologically contested present (2000–2004). As discussed above, this is a period of conflict, great tension, and, in some quarters, retrenchment.

The eighth moment is now, the future (2005-). In this moment scholars, as reviewed above, are confronting the methodological backlash associated with "Bush science" and the evidence-based social movement.

Reading History

We draw several conclusions from this brief history, noting that it is, like all histories, somewhat arbitrary. First, each of the earlier historical moments is still operating in the present,

either as legacy or as a set of practices that researchers continue to follow or argue against. The multiple and fractured histories of qualitative research now make it possible for any given researcher to attach a project to a canonical text from any of the above-described historical moments. Multiple criteria of evaluation compete for attention in this field. Second, an embarrassment of choices now characterizes the field of qualitative research. Researchers have never before had so many paradigms, strategies of inquiry, and methods of analysis to draw upon and utilize. Third, we are in a moment of discovery and rediscovery, as new ways of looking, interpreting, arguing, and writing are debated and discussed. Fourth, the qualitative research act can no longer be viewed from within a neutral or objective positivist perspective. Class, race, gender, and ethnicity shape inquiry, making research a multicultural process. Fifth, we are clearly not implying a progress narrative with our history. We are not saying that the cutting edge is located in the present. We are saying that the present is a politically charged space. Complex pressures both within and outside of the qualitative community are working to erase the positive developments of the past 30 years.

The postmodern era has also added to the complexity of doing research with the realization that there is a multiplicity of ways that research can be performed, represented, and interpreted. This excerpt reveals that history is a dynamic and ever-changing backdrop to human lives. As an example of this, in this fragment, Denzin and Lincoln speak of the “crisis” of representation. At the time of writing, this was very likely an accurate depiction. However, because a crisis is a one time emergent event, and because the “crisis” is ongoing and has never disappeared, it has become a part of the “cost of doing research.” As such, the “problem” of representation is continuous and is endemic to any research endeavor in the humanities and social sciences.

Put another way, there is a healthy tension between biography and history. The researcher must negotiate a balanced view that incorporates not only the “facts” of the lives of the individuals under scrutiny, but also the “facts” of the researchers’ own lives. This represents the intersection of the relationship between biography and history. The autobiographical has to be connected to a moment in time in order to understand not only how historical events unfold but to understand *why* these events unfold as they do.

An Interview with Norman Denzin

Norman K. Denzin was interviewed in September, 2007, at his office in the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. In this video clip, Professor Denzin describes his journey of understanding with regard to how history functions within qualitative research. He suggests that history does not have to be viewed in the passive sense of things past, but individuals can utilize history to transform their research into a more dynamic, purposeful and powerful instrument which can aid in the understanding of one’s place within the historical moment.

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In order to understand how the historical moment can be transformed, much the same way that a journey of some length takes advantage of milestones and markers, Denzin notes that one must recognize that history is always occurring, whether it is in terms of momentous occasions or not. He suggests that it is the understanding of the active sense of history which allows the individual to recognize that he or she is in a historic moment. By understanding this, one then has the opportunity to insert oneself, as Denzin attempts to do through his writing, into the historic moment, so as to bring about positive societal change.

By way of explanation, Barthes (1974) uses the “author” and the “scriptor” to describe different ways of thinking about the creators of texts, be they traditional forms of inscription or videotexts. For Barthes, the traditional concept of an author creating literature by the powers of his or her imagination is no longer viable. In place of the author, the (post)modern world presents us with the “scriptor,” who combines preexisting texts in new ways (Barthes 1974). This complements Foucault’s treatment of discourse as social practice, which suggests the importance of understanding the practice of subjectivity (autobiography). Foucault allows for a subject who actively and simultaneously shapes and utilizes discourse (Foucault 1971). Barthes informs this further by employing “readerly” and “writerly” as terms to differentiate types of literature and to interrogate ways of reading texts. Readerly texts make no requirement of the reader but allow for “ready-made” meaning, which does not disturb the surrounding culture, while writerly texts attempt to encourage the reader to no longer be merely a consumer but an active producer of text, constituting a more dynamic way of interacting with a culture and its cultural inscriptions (Barthes 2004). Barthes believes that all writing draws on previous texts, norms, and conventions, and that these are the things to which we must turn to understand a text. Further to this, Barthes (1974) also implies that the author has no original past and, thus, interpretive horizons are opened up for the active reader. Thus, instead of merely contenting himself with “readerly” or “authored” texts, Norman Denzin illustrates the importance of using the “writerly” or “scripted” text to insert himself into the historic moment.

Summary

This chapter has described the historical context of qualitative research through the use of an African proverb and through an excerpt from one of Professors Denzin and Lincoln’s volumes that describes the eight moments of qualitative research and addresses issues relating to the representation of any text. A video clip of Professor Denzin provided a base for the purpose of the “writerly” text and how it can be utilized in order to fashion change. Here is the hope – that individuals who seize the historical moment in order to influence positive societal change will help define those moments so that we, the members of society, will not only learn from the mistakes of the past, we will also be able to benefit from a clearer knowledge that we are the agents of the future.

While the eight historic moments may serve as a useful register for the understanding of the history of qualitative research, it is not merely enough to

recognize the historical moment in retrospect, nor even to recognize the historical moment as it is occurring because, while the “facts” of history may not change, those facts are always open to interpretation. The strength of the historical context is to assist in recognizing and utilizing a particular moment or event in order, as Denzin suggests, to insert oneself into the text by reconstructing history in ways “that interrupt history so that, the next time around, it won’t be performed the way it has been.” In doing so, one may be able to more fully understand the power that the historical moment provides us with – the ability to forge change.

Because not all events are universally considered historical, the notion of history becomes relative. For some, the deepest historical moments exist outside of themselves while, for others, those deep moments of the recognition of historical change are deeply entrenched within. For all of us, however, our deepest historical moments are also deeply political moments, because it is these moments that signal change. Consequently, while not all historical moments are political moments, all political moments can be considered historical moments. Politics and history are joined at the hip.

In the following chapter, Dr. Henry Giroux discusses the political context of qualitative research. In this chapter, Professor Giroux states that it is not only important to recognize the moments in history that effect change, it is also important to recognize them for the political events that they signify, in order to move us from relying upon the structure of the society to protect us to ensure that we become the agents of our own futures.

Selected Annotated Bibliography – Norman Denzin

Denzin, N. K. (2009). *Childhood socialization*. Piscataway: Transaction Publishers. Norman Denzin presents a social psychological account of how the lives of children are shaped by social interaction, particularly interaction with parents and other caretakers. He examines the special language of children, their socialization experiences, and the emergence of their self-conceptions as they occur in natural surroundings: daycare centers, homes, playgrounds, schools, and many other places. Denzin is concerned not with sequential developmental changes during childhood but with how children themselves enter into the processes that lead to self-awareness, socialized abilities, and attributes such as pride, perceptiveness, dignity, and poise. Denzin maintains that the definitions of childhood by the 1970s had become detrimentally entrenched in educational and political policies regarding children.

Denzin, N. K. (2009). *Qualitative inquiry under fire: Toward a new paradigm dialogue*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

This collection of recent works by Norman K. Denzin provides a history of the field of qualitative inquiry over the past two decades. As perhaps the leading proponent of this style of research, Denzin has led the way toward more performative writing,

toward conceptualizing research in terms of social justice, inclusion of indigenous voices, and new models of interpretation and representation. In these 13 essays which originally appeared in a wide variety of sources and are edited and updated here, the author traces how these changes have transformed qualitative practice in recent years. In an era when qualitative inquiry is under fire from conservative governmental and academic bodies, he points the way toward the future, including a renewed dialogue on paradigmatic pluralism.

Denzin, N. K. (2008). *Searching for Yellowstone: Race, gender, family and memory in the postmodern west*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Part auto-ethnography, part historical narrative, part art criticism, part cultural theory, Norman Denzin creates a postmodern bricolage of images, staged dramas, quotations, reminiscences and stories that strike at the essence of the postmodern vision of the American West. Denzin interrogates iconic figures, symbols of the West in the Anglo-American imagination, for their cultural meaning in this finely woven work. *Searching for Yellowstone* remembers and re-interprets the essence of the American dream and rediscovers and explores the lives and the shattered dreams of the peoples it subjugated. Denzin has produced an unusual work on the production and performance of Native American archetypes, specifically as they intersect with the history of Yellowstone National Park and with Denzin's own personal history.

Denzin, N. K., & Giardina M. D. (Eds.). (2007). *Ethical futures in qualitative research: Decolonizing the politics of knowledge*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

The original contributions to this volume highlight key ethical topics facing contemporary qualitative researchers and those who will likely emerge in the near future. While considerations that relate to ethics in qualitative research have always been of perennial concern for qualitative researchers, the subject has been confounded by the emergence of human subjects, regulations, increased concern with indigenous communities, globalization of research practices, and the breakdown of barriers between researcher and subject. This book will help to shape the ethical response of the field to the challenges presented by the contemporary research environment. Contributions to this volume have been made by many of the leading figures in the field of qualitative research.

Denzin, N. K. (2007). *Flags in the window: Dispatches from the American war zone*. New York: Peter Lang Pub Inc.

This volume was written over a 4-year period and was originally conceived as *Notes from a Homeland War Diary*. These concise, gripping, and provocative essays record on-going reactions and reports from the Iraqi war zone. One such reaction is from Joan Didion, an American author best known as a novelist and writer of personalized, journalistic essays responding to what she fears is a disintegration of American morals amid cultural chaos. She refers to the War in Iraq as the "new normal" under the past Bush Administration. The essays presented in

Flags in the Window encourage the reader to rethink questions of power, political authority, patriotism, democracy, science, civil society, and the academy. *Flags in the Window* should be read by everyone who has an interest in an alternative view of the Iraq War.

Denzin, N. K. (2007). *On understanding emotion*. Piscataway: Transaction Publishers.

Emotions are those fleeting, insubstantial, changeable, and ambiguous moments that seem to defy study and analysis. Nothing is more complex, mysterious, and subject to conflicting theories and interpretations than human emotion. Yet the central importance of emotion in human affairs is undeniable. In his book, Norman Denzin presents a systematic, in-depth analysis of emotion that combines new theoretical advances with practical applications. Based on an intensive, critical examination of classical and modern theoretical research, he builds a new framework for understanding ordinary emotions and emotional disturbances. He offers new insights on the role of emotions in family violence and recommends ways of helping people escape from recurring patterns of violence.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is necessary to reengage the promise of qualitative research as a generative form of inquiry. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln have put together a volume that represents the state of the art for the theory and practice of qualitative inquiry. Built on the foundation of their landmark first edition, published in 1994, the third edition is both a bridge and a roadmap to the territory that lies ahead for researchers across the disciplines. Every chapter in the book has been thoroughly revised and updated. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research, Third Edition, represents the state of the art for the theory and practice of qualitative inquiry. The editors and authors ask how the practices of qualitative inquiry can be used to address issues of social justice in this new century.

Denzin, N. K. (2003). *Performance ethnography: The politics and pedagogies of culture*. London: Sage.

Norman K. Denzin evaluates reflexive performance, ethnography, and autoethnography, where each has been and where they are going as they pertain to the study of democracy and racism in postmodern America. In *Performance Ethnography*, Norman Denzin, one of the world's most distinguished authorities on qualitative research, establishes connections among performance narratives, performance ethnography, and autoethnography, and links them to critical pedagogy and critical race theory. The amalgam serves as an invitation for social scientists and ethnographers to confront the politics of cultural studies and explore the multiple ways in which performance and ethnography can be both better understood and used as mechanisms for social change and economic justice.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

The Landscape of Qualitative Research, 2nd Edition examines the field from a broadly theoretical perspective. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research, Second Edition* attempts to put the field of qualitative research into context. Part I locates the field, starting with history and progressing to action research and the academy, and the politics and ethics of qualitative research. Part II isolates what we regard as major historical and contemporary paradigms now structuring and influencing qualitative research in the human disciplines. The chapters move from competing paradigms (positivist, postpositivist, constructivist, critical theory) to specific interpretive perspectives, feminisms, racialized discourses, cultural studies, sexualities, and queer theory. Part III considers the future of qualitative research.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, the third volume in the paperback version of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Edition*, considers the tasks of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting empirical materials, and comprises the Handbook's Parts IV (*Methods of Collecting and Analyzing Empirical Materials*) and V (*The Art of Interpretation, Evaluation, and Presentation*). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* introduces the researcher to basic methods of gathering, analyzing and interpreting qualitative empirical materials. The first section moves from interviewing to observing, to the use of artifacts, documents, and records from the past, to visual and autoethnographic methods.

Denzin, N. K. (2002). *Reading race: Hollywood and a cinema of racial violence, 1980–1995*. London: Sage.

In this volume, Norman Denzin argues that the contemporary history of race relations in America is reflected by the representation of violent, youthful minority group members in Hollywood cinema. He analyzes Hollywood's "cinema of racial violence" for what it reveals about the inability of American society to fully understand the conflict between its creed of fundamental equality and the segregationist and discriminatory realities of society. Focusing on a number of recent, popular films, he contends that mainstream film contributes to the production of a new racial discourse that connects race to a culture of violence. The gaze of the camera thereby becomes aligned with the conservative laws of patriarchy and the state, making colored people the objects of a white panoptic system of social control and surveillance.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2002). *The qualitative inquiry reader*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

The Qualitative Inquiry Reader offers the best of the popular SAGE journal, *Qualitative Inquiry*. These collected works aim to introduce the necessary critical framework that will allow scholars and students to interpret cutting edge work in the field of qualitative inquiry. By providing this framework, readers will then be able

to use this work as it applies to critical political and moral discourses. The book includes examples from across the behavioral and social sciences and is divided into five sections: Reflexive Ethnography, Autoethnography, Poetics, Performance Narratives, and Assessing the Text. These sections reflect the ways in which contemporary researchers have implemented the narrative in their writings.

Denzin, N. K. (2001). *Interpretive interactionism* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage. *Interpretive Interactionism* argues strongly for a new approach to qualitative research methods. Writing primarily for established practitioners and advanced graduate students, Denzin seeks to fuse influences of symbolic interactionist, hermeneutical, feminist, postmodern, and critical-biographical thought into his personal approach to research, which he calls interpretive interactionism. This work moves to the forefront of the field through its unapologetic advocacy of the subjective, its emphasis on the biographical, and its appeal for experimentation in new writing conventions. Readers wishing to acquaint with current thinking in the field will find it well synthesized in this volume. This volume represents one of the simplest and clearest presentations of Denzin's work.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2001). *The American tradition of qualitative research* (4 vols.) London: Sage.

These four volumes cover six central themes in American Qualitative Research: (1) History, Ethics, and Politics; (2) Paradigms such as positivism and postpositivism, interpretive theory, queer theory, Marxism, Feminism, cultural studies, and standpoint theory; (3) Strategies of Inquiry such as Ethnography, Case Study, Life Story, Historical Method, Grounded Theory, Action Research, and Ethnomethodology; (4) Methods of Collecting Empirical Materials such as Interview, Observation, Document Analysis, Visual Culture, Narrative Content, Semiotic Methods; (5) Interpretive Practices such as Causal Modules, Interpretive Validity, Politics of Interpretation and the Art of Writing; (6) The Future. This volume is a valuable handbook for any novice or seasoned researcher.

Questions for Further Study

1. Read the African proverb presented in this chapter and discuss it in relation to qualitative research. Give examples of an historical event that either illustrates a colonial viewpoint or has been reenvisioned for postcolonial times.
2. Qualitative research means different things in each of the eight moments identified by Denzin and Lincoln. As individuals or in groups, discuss a research moment and report your findings to the class relative to each respective research moment, beginning with the first moment.
3. Denzin and Lincoln write that "each of the earlier historical moments is still operating in the present, either as a legacy or as a set of practices that researchers continue to follow or argue against" (2005, p. 20). Consider and discuss this point.

4. Reflect and relate the above quote back to the proverb discussed earlier in the chapter and describe the manner in which it relates, in concert or in contradiction, to your respective research moment from the second study question.
5. What does the “crisis of representation” mean to you and how does it affect the type of research that you are interested in pursuing?

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Chapter 5

The Political Context

*I can live on my knees or I can live standing up;
and I'm not going to live on my knees.*

– Dr. Henry Giroux



Dr. Henry Giroux

To this point, in this volume we have discussed some of the underpinnings related to engaging in research in general and to qualitative research in particular. We have introduced an orientation for inquiry, called the Five Contexts, by which to engage conceptually with a variety of research genres. The first two aspects of this orientation have included a discussion of the autobiographical and the historical contexts of performing qualitative research. We now move on to the third aspect of this orientation, the political context. This chapter introduces the political context of qualitative

research, featuring video clips of an interview with Henry Giroux, who offers a reflection on this context and relates it to issues of qualitative research. The particular political stance that is offered in this chapter relates to critical inquiry.

It may be important to consider that any event may be historical, but not necessarily political, as it pertains to the individual. As such, any biographical event may be historical, such as a birthday, for example, without it necessarily being a political event. It is also fairly safe to say that, conversely, any political event not only has the capacity to be an (auto)biographical event but also tends to be historical. Such is the nature of political endeavor. Because political events and historical events are not necessarily mutually inclusive as the former can be subsumed under the latter, it is important to delve into how political actions or inactions influence and impact upon the other research contexts, as outlined in this volume. Few people speak of these concerns as eloquently as Henry Giroux.

Reflection on the Political Context

Professor Henry Giroux was interviewed in his office at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, on December 12, 2008. In the first of two video clips, Professor Giroux talks about his early influences and the process by which he came to recognize the importance of the political in any research endeavor. This first video clip is essentially autobiographical and is populated with personal historical milestones. A number of these historical milestones are further described through Henry Giroux's stance on democracy and justice. Throughout this video clip, Dr. Giroux speaks of his own personal circumstances in order to illuminate how the political contexts at work within society impact upon one's sense of agency.

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In this video clip, Henry Giroux contends that it is patently impossible to separate the personal from the political. As such, in looking to previous chapters in this volume, Norman Denzin points to historical events that serve to ground the political context within the personal autobiographical. William Pinar's view, in this volume, also speaks of the importance of the autobiographical context which remains central to the political context.

The political context discussed by Henry Giroux notes that society tends to define individuals by what it is that they lack, rather than qualities that they may possess. Professor Giroux grew up in a working class neighborhood and he notes that he learned many valuable skills, few of which were useful in school or within the larger community. In fact, he points to the notion that numerous skills and types of knowledge

that are often valorized within our educational systems are not always translatable into immediate and necessary survival skills. By using examples from his early years and noting that his early life was anything but frictionless, Henry Giroux ties together the autobiographical, the historical, and the political contexts that form the central thesis of this volume.

At the intersection between personal and public histories, Henry Giroux notes that it was the foment of the 1960s that acted as precursor to a radical new shift that we now recognize as the postmodern era. It was the failed intellectual revolution of the 1960s in tandem with such tragedies as the Vietnam War that raised political consciousnesses (and consciences) around the world. Giroux suggests that, ever since that eventful decade, issues around justice and the need for greater agency, equity, and emancipation became ever more present in the public psyche, if not in the public domain. To further demonstrate the need for a political consideration regarding qualitative research, we include an excerpt of the preface and introduction to the first section of Henry Giroux's classic book, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (1983).

Excerpt of an Article by Henry Giroux

The following excerpt was taken from the preface and introduction to one of Professor Giroux's most influential books, entitled *Theory and Resistance in Education* (1983). In this excerpt, he discusses the struggle for economic and social democracy and the need to develop a mechanism for critique that speaks of the need for social action and emancipatory transformation.

Preface

This book was written during a trying time. On the national level, political hopes and dreams for a better future have been replaced by publicity gimmicks and advertisements for a creeping authoritarianism. The moral questions that once informed issues regarding human needs and welfare have been overshadowed by technical questions about balancing budgets and increasing military stockpiles. Leftist academics are being slowly purged from the universities, while many of their colleagues disappear into the security of their tenured positions and refuse to resist or challenge the academic assassins who act without compassion or reflection. The script is grim, and the historical logic that informs it raises alarm. Such a scenario is not meant to prompt despair or cynicism; instead it points to the necessity to organize collectively and to fight harder. It also implies that the struggle will be a long and arduous one, and that in time the seeds of a new society may or may not bloom. In other words, one has to struggle against the new authoritarianism and hope that such an effort will pay off in the future. The dialectic between the reality and the promise cannot be escaped, it can only be ignored, and then only by those who have the economic and political power to close their doors and hide from the carnage they create, but never actually see or touch. This is the age of clean killers.

To struggle for economic and social democracy is to take risks. It is impossible to escape this logic. In my own case, I made the mistake of thinking that all major universities generally provided a setting where a critical dialogue could be constructed, oppositional views aired, or, for that matter, where alternative positions could be taught. It now appears that there are very few universities left in the United States where academic freedom is taken

seriously. The message, of course, is not strictly a personal one, though that is not to be discounted since actions that violate the principles of academic freedom always disrupt lives in a deeply painful way. What is more important is that the message is a political one, and it speaks to the need for educators, teachers, community people, and others to develop, where possible, political, cultural, and educational collectives that provide both the space and the support necessary for them to survive and to struggle with dignity and power. There are no safe avenues any longer. There are only fleeting possibilities for us to think through the past, to examine the sedimented histories that constitute who we are, and to insert ourselves into the present so as to struggle for a better society. This book makes a small contribution to that effort. It provides no final answers: only the politicians and the game shows do that, and both of them are rigged. The book simply raises questions, invokes a real discourse for educators, and points to new relations and modes of analysis for understanding and changing schools and the larger society. The rest is open-ended....

Since the established universe of discourse is that of an unfree world, dialectical thought is necessarily destructive, and whatever liberation it may bring is liberation in thought, in theory. However, the divorce of thought from action, of theory from practice, is itself part of an unfree world. No thought and no theory can undo it; but theory may help to prepare the ground for their possible reunion, and the ability of thought to develop a logic and language of contradiction is a prerequisite for this task (Marcuse 1960).

In this brief paragraph, Marcuse manages to capture both the spirit and the challenge that presently confront radical pedagogy. Its spirit is rooted in an aversion to all forms of domination, and its challenge centers around the need to develop modes of critique fashioned in a theoretical discourse that mediates the possibility for social action and emancipatory transformation. Such a task will not be easy, particularly at the present historical juncture, informed as it is by a long tradition of ideological discourse and social practices that promote modes of historical, political, and conceptual illiteracy.

The following section attempts to develop a theoretical discourse that seriously engages the challenge implicit in Marcuse's statement. It does so by positing an argument for a theory of radical pedagogy that takes as its first task the development of a new language and set of critical concepts. In this case, it calls for a discourse that acknowledges as a central concern the categories of history, sociology, and depth psychology. At the same time, it attempts to fashion these categories into a mode of analysis that grounds human agency and structure within a context that reveals how the dynamics of domination and contestation mediate the specific forms they take under concrete historical circumstances. In essence, this section attempts to rescue the critical potential of radical educational discourse while simultaneously enlarging the concept of the political to include those historical and socio-cultural institutions and practices that constitute the realm of everyday life. In more specific terms, this means developing analyses of schooling that draw upon a critical theory and discourse that interrelate modes of inquiry drawn from a variety of social science disciplines. On the other hand, this section attempts to construct a theoretical foundation to extend the notion of critique into relations and dimensions of schooling and social activity often ignored by both traditional and radical educators.

The questions underlying the modes of analysis used in this section are important ones: how do we make education meaningful by making it critical, and how do we make it critical so as to make it emancipatory? The starting point for pursuing these questions is historical in nature and suggests a brief commentary on how the issue has been treated in traditional and radical analyses.

Educational traditionalists generally ignore the issue. In both conservative and liberal versions of schooling, theory has been firmly entrenched in the logic of technocratic rationality and has been anchored in a discourse that finds its quintessential expression in the attempt to find universal principles of education that are rooted in the ethos of instrumentalism or self-serving individualism. At the same time, these accounts have suppressed questions

of the relations among power, knowledge, and ideology. In effect, traditional educational theory has ignored not only the latent principles that shape the deep grammar of the existing social order, but also those principles that underlie the development and nature of its own view of the world. Schools, in these perspectives, are seen merely as instructional sites. That they are also cultural and political sites is ignored, as is the notion that they represent arenas of contestation and struggle among differentially empowered cultural and economic groups.

Needless to say, various modes of radical educational theory and practice have emerged in the last few decades to challenge the traditionalist paradigm. We have witnessed structuralist accounts that focus on macro-issues concerning those social, economic, and political determinants of schooling that have aimed at capital accumulation and the reproduction of the labor force. Characteristic of these investigations are accounts of schools as part of an “ideological state apparatus,” the ultimate function of which is to constitute the ideological conditions for the maintenance and reproduction of capitalist relations of production, i.e., the creation of a labor force that will passively comply with the dictates of capital and its institutions. We have also seen the development of historical and sociological accounts of the way in which the structure of the workplace is replicated through daily routines and practices that shape classroom social relations, that is, the hidden curriculum of schooling. More recently, we have accounts of schooling that illuminate how cultural resources are selected, organized, and distributed in schools so as to secure existing power relations.

I shall argue in this section that all of these positions have failed to provide an adequate basis for developing a radical theory of pedagogy. The traditionalists have failed because they have refused to make problematic the relations among schools, the larger society, and issues of power, domination, and liberation. There is no room in their discourse for the fundamental categories of praxis: categories such as subjectivity, mediation, class, struggle, and emancipation. While radical educators do make the relations among schools, power, and society an object of critical analysis, they do so at the theoretical expense of falling into either a one-sided idealism or an equally one-sided structuralism. In other words, there are, on the one hand, radical educators who collapse human agency and struggle into a celebration of human will, cultural experience, or the construction of “happy” classroom social relations. On the other hand, there are radical views of pedagogy that cling to notions of structure and domination. Such views not only argue that history is made behind the backs of human beings, but also imply that within such a context of domination human agency virtually disappears. The notion that human beings produce history – including its constraints – is subsumed in a discourse that often portrays schools as prisons, factories, and administrative machines functioning smoothly to produce the interests of domination and inequality. The result has often been modes of analysis that collapse into an arid functionalism or equally disabling pessimism.

It is at this juncture that the work of the Frankfurt School becomes important. Within the theoretical legacy of critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse there is a sustained attempt to develop a theory and mode of critique that aims at both revealing and breaking with the existing structures of domination. Crucial to this perspective are an analysis and a call for the integration of the processes of emancipation and the struggle for self-emancipation. History, psychology, and social theory interface in an attempt co-rescue the human subject from the logic of capitalist administration. Political education (not necessarily schooling) takes to a new dimension within the context of this work. As Marcuse points out:

It is precisely the preparatory character of [education] which gives it its historical significance: to develop, in the exploited, the consciousness (and the unconscious) which would loosen the hold of enslaving needs over their existence – the needs which perpetuate their dependence on the system of exploitation. Without this rupture, which can only be the result of political education in action, even the most elemental, the most immediate force of rebellion may be defeated, or become the mass basis of counterrevolution (Marcuse 1969).

Central to the work of the Frankfurt School is an examination of the degree to which the logic of domination has been extended into the sphere of everyday life, the public sphere, and the mode of production itself. What critical theory provides for educational theorists is a mode of critique and a language of opposition that extends the concept of the political not only into mundane social relations but into the very sensibilities and needs that form the personality and psyche. The achievements of the critical theorists are their refusal to abandon the dialectic of agency and structure (i.e., the open-endedness of history) and their development of theoretical perspectives that treat seriously the claim that history can be changed, that the potential for radical transformation exists. It is against this theoretical landscape that I shall examine the various analyses of the hidden curriculum and reproductive theories of schooling that have emerged in the last few decades in the United States and Europe. Whereas the Frankfurt School provides a discourse that illuminates the social, political, and cultural totality in which schools develop, the various analyses of schooling provide a referent point from which to assess both the strengths and limitations of such work. Moreover, it is precisely in the interface of the work of the Frankfurt School and the various theories of schooling under analysis in this section that the theoretical elements for a radical theory of pedagogy begin to appear. It is to this task that I will now turn.

In this compilation of segments from *Theory and Resistance in Education* (1983), Henry Giroux's message is intensely political as it suggests that dreams for a better future have become derailed by an insouciant, unchallenged, and creeping authoritarianism that seeks to create a labor force made up of "passive-compliants" to operationalize the dictates of the dominant forces within society. Although we are reassured that this scenario is not meant to send us to the depths of despair, it does help us to realize that there is a battle being fought and that the battleground is in and around our collective systems of education. Why bother to fight or defend at all? Giroux claims that one must defend academic freedom and wage a battle now in order to secure a future that our children would wish to inherit. After all, the stakes are very high: the prize is nothing less than economic and social democracy.

As such, the political aspects of our current challenges have their genesis in the past; the "sedimented histories that constitute who we are" may allow us "to insert ourselves into the present" in the struggle for a better society. This view connects directly with the previous chapter that focuses on the Historical Context in calling for a discourse that acknowledges not only history but sociology and psychology as well. Thus, Giroux contends, the objective of this struggle is to ground human agency and structure within a context that reveals how domination and contestation subjugate the individual to specific societal structures that are at once social and historical. This hearkens back to the Autobiographical Context, presented in the third chapter of this volume, which also attests to the need for individuals to develop an understanding of not only themselves, but of themselves in relationship to the world which they currently inhabit.

While the starting point may be historical and autobiographical in nature, how does Giroux suggest that this "understanding" may occur? He begins by suggesting that a critical education is the key to making education emancipatory. Schools are not merely instructional sites; they are also cultural and political sites and, as such, they represent contested terrain that is represented by the struggle among "differentially empowered cultural and economic groups."

To date, however, educational institutions have uniformly failed to provide an adequate basis for developing a radical theory of pedagogy. Professor Giroux's endeavors remain central to the work of the Frankfurt School in examining the degree to which the logic of domination has crept into the life spheres of the individual. Thus, Henry Giroux's message, while intensely political, is hopeful in that it reaffirms the potential for radical transformation and, ultimately, emancipation and the prospect of the alleviation of human suffering.

An Interview with Henry Giroux

Following is an excerpt from the full-length interview with Henry Giroux. In this video clip, Professor Giroux speaks of the notion that research itself is not devoid of issues of power. Because governments and corporations alike invest heavily in research, research is not a neutral commodity, even though it is at the heart of educative and educational endeavors.

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Professor Giroux, in this video clip, states that corporatist-driven research is antithetical to notions of democracy. As an example, he points to the vast amount of funding that goes into the development of armaments and the technology of warfare. He notes that research should strive to become more ethical in order to link private and corporate issues to societal issues. In discussing such mechanisms of control, he comments that we must reexamine the purpose and meaning of education. He states that education should drive exploration, rather than the current experience of the corporations funding research for the purpose of directing educational endeavors.

Dr. Giroux points to an "elaborated code" that serves to punish, through marginalization and exclusion, those who are unaware or who have not learned the symbols, gestures, and language of the dominant society. As if this is not enough, it is incumbent upon every individual, who wishes to become successful, to become literate in a multiplicity of ways in order to understand the various registers of human interaction. This is a very powerful political statement, as it connects individual agency to corporate structures and beyond through mastery of this elaborated code of conduct that controls and maintains, as its reward, acceptance to ever greater levels of power. It is this understanding, Dr. Giroux claims, that allows human interaction to survive.

Summary

In this chapter, Henry Giroux discusses and describes the importance of recognizing the political dimensions of any research within which one is engaged. Professor Giroux identifies points in his own personal autobiography that have assisted him in realizing the enormity of the political context not only in research but in our everyday lived experiences. He notes that the ability to develop agency is a major key in developing success within any parameters of life and work and notes that it is of extreme importance to maintain a dialogue with others, corporate and otherwise, particularly regarding acts of terrorism and to issues relating to symbolic violence as well. As such, Giroux believes that there are huge political issues surrounding language, not only in terms of what is said or how it is said, but also how it is used to marginalize and exclude individuals and groups of individuals in order to afford control to dominate others. In short, both research and language are situated within social formations and structures which are, in turn, fraught with political issues and concerns relating to the abuse of power.

Professor Giroux makes his point about how these issues continue to be global issues, and this raises the specter of globalization which has occurred in accelerated terms since the rise of what Zygmunt Bauman has referred to as postmodernity. In agreement with Bauman, Henry Giroux acknowledges that there are no hard and fast distinctions between so-called late modernity and early postmodernity, but suggests that the two eras have melded seamlessly together as both can be seen to be operating consecutively *and* concurrently and do not necessarily represent mutually exclusive time periods. Professor Giroux holds to the notion that it is more important to mark the relations between the elements of modernity and postmodernity than it is to identify the differences between the eras. It is to the next chapter that we turn in order to hear the words of Professor Zygmunt Bauman as he describes how he has discarded the idea of postmodernity as being merely a “stop-gap” appellation in favor of the more encompassing and accurate notion of “liquid modernity.”

Selected Annotated Bibliography – Henry Giroux

Giroux, H. A. (2004). Cultural studies, public pedagogy, and the responsibility of intellectuals. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 1(1), 59–79.

The author argues that cultural studies are an invaluable field to critical pedagogy, both inside the classroom and in the public sphere. Cultural studies investigate the arena of democratic politics, resistance, and social agency that are key to understanding how private issues may relate to a larger social context. This approach to pedagogy is particularly important given the increasing diversity of students and the lack of cultural sensitivity to this multiplicity. Debate, dialogue, and critical engagement are necessary to understand the relationship between representation and agency within public memory. Pedagogy should be held ethically and politically accountable

to the stories it helps produce, and also foster an environment where critical imagination and discussion can occur.

Giroux, H. A. (2004). Pedagogy, film, and the responsibility of intellectuals: A review. *Cinema Journal*, 43(2), 119–127.

This article is an introduction to and contextualization of the arguments brought forth in this issue of *Cinema Journal* by a variety of authors. Giroux offers insight into the role of intellectuals in reclaiming democratic values, social agency, and political pedagogy in a post-9/11 America. He argues that educators must turn toward a critical and moral pedagogy that examines the relationships between power, knowledge, and ideology, which are crucial for understanding how public memory is shaped and national identity is constructed. Moreover, educators need to engage students openly in discussions of politics and to voice their own particular positions on issues. This approach is critical in order for students to gain the skills necessary to assume public responsibility and active participation on political and social issues.

Giroux, H. A. (2004). Critical pedagogy and the postmodern/modern divide: Towards a pedagogy of democratization. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 31(1), 31–47.

This article examines the impacts of neoliberalism on democracy and social issues, and the necessity of developing a critical pedagogy to counter global capitalism, while resurrecting a “militant democratic socialism.” Through a transdisciplinary pedagogical approach, educators can provide an alternative to the mainstream vision of the future and provide the tools required to construct representations of our environment and of ourselves. It is the responsibility of educators to democratize political culture through self-reflective analysis of the kinds of labor, practices, and production that occur in public and higher education. It is the role of critical pedagogy to reshape this condition through the project of democratization.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). *The abandoned generation: Democracy beyond the culture of fear*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Henry Giroux continues his critique of the US political and popular culture’s influence on the lives of our children. In his controversial new book, Giroux argues that the USA is at war with young people. No longer seen as the future of a democratic society, youth are now derided by politicians looking for quick-fix solutions to crime and demonized by the popular media. This perception of fear and disdain is being translated into social policy. Instead of providing a decent education to young people, we offer them the increasing potential of being incarcerated. Instead of guaranteeing them decent health care, we serve them more standardized tests. There is a war on in the USA these days, and Henry Giroux sees our youth as the target.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). *Public spaces/private lives: Democracy beyond 9/11*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

While many of the essays in this book were written before 9/11, they point to a number of important issues such as the commercialization of public life, the stepped-up militarization, racial profiling, and the threat to basic civil liberties that have been

resurrected since the terrorist attacks. This volume serves to legitimate the claim that there is much in America that has not changed since 9/11. Rather, we are witnessing an intensification and acceleration of the contradictions that threatened American democracy before the tragic events of 9/11. This book offers a context for both understanding and critically engaging the combined threats posed by increases in domestic militarization and a neoliberal ideology that substitutes market values for democratic values.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Spectacles of race and pedagogies of denial: Anti-black racist pedagogy under the reign of neoliberalism. *Communication Education*, 52(3/4), 119–211.

This article explores the occurrence of a more subtle and complicated representation of race within American culture since the civil rights movement. Neoliberalism has created a culture of privatization and profit making, for the benefit of the individual over public good. This has created an atmosphere in which all problems, including racism, are private issues to do with an individual's own character, motivation, and intelligence rather than as systemic issues. In addition, the article details how the mainstream ideology of color blindness allows Whites to ignore existing power asymmetries that may be expressed in terms of housing availability, income disparity, incarceration rate, and educational opportunity. A crucial role of public pedagogy is to provide the tools necessary for a collective antiracist struggle.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Neoliberalism and the disappearance of the social in *Ghost World*. *Third Text*, 17(2), 151–161.

This article examines how the mainstream film *Ghost World* presents a sympathetic picture of marginalized youth within a non-genuine, middle-class world. The author details the movie's plot, and praises the authenticity of teenage speech, dress, and the portrayal of adolescent alienation. Giroux explores the movie's shortcomings, including its failure to acknowledge the option of a pedagogy of resistance to challenge the conventional world. In this way, the movie serves to isolate and privatize teenage resistance, a neoliberalist strategy that serves to diminish politics by fostering individual cynicism. Giroux argues that youth pose a threat to the established social order in America, and the movie fails to engage in the larger questions of "politics, power, and public consciousness" that are necessary to inspire collective action.

Giroux, H. A. (2002). *Breaking into the movies: Film and the culture of politics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press.

Breaking into the Movies brings together Henry Giroux's best-known essays from the last 20 years, centering on important subjects on the cultural studies and pop culture agenda, including violence, race, class, gender, identity, politics, and children's culture. The volume charts his career as one of the most astute observers of the Hollywood tradition, from early reflections on *Norma Rae* and *Looking for Mister Goodbar* to ground-breaking analyses of more recent movies such as *Pulp Fiction*, *Dead Poets Society*, *Dangerous Minds*, and *Fight Club*. By addressing the profound pedagogical role of film in contemporary society, Giroux demonstrates

how it dramatically shapes the way young people come to terms with today's most highly charged social issues.

Giroux, H. A. (2001). *Theory and resistance in education (Revised Edition)*. South Hadley: Bergin & Garvey.

The past decade has witnessed a virtual explosion of interest in social theory. This volume aims to stir controversy by valorizing as well as offering criticism of what is new and exciting in social theory. At the beginning of the new millennium, educators, parents, and others should reevaluate what it means for adults and young people to grow up in a world that has been radically altered by a hyper-capitalism that monopolizes the educational force of culture as it ruthlessly eliminates those public spheres not governed by the logic of the market. Giroux provides new theoretical and political tools for addressing how pedagogy, knowledge, resistance, and power can be analyzed within and across a variety of cultural spheres, including but not limited to the schools.

Giroux, H. A. (2001). *Stealing innocence: Corporate culture's war on children*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Henry Giroux looks at the way corporate culture is encroaching on the lives of children: that the triumph of democracy is related to the triumph of the market; that children are being affected by power and politics; and that teaching and learning are no longer linked to improving the world. Looking at childhood beauty pageants, school shootings, and the omnipresent nihilistic "chic" of advertising, Giroux paints a disturbing picture of the world surrounding our children. He turns to the work of Antonio Gramsci, Paulo Freire, and Stuart Hall for lessons on how we can reinstitute a realistic childhood for our children. Giroux points out that children today are over-inundated with outside influences that coerce young people to face adulthood too early in their lifetimes, thereby forcing traditional childhood concerns to the wayside.

Giroux, H. A. (2000). *Impure acts: The practical politics of cultural studies*. London: Routledge.

This book begins with the premise that the culture of politics – culture's capacity to create those discursive resources and material relations of power that shape democratic public life – appears to be in crisis, subject to derision by a wide range of ideological perspectives. In opposition to such attacks, this book argues that struggles over culture are not a weak substitute for "real" politics, but are central to any struggle willing to forge relations of power, theory, and practice, as well as pedagogy and social change. Giroux challenges contemporary politics by addressing a number of issues including the various attacks on cultural politics, the multicultural discourses of academia, the corporate attack on higher education, and the cultural politics of the Disney Empire.

Giroux, H. A. (1999). *The mouse that roared: Disney and the end of innocence*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Press.

Giroux explores the surprisingly diverse ways in which Disney, while hiding behind a cloak of innocence and entertainment, strives to dominate global media and shape

the desires, needs, and futures of today's children. Giroux takes the reader inside the company's vision of the full range of its media – its films, television, famous characters, and spin-off products, as well as its special school, "Celebration." He reveals how Disney idealizes and implements its goal of building a world culture. Giroux tackles Disney's theme parks, its recent forays into education and its movies in an attempt to expose how Disney's legacy is eroding democracy and endangering our nation's youth. Disney's movies, argues Giroux, promote sexism and racism and encourage massive consumer spending while assuming the guise of innocuous family fun.

Castells, M., Flecha, R., Freire, P., Giroux, H., Macedo, D., & Willis, P. (1999). *Critical education in the new information age*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Press.

This volume offers essays by some of the world's leading educators and provides a revolutionary portrait of new ideas and developments in education that can influence the possibility of social and political change. The authors take into account such diverse terrain as feminism, ecology, media, and individual liberty in their pursuit of new ideas that can inform the fundamental practice of education and promote a more humane civil society. The book consolidates recent thinking just as it reflects on emerging new lines of critical theory. The authors of this volume embrace current educational issues with a political and moral urgency. Given the complexity of issues that educators, policy makers, administrators and activists face at the dawn of the new millennium, the publication of this volume could not be more timely.

Giroux, H. A. (1998). *Channel surfing: Racism, the media and the destruction of today's youth*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

What truth, if any, is contained in depictions of today's youth? What message about our children is being transmitted? In *Channel Surfing*, Giroux turns to this barrage of media images and sees a message that sells our children short by damning them to the preconceived role of alienated outcast. Surfing from one channel of communication to the next, Giroux builds a complex web of associations between characters in films, tarnished real-life teen idols, and sexualized presentations of nubile young clothing models to show us the dark vision of our children that rides the airwaves and inhabits the print media. Henry Giroux's most fascinating and intriguing book yet, this volume is sure to create controversy and debate at the same time that it calls for a more ethical attitude toward the prospect of our children's future.

Questions for Further Study

1. What are the origins of the term "political?" Using an etymological dictionary, trace the origins of the word and how it has been used throughout the ages. How does this word relate to concepts of power, government, citizenry, and human rights?

2. Can you describe an event in your own life that was an intrinsically political situation? What were the circumstances and how was this political? What was the resolution, if any?
3. What kinds of revelations have you witnessed as a result of listening to Henry Giroux in the two video clips that accompany this chapter? What was revealed to you and why is it significant in terms of your autobiography and/or historical outlook?
4. By way of practical exercise, can you think of an example, personal or media-related, that is hopeful by way of democratic imagination? What evidence do we have of a “democratic imagination” at work? What changes would we need to embrace in order for this example to become a reality?
5. Would you agree, as Henry Giroux suggests, that the English language is a “punishing language?” Please justify your conclusion in terms of autobiographical or historical events that you have witnessed.

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Chapter 6

The Postmodern Context

We have never been so modern as we are at the moment and I think that modernity has reached the biological limits of its own development.

– Dr. Zygmunt Bauman



Dr. Zygmunt Bauman

This chapter focuses on the work of Dr. Zygmunt Bauman, one of the world’s leading scholars on the topic of postmodernity. Although the term “postmodern” was originally intended as a temporary expression that would later be dispensed with in favor of one that more accurately describes our current circumstances, in a very postmodern-like way the very word “postmodern” has stuck like glue. Professor Bauman prefers “liquid” to the term “post-” as he feels that our current times are much more synonymous with the fluidity of water than with the concreteness of the

previous, so-called “modern,” era. While “liquid modernity” seems to describe with greater accuracy the context within which societies currently live, we, the authors, have taken the liberty of continuing to use the term “postmodern” due to its more readily identifiable signature with the greater public.

A George Carlin video clip, entitled “Modern Man,” begins this chapter by describing our modern situation in postmodern terms. In concordance with the format established in previous chapters, a video clip featuring Zygmunt Bauman discussing key concepts relating to postmodernity along with an excerpt by Professor Bauman on this topic are presented. Graduate students then reflect on what postmodernity means to them in societal terms and how it relates, in turn, to qualitative research. Throughout the chapter, connections are made between postmodernity and qualitative research. This chapter concludes with an annotated bibliography and questions for further study.

(Post)Modern Man

How does one go about describing the phenomenon of postmodernity? Some suggest that it began as an avant-garde movement in art and architecture that captured the imagination of entire societies. Others believe that the postmodern era was issued in with the invention of the microchip, which has allowed for the miniaturization of computers and the plethora of mind-boggling applications that involve almost anything that one can think of. Whatever its origin, its appearance has changed the course of global trends forever.

Suddenly, with the advent of a postmodern world, huge new possibilities presented themselves. For example, choice became a right, and there was and continues to be plenty of choice to be had. In fact, the issue of choice has become overwhelming, particularly when coupled with the accelerating rate of change that is current in today’s society. George Carlin, in his presentation entitled “Modern Man,” describes himself as a modern man in what can only be described as postmodern terms. His comedic rendition of all that we are attendant to within our society provides a hilarity that parodies a serious overinvestment in the current cybersphere.

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Through comic relief, George Carlin echoes the concern that Zygmunt Bauman brings to light in his work; the idea that, as a society, the world order is moving from a producer society to a consumer society which, if unchecked, will spell dire consequences for humanity. It is the direness of Bauman’s warning that allows George Carlin to bring the dangers inherent in these current times home

to his audiences through his caricaturization of what could perhaps be re-entitled “Postmodern Man.”

An Interview with Professor Emeritus Zygmunt Bauman

In order to develop the postmodern context for this volume, we decided to interview not only a postmodern man, Dr. Zygmunt Bauman, but one who has contributed enormously to society’s understanding of what postmodernity entails, what it means and how it functions. Zygmunt Bauman was interviewed in his home in Leeds, England, on March 16, 2007. In this autobiographical video clip, he describes his early years in Poland and his life in the aftermath of World War II.

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It is interesting to note that serendipity, arriving in the form of the Second World War, intervened in Zygmunt Bauman’s original plans to become a physicist. The devastation of Poland was the inspiration for him to become a sociologist instead and to aid in the reconstruction of his homeland. From the Polish Army to Warsaw University and then to Israel and finally England, Professor Bauman has experienced many changes in geography and in historical events that can be seen retrospectively as contributing to his postmodern view of the world.

In *Liquid Times* (2007), Professor Bauman describes our postmodern society in terms of the metaphor of a snake which is in the process of eating its own tail. As a result, the distance between the snake’s head and its tail is ever diminishing. Unfortunately, the snake and, by extension, the society itself does not recognize this continuous reduction of its own resources and the power to regenerate itself. Even more startling is the accelerating rate with which this is happening. Professor Bauman notes that the current postmodern era has issued in, among many competing issues of choice and constraints, a certain fading of illusions. In fact, he refers to postmodernity as “modernity without illusions.” It is this fading of illusions that he feels must be addressed through morality and ethics in the context of postmodern life.

Reflections on Research and Postmodernity

In this video clip, Zygmunt Bauman describes some of the symptoms of postmodernity and some of the deeper concepts involved with this construct. He notes the term “postmodernity” was a “stop-gap concept,” emerging during the 1960s and 1970s,

that became tangible during the previous decade of the 1990s. The concept is explored in his trilogy, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (1990a), *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Postmodernity and Intellectuals* (1991), and *Modernity and the Holocaust* (2000).

Professor Bauman identifies the duty of Sociology as identifying and engaging with the changing human experience in an attempt to understand that experience. He defines and identifies the differences between modernity and postmodernity and moves toward a concept of “liquid modernity” in explaining how previously “solid” ideas have now become more flexible and fluid. Conversely, science and technology have come to represent more solid realities, representing greater certainty in an increasingly uncertain world.

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In this video clip, Professor Bauman presents a panoply of concepts. As expressed by Dr. Bauman himself, he has attempted to begin a discussion of modernity and postmodernity through identifying a number of societal issues in his book, *Thinking Sociologically* (1990b). Each new book develops a theme from this book or presents other sociological issues in order to provide a panoramic view and a subsequent understanding of issues with which society must come to grips. Here, in this video clip, Zygmunt Bauman describes how “liquid modernity” affects every aspect of one’s life through the paradox of short-term employment combined with the extension of human life. He notes that this results in life becoming a series of episodes or projects. The past era, typified by the “delay of gratification” is now being replaced by a “delay of commitment” as society moves from a society of producers to a society of consumers. He refers to contemporary society as being a “civilization of spare parts.”

Response by Graduate Students

As has been the custom in several previous chapters, we continue to be interested in what our graduate students are thinking with regard to the various contexts and what they have to say on the matter. After viewing the previous video clip, graduate students were asked, “What is your perception of postmodernity?” Here are a few selected responses:

In a word, my version of postmodernity is change at warp speed. Things are constantly in flux and most of us struggle to keep up. Most of our modern conveniences, such as computers,

small and large appliances, automobiles, food and war, change so rapidly that we cannot stay on top of things. Take the car for example; during the modern era, most men were able to do most of their own mechanical work. After all, if a car was not starting, it was a fuel, air or spark problem. You lift the engine hood of a car today and you can hardly find the oil dip stick to check the oil, not that you really need it anymore because the car tells you when to change the oil. We are at a stage where most of us are almost helpless to help ourselves.

Postmodernism has also led us to a culture of waste. We throw away so much that I don't know how we can keep finding places to dispose of our junk. We no longer try to fix the broken items we have, we just conveniently go to the store and get a new one and probably four or five other items. Postmodernism has not been totally positive for us.

On the other hand, with the constant improvement in our technology, our lives have been made much more convenient. We don't have to leave the couch to turn the channel and we can serve up a TV dinner in the microwave in a matter of minutes instead of half an hour or so. Our health care has also made so many advances in the postmodern era. People are living longer and healthier lives, and the global media is making strides in making us more aware of health concerns and we seek medical expertise more often (Bill Chisholm).

As Bill Chisholm suggests, improvement frequently brings complexity, a complexity that is so stunning that we are almost incapacitated. Dr. Bauman agrees, suggesting that not only are things being (re)modernized on a daily basis, we must also try to keep ahead of an extremely steep learning curve, a learning curve that can be mastered if we are in a position to repetitively go through the sequences required to learn new skills incrementally. However, he suggests that such learning curves can invoke a "cult of mystery" if skills are not continuously, repetitively and obsessively honed.

Postmodernity has also led to "a culture of waste." Planned obsolescence has become a state of being, even as we live longer and more healthily, gain more material appurtenances, and benefit from growing scientific and technological advances. Natalie McInnes feels that postmodernity is a reaction to the previous era of modernity and has been typified by an individual value system.

Postmodernity is the reaction to and rejection of modernism. Postmodernity argues that modernism exemplifies the values of the elite, rather than the majority. Postmodernity is an evolution away from conventional culture, intellectual trends and expectations. It is typically described by what it is not, because it does not wish to impose.

Postmodernity implies a lack of conventional structure and therefore uncertainty or lack of clarity. If there is no universally accepted standard, when do we know to be satisfied? We are in the constant process of improvement and reorganization.

Unfortunately this leads to a disposable society that does not value people or objects. The enormous pressure created by all of these conveniences has given us the illusion of more self control, but has made us slaves to our gadgets. I do appreciate postmodernity's premise of re-culturing society to question what society values as important (Natalie McInnis).

One of the points made in the above excerpt is that there is a high level of uncertainty in the absence of universally accepted standards. Whether those standards were ever in fact real or merely imagined is immaterial, as the current era creates an illusion of a re-enculturation of a society that has come to question previously accepted truisms.

Sue Waghorn begins her comments with the video clip of George Carlin and links this to the issue of immediacy and "packaged perfection."

George Carlin has certainly hit the ‘nail on the head’ with his medley of the “Modern Man” in relation to the postmodern condition. As I listened to him, I felt guilty in my demand for adequate choices in products, services and just about everything else I desire and for how quickly these acquisitions can be attained. Sadly enough, Carlin’s montage highlighted the impatience and tensions that exist within society today. This sense of urgency is both exhausting and frightening.

When I think of postmodernity, consumerism comes to mind. Our infatuation and fanaticism with having the ‘latest’ products, services goals and ambitions have created an overabundance of choices for us to make. In fact, when I think of postmodernism, Martha Stewart comes to mind because of her packaged perfectionism and how we aspire to create the perfect illusion and esthetic in every aspect of our lives. If we can Google it, we can have practically anything we desire instantaneously. If it is not instant, it can be delivered to our doorstep within 24 hours. Unfortunately, postmodern instantaneity is evident in societal conditions which often become manifested in stress and anxiety. What else would explain the pharmaceutical market being inundated with mood altering drugs to help people cope with everyday living?

Postmodernism is also evident in the global village. Having the world at our fingertips is a wonderful initiative; however, society’s increased ‘need for speed’ and globalization is creating an expectation with possible negative ramifications.

This supports Bauman’s statement that postmodernity is a fluid or liquid cultural condition. We have been ‘programmed’ to adapt to changes in our careers, relationships, environments, attitudes, the list goes on, at an incredible rate! The reality of postmodernity that disturbs me most is the growing gulf between the so-called emerging affluent and the disadvantaged/unfortunate/working class. For the corporate and political affiliates, the driving force of the postmodern condition is greed and, in a sense, bullying; unfortunately, the end does not appear to be in sight. This compulsive and obsessive mentality which appears to have been cultivated in the last generation is obvious in Bauman’s reference to perfection being a state that cannot be improved upon whereby any further progress would have a negative impact on society’s values. I believe we are feeling this impact now and I wonder how future generations will cope with the demands that a postmodern society has created (Sue Waghorn).

Having the world at one’s fingertips may not be the panacea that it appears. The fluidity and constancy of change also has social ramifications in terms of who has access to modern technology and who does not. This increasing differential of power has a significant influence on the values held by citizens of today’s society. It is this concern about ethics and morality to which Professor Bauman now turns his attention.

An Article by Zygmunt Bauman

Beginning with one of his earlier books, *Thinking Sociologically* (1990b), Zygmunt Bauman explores a number of underlying assumptions which help to structure one’s view of the world. He then, in subsequent books, unpacks numerous aspects and issues endemic in the recognition, engagement with and explanation of the postmodern society. Following his Modernity Trilogy, *Legislators and Interpreters*, *Modernity and the Holocaust* and *Modernity and Ambivalence*, and with the publication of each new book, Zygmunt Bauman has attempted to describe new faces of postmodernity in terms of its impact upon society. It is his contention that the roots of

postmodern moral problems and issues have their genesis in the fragmented and episodic nature of current social contexts. The following excerpt was taken from his landmark book, *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (1995). Gliding effortlessly from sociology to philosophy, Professor Bauman unpacks some of the implications of this new world order as he discusses the postmodern society in terms of morality and ethics. Let us slip below the surface attributes of postmodernity and into the liquidity of postmodern philosophy.

Introduction: In Search of Postmodern Reason

In *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993) – the book to which the present essays refer and whose motifs they develop – I considered the changes which the new, postmodern perspective has brought or may bring to our orthodox understanding of morality and moral life. I proposed there that the breaking up of certain modern hopes and ambitions, and the fading of illusions in which they wrapped social processes and the conduct of individual lives alike, allow us to see the true nature of moral phenomena more clearly than ever. What they enable us to see is, above all, the ‘primal’ status of morality: well before we are taught and learn the socially constructed and socially promoted rules of proper behaviour, and exhorted to follow certain patterns and to abstain from following others, we are already in the situation of *moral choice*. We are, so to speak, ineluctably – *existentially* – moral beings: that is, we are faced with the challenge of the Other, which is the challenge of responsibility for the Other, a condition of *being-for*. Rather than being an outcome of social arrangement and personal training, this ‘responsibility for’ frames the primal scene from which social arrangements and personal instruction start, to which they refer and which they attempt to reframe and administer.

This proposition is not, emphatically, a part of the ancient and, on the whole, fruitless debate about the ‘essential goodness’ or ‘essential evil’ of humans. ‘To be moral’ does not mean ‘to be good’, but to exercise one’s freedom of authorship and/or actorship as a choice between good and evil. To say that humans are ‘essentially moral beings’ does not mean to say that we are basically good; and to say that socially constructed and taught rules are secondary regarding that primal moral condition does not mean to say that evil comes from the distortion or incapacitation of the original goodness by unwholesome social pressures or flawed social arrangements. To say that the human condition is moral before it is or may be anything else means: well before we are told authoritatively what is ‘good’ and what ‘evil’ (and, sometimes, what is neither) we face the choice between good and evil; we face it already at the very first, inescapable moment of encounter with the Other. This means in its turn that, whether we choose it or not, we confront our situation as a moral problem and our life choices as moral dilemmas. What follows is that we bear moral responsibilities (that is, responsibilities for the choice between good and evil) well before we are given or take up any concrete responsibility through contract, calculation of interests, or enlisting to a cause. What follows as well is that such concrete responsibilities are unlikely to exhaust and replace in full the primal moral responsibility which they strive to translate into a code of well tempered rules, that the fact of moral responsibility may be only concealed, but not revoked.

This primal fact of our being-in-the-world as, first and foremost, a condition of moral choice, does not promise a happy-go-lucky, carefree life. On the contrary, it makes our predicament acutely uncomfortable. Confronting the choice between good and evil means finding oneself in a situation of ambivalence. This would be a relatively minor worry, were the ambiguity of choice limited to the straightforward preference for good or evil, each clearly, unmistakably defined; in particular, to the choice between acting on one’s responsibility for the Other or desisting from such action – again with a pretty clear idea of what ‘acting on responsibility’ involves. This is not, however, the case. Responsibility for the Other is itself shot through with ambivalence: it has no obvious limits, nor does it easily

translate into practical steps to be taken or refrained from – each such step being instead pregnant with consequences that are notoriously uneasy to predict and even less easy to evaluate in advance: The ambivalence that pertains to the condition of ‘being for’ is permanent and incurable; it can be taken away only together with whatever is ‘moral’ in the moral condition. One is tempted to say that facing the ambivalence of good and evil (and thus, so to speak, ‘taking responsibility for one’s own responsibility’) is the *meaning* (the sole meaning) of being moral.

This means, though, rubbing the salt of loneliness into the wound of ambivalence. Dilemmas have no ready-made solutions; the necessity to choose comes without a foolproof recipe for proper choice; the attempt to do good is undertaken without guarantee of goodness of either the intention or its results. The realm of responsibility is frayed on all sides; it is equally easy to underdo as it is to overdo what ‘acting responsibly’ may ideally require. Moral life is a life of continuous uncertainty. It is built of the bricks of doubt and cemented with bouts of self-deprecation. Since the dividing lines between good and evil have not been drawn before, they are drawn in the course of action; the outcome of these efforts at drawing lines is akin to a string of footprints rather than a network of charted roads. And thus loneliness is as permanent and unevictable a resident of the house of responsibility as is ambivalence. When unmitigated and unassuaged, that loneliness in the face of endemic ambivalence of moral condition is excruciatingly painful to live with. No wonder much of human inventiveness was dedicated throughout history to designing ways of alleviating the burden. In pre-modern times the principal designs were religious in character. The hub of every religious system was not the idea of sin, but that of the *repentance* and *redemption*. No religion considered sinless life a viable prospect nor proposed a way towards a life without evil. On the whole, religions realistically accept the inevitability of sin (that is, of pangs of conscience, unavoidable in view of the incurable uncertainty of the moral situation), and concentrate their efforts instead on ways to assuage the pain through the clear-cut prescription for repentance, tied to the promise of redemption. The essence of religious solutions to moral ambivalence, is, so to speak, dealing with it retrospectively – by providing the means of balancing out the burden of a wrong choice. What has been done, may be undone – the wrong may be made good again. Responsibility for choice is still a lonely matter – it rests fairly and squarely on the individual’s shoulders, as do the consequences of choosing evil over good; but an *ex post facto* cure is provided, and it is provided collectively, in the name of an authority transcending the power and the understanding of the sinner, and thus guaranteeing freedom from worry in exchange for obedience.

It was only the modern project of remaking the world to the measure of human needs and capacities, and according to a rationally conceived design, that promised life free from sin (now re-named as guilt). Legislation was to be the principal tool of the rebuilding (seen as a ‘new beginning’ in the fullest sense of the term; a beginning unbound by anything which went on before, a virtual ‘starting from scratch’). In the case of the moral condition, legislation meant designing an ethical code: one that (unlike the religious strategies of repentance and forgiveness) would actually prevent evil from being done, lending the actor an *a priori* certainty as to what is to be done, what can be left undone and what must not be done. (The feasibility of the project was assured in advance, tautologically; following the ethical rules could produce nothing but good, since ‘good’ has been defined in unambiguous terms as obedience to the rules.) The modern project postulated the possibility of a human world free not only from sinners, but from sin itself, not just from people making wrong choices, but from the very possibility of wrong choice. One may say that in the last account the modern project postulated a world free from moral ambivalence; and since ambivalence is the natural feature of the moral condition, by the same token it postulated the severance of human choices from their moral dimension. This is what the substitution of ethical law for autonomous moral choice amounted to in practice.

In effect, the focus of moral concerns has been shifted from the self-scrutiny of the moral actor to the philosophical/political task of working out the prescriptions and proscriptions of an ethical code; meanwhile the ‘responsibility for the responsibility’ – that is the

responsibility for deciding what practical steps the responsibility requires to be taken and what steps are not called for ('go beyond the call of duty') – has been shifted from the moral subject to supra-individual agencies now endowed with exclusive ethical authority.

From the moral actor's point of view, the shift had much to be recommended. (Indeed, this shift was one of the main reasons why the surrender of autonomy could be credibly represented as emancipation and increase of freedom.) Having reduced the vague, notoriously underdefined *responsibility* to a finite list of duties or *obligations*, it spares the actor a lot of anxious groping in the dark, and helps to avoid the gnawing feeling that the account can never be closed, the work never finally done. The agony of choice (Hannah Arendt's 'tyranny of possibilities') is largely gone, as is the bitter aftertaste of a choice never ultimately proved right. The substitution of rule-following for the intense, yet never fully successful, listening to infuriatingly taciturn moral impulses results in the almost unimaginable feat of not just absolving the actor from the personal responsibility for the wrongs done, but freeing the actor from the very possibility of *having* sinned. More promptly than the equivalent religious remedies – because *in advance*, before the act has been committed – the guilt is eliminated from choice, which is now simplified to the straightforward dilemma of obedience or disobedience to the rule. All in all, the modern shift from moral responsibility to ethical rulings offered a compensatory drug for an ailment induced by another modern accomplishment: the foiling of many determinants that once kept the actor's actions within tight and strictly circumscribed limits, so producing an 'unencumbered', 'disembedded' personality that is allowed (and forced to) self-define and self-assert. To the moral self, modernity offered freedom complete with patented ways of escaping it.

In what are commonly called 'postmodern' times the modern ailment of autonomy persists, while the compensatory drug is no longer available on National Ethical Service prescriptions. It can be purchased only in the free market, in the thick of the cutthroat publicity war between drug companies calling each other's bluff, extolling their own products and undercutting the claims of the competition. With the state ethical monopoly (and indeed, the state's desire for monopoly) in abeyance, and the supply of ethical rules by and large privatized and abandoned to the care of the marketplace, the tyranny of choice returns, though this time it taxes not so much the moral competence, as the shopping skills of the actor. The actor is responsible not for the contents with which the responsibility has been filled, but for the choice of an ethical code from among many, each of which sports expert endorsement and/or the credentials of box-office success. True, the 'responsibility for the responsibility' is no more lodged with central powers (or powers aspiring to centrality), having been shifted back to the actor; but this privately owned and managed meta-responsibility Mark II is not a responsibility for listening to the moral instinct or following moral impulse, but for putting one's bets on an ethical pattern likely to emerge victorious from the war of expert promises and/or popularity ratings. In the volatile atmosphere of flashing fames, flickery fads and freak franchises, this is not an easy matter – no more secure than speculating on the stock exchange. The consequences of choice outlive, as a rule, the authority on whose advice the choice had been made...

The tendency of permit-issuing authorities to depart prematurely takes quite a lot of weight out of the consequences, though. The essence of the episode is that it leaves no lasting traces; life lived as a succession of episodes is a life free from the worry about consequences. The prospect of living with the results of one's actions, be they what may, seems somewhat less daunting if remote and uncertain; less daunting, at any rate, than the *immediate* prospect of challenging the authority currently most vociferous and commanding most troops. Modernity extolled the delay of *gratification*, in the hope that the gratification will be still gratifying when the delay is over; the postmodern world in which authorities spring up, unannounced, from nowhere, only to vanish instantly without notice, preaches *delay of payment*. If the savings book was the epitome of modern life, the credit card is the paradigm of the postmodern one.

One possible interpretation of what is happening is that postmodernity preserves the precious gain of modernity – the 'unencumbered' autonomy of the acme – while simultane-

ously removing the price tag and the strings that modernity attached to it. Now, at long last, you may eat your cake and have it. (Or, rather, as cakes tend to get stale and unappetizing faster than before – you may eat your cake and *recycle* it.) Postmodernity (or, more appropriately still in this context, ‘late modernity’), one hears time and again, is the ultimate crowning of the modern dream of freedom and of the long and tortuous effort to make the dream come true. So let us celebrate the world unencumbered by imagined obligations and fake duties. With universal principles and absolute truths dissipated or kicked out of fashion, *it does not matter much* any more what personal principles and private truth one embraces (the embrace must be never tight anyway) and follows (the following need not be too loyal and committed, to be sure).

Does it or does it not matter? – this is the question. And it remains a question – perhaps the crucial, constitutive question of postmodern (late modern) life. One might say with considerable conviction that precisely the opposite to the postmodernist account of postmodernity is the case: that *the demise of the power-assisted universals and absolutes has made the responsibilities of the actor more profound, and, indeed, more consequential, than ever before*. One might say with still greater conviction, that, between the demise of universal absolutes and absolute universals on the one hand and ‘everything goes’ licence on the other, there is a jarring *non sequitur*. As Steven Connor recently pointed out, ‘the lack of absolute values no more makes all other values interchangeable than the absence of an agreed gold standard makes all world currencies worth the same.’¹

Or, as Kate Soper suggests, it is quite conceivable (though it still remains to be seen whether it is realistic as well) to give up on ‘the grand narrative idea of a single truth, without giving up on the idea of truth as a regulative ideal’.² If one translates Soper’s proposition into the language of ethics, one may say that it is possible to give up on the grand narrative idea of a single ethical code, without giving up on the idea of moral responsibility as a regulative ideal. After the translation, though, the proposition looks unduly modest and meek.

One would rather say that it is precisely *because* of the demise of the allegedly unified and ostensibly unique ethical code, that the ‘regulative ideal’ of moral responsibility may rise into full flight. Choices between good and evil are still to be made, this time, however, in full daylight, and with full knowledge that a choice has been made. With the smokescreen of centralized legislation dispersed and the power-of-attorney returned to the signatory, the choice is blatantly left to the moral person’s own devices. With choice comes responsibility. And if choice is inevitable, responsibility is unavoidable. No secure hiding place is left, and such shelters from responsibility as are on offer tend to be withdrawn from the supermarket shelves before the attached warranty expires, so that there is nowhere to which complaints can be addressed if the commodity proves faulty. One is left with the product and its defects and has only oneself to blame.

Will this new condition make us do good things more often than before and evil things less often? Will it make us better beings? Neither a ‘yes’ nor a ‘no’ answer can be responsibly given to those questions. As always, the moral situation is one of inherent ambivalence, and it would not be moral without a choice between good and evil. (Before eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve were not moral beings, and the Garden of Eden was a place without morality.) What this new condition does spell out, however, is a prospect of a greater awareness of the moral character of our choices; of our facing our choices more consciously and seeing their moral contents more clearly.

It has to be repeated again and again: even that last prospect – of eyes opened wider to the ‘for’ in every ‘with’, of resurrecting the consideration of the Other temporarily elbowed out or suspended by the obedience to the norm – does not necessarily augur the arrival of a

¹Steven Connor (1993), pp. 39–40.

²Kate Soper (1993), pp. 28–29.

better world populated by better people. Even if that prospect became true, there is no guarantee of any sort that morality will gain by exposing itself point-blank to the moral self abandoned to her or his own moral sense. No one has, perhaps, given this uncertainty (nay fear) a more poignant voice than Gillian Rose:

New ethics [by which Rose means such a postmodern view of morality as repudiates ‘any politics of principle’ and takes the Other, rather than the moral subject, for its centre point] is waving at ‘the Other’ who is drowning and dragging his children under with him in his violent, dying gestures. *New ethics* cares for ‘the Other’; but since it refuses any relation to law, it may be merciful, but, equally, it may be merciless. In either case, having renounced principles and intentions, *new ethics* displays ‘the best intentions – the intention to get things right this time. In its regime of sheer mercy, *new ethics* will be as implicated in unintended consequences as its principled predecessor.³

This is, roughly, the idea I wished my own book on *Postmodern Ethics* to convey: that *postmodernity is the moral person’s bane and chance at the same time*. And that *which of the two faces of the postmodern condition will turn out to be its lasting likeness, is itself a moral question*.

The essays collected in the present volume follow up these ideas – as they draw life-juices from or dry up and wilt in the daily life of postmodern men and women. Unlike their predecessors collected in the previous volume, these essays are less concerned with the question of how morality can be narrated in the absence of the ‘politics of principle’, and more – mainly – with the question what aspects of life conditions make the ‘politics of principle’ redundant or impossible to conduct. It would be unfair to blame the philosophers for abandoning principles and refusing to seek unshakeable foundations of human goodness; it would be presumptuous to propose that what is worrying about the moral plight of postmodern humans is that philosophers ‘got it wrong’ and neglect their duty. Philosophy always was and remains an informed, thoughtful commentary on being, and the being it is a commentary on is the kind of being lived under the conditions which happen to be the fate of men and women of their time and part of the world. There must be something in that time and that part of the world which makes some familiar commentaries sound hollow while supplying new motifs and new tunes. These essays attempt to unravel this ‘something’.

Christopher Lasch observed in his recent study that society is ‘no longer governed by a moral consensus’. He also points out that our social order no longer requires ‘the informed consent of citizens’. I propose that the two observations are not unconnected, and the two phenomena they report have common roots. And that there is an intimate link between both and a third phenomenon, located seemingly on an entirely different level of experience – ‘our impatience with anything that limits our sovereign freedom of choice...our preference for “nonbinding commitments”’.⁴ I propose that the study of postmodern morality(ies) must be a study in the context of postmodern life and postmodern life strategies. It is the guiding theme of these essays that the roots of postmodern moral problems go down to the fragmentariness of the social context and the episodicity of life pursuits.

These are studies not so much in ‘unintended consequences’, as in the endemic and incurable ambivalence of the primal moral scene – the scene of moral choices and the scene of discovery of the morality of choices – in which any consequences are begotten, by design or by default. These essays attempt to take stock of the dangers and opportunities inherent in this scene – and, above all, of those ambivalent appurtenances of postmodern life of which we do not yet know whether they are hurdles or springboards; and which, for all we know, may yet become either.

³Gillian Rose (1993), p. 6.

⁴Christopher Lasch (1991), pp. 30, 31, 34.

Professor Bauman suggests in the opening of *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (1995) that the “lack of purpose and the abyss bridged by just a brittle gangplank of convention – can only be an ethically unfounded morality” (18). It is this statement that moves us beyond the realm of sociology and into the province of philosophy, ultimately to rest upon the existential nature of being alive in today’s world – a world of uncertainty – where the problem of choice raises questions in a new dimension. Zygmunt Bauman notes that the issues surrounding choice not only questions the simultaneity of having to choose in a multiplicity of dimensions, but also probes into the very nature of choice. Perhaps choice does not serve to reduce uncertainty after all, but instead serves to question the ultimate validity of the choices which confront individuals on a daily basis. It is this questioning that allows us, as Professor Bauman suggests, to recognize that we must necessarily come to grips with *moral choice*.

Zygmunt Bauman recognizes the ultimately *existential* nature of moral choice. With the rapidity of accelerating change, choice, moral or otherwise, becomes a necessity. To not choose or to not have choice is to no longer count, to no longer have a purpose and, hence, to no longer have meaning. In these postmodern times, one is either on the bandwagon or is left behind. There is no other alternative. Consequently, this has serious ramifications for one’s concepts around the meaning and purpose of life.

Also, as Albert Camus (2000), the renowned existentialist author philosophizes, one must choose a reason or a purpose for one’s continuing existence and that purpose, in order to be fulfilling, must be greater than the individual making the choice. One cannot, for example, dedicate oneself to coffee with any real meaningful consequences, gratifying though the experience may be. This is why one is constantly faced with what Bauman refers to as the challenge of the responsibility for the Other – the responsibility for the continued working of societal forces. Professor Bauman is not referring to the hoary old debate about whether humankind is essentially good or evil, but articulates the idea that being moral means to exercise freedom of choice in choosing between the two binaries. Thus, one must take the responsibility for one’s choice. There is no more, “The devil made me do it.” However, there is more in terms of who is it that now takes responsibility for the responsibility of keeping the wheels of society lubricated and moving forward. Bauman suggests, as does Camus (2000) that, in the absence of a higher authority, it is the individual who must take responsibility not only for his or her own actions, but for the consequences of the actions of others as they impact upon that individual and influence his or her circumstances. In this way, to choose right or wrong, good or evil, both of these possible choices are moral choices; and what it is that causes a person to choose one way or the other is a moral choice. It is not the act but the motivation and intent that recasts the issue of choice as moral commitment, which ultimately means that one’s life situation is a set of moral problems and one’s life choices can be viewed as moral dilemmas – the choice between good and evil.

As authors from Nathaniel Hawthorne to Albert Camus have previously noted, moral choice does not promise happiness, since merely confronting the choice between good and evil means finding oneself in a situation of ambivalence that has no

obvious limits. Each choice has consequences, both good and bad, that are difficult to evaluate, impossible to predict and which are ultimately irrevocable. Professor Bauman describes this condition as “permanent and incurable.” This, then, is the burden of freedom – taking responsibility for one’s own responsibility is the sole meaning of being moral.

Professor Bauman also looks at the philosophy of postmodernity from the perspective of religion. He claims that, central to every religious system is the notion of redemption rather than the issue of sin in the first place – that one may sin, providing that one repents one’s sins. Religions balance the burden of a wrong choice with another choice, the act of repentance. In essence, Adam and Eve were not moral beings and the Garden of Eden was a place without morality, according to Bauman. The act of repenting is tantamount to the art of obeying.

In this climate of economic overkill, one must choose wisely or else have no one to blame but oneself. It is at this point that Bauman, like Camus (2000), strikes a faint note of hope in an otherwise bleak scenario. Professor Bauman notes that postmodernity is the moral person’s catalyst for both opportunity and chance, whether they represent hurdles or springboards. Therefore, there is hope in having choice between right and wrong, good or evil. If one shoulders one’s responsibility, even a poor choice may be worth the heartache, even though the consequences of that choice frequently outlive the authority on whose advice the choice had originally been made.

While modernity promised a delay of *gratification*, postmodernity was all about *delay of payment*. The difference between the producer society and the consumer society is revealed in the metaphor that a bankbook is to the modern world what the credit card is to the postmodern world. Bauman claims that it no longer matters what principles one embraces or follows, as any choice between good and evil is up to the individual. Thus, responsibility for those choices is up to that person and, therefore, whichever the person chooses is a moral choice. In essence, according to Zygmunt Bauman, morality is not about being right or wrong; it is about having the choice to be right or wrong.

Summary

As has been seen with the previous three contexts, postmodernity is a construct that helps to identify some important considerations relating to conducting research. While Zygmunt Bauman explains the current state of the world through a postmodern lens, he helps to connect this to the political, historical, and autobiographical contexts as well. As Henry Giroux states, the current era is an era that connects private consideration to public issues. Therefore an understanding of agency and structure, and the power that one has to influence policy, is an extremely important consideration as one engages with research of any description. Norman Denzin suggests that the key to empowerment is to recognize that one is always in a historical moment and that one must insert oneself into that moment in order to influence

historical outcomes – to find a better way. This is true of research endeavors as well. By recognizing that we bring ourselves into the research, whether by design or circumstance, we celebrate some aspect of the autobiographical context. William Pinar has identified a process by which one can come to know oneself, and through this process of recognition, the individual can then more clearly recognize the impact which he or she has on the process of engaging in research.

However, it is the postmodern context that has allowed a vision of insecurity and indeterminacy, which is at once a political analysis and one that requires a new language in order to articulate its position and its importance within modern society. Political issues, research, and language, according to Giroux are situated within social/historical and biographical/biological formations. As such, recognition of the context of modernity/postmodernity can help to avoid a periodization that can suggest that society and its members, individually and collectively, have made a break with autobiographical, historical, and political structures within which people find themselves.

In the following chapter, Maxine Greene offers a long view of the world and discusses research from the philosophical perspective. She offers a distillation of the forgoing contexts and synthesizes these through her own lengthy history and through her autobiographical vignettes that bring into focus historical and political instances that can be juxtaposed with society in the postmodern era. In essence, Maxine Greene offers a philosophical positioning relevant to issues of engaging in research in the postmodern moment.

Selected Annotated Bibliography – Zygmunt Bauman

Bauman, Z. (2008). *Does ethics have a chance in a world of consumers?* Harvard: Harvard University Press.

This book is what Bauman calls a “report from a battlefield,” part of the struggle to find new and adequate ways of thinking about the world in which we live. Rather than searching for solutions to what are perhaps the insoluble problems of the modern world, Bauman proposes that we reframe the way we think about these problems. In an era of routine travel, where most people circulate widely, the inherited beliefs that aid our thinking about the world have become an obstacle. Bauman seeks to liberate us from the thinking that renders us hopeless in the face of our own domineering governments and threats from unknown forces abroad. He shows us we can give up belief in a hierarchical arrangement of states and powers, and challenges members of the “knowledge class” to overcome their estrangement from the rest of society.

Bauman, Z. (2005). *Liquid life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

“Liquid Life” is the kind of life commonly lived in our contemporary, liquid, modern world. Liquid life cannot stay on course, because liquid modern society cannot keep

its shape for long. It is a precarious life, lived under conditions of constant uncertainty. The most acute and stubborn worries that haunt this liquid life are the fears of being caught napping, of failing to catch up with fast-moving events, of overlooking the “use by” dates and being saddled with worthless possessions, of missing the moment calling for a change of tack and being left behind. Liquid life is also shot through by a contradiction: it ought to be a (possibly unending) string of new beginnings, yet precisely for that reason it is full of worries relating to swift and painless endings, without which new beginnings would be unthinkable.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *Community: Seeking safety in an insecure world*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

There is a price to be paid for the privilege of living in a community. Community promises security but exacts the price of freedom and deprives us of the right to be ourselves. Security and freedom are two equally precious and coveted values that can be balanced to some degree, but are rarely reconciled. The tension between security and freedom, and between community and individuality, is unlikely ever to be resolved. We cannot escape this dilemma, but we can take stock of the opportunities and dangers in order to avoid repeating previous errors. Bauman offers a reappraisal of concepts that are central to current debates about the nature and future of our societies.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *Work, consumerism and the new poor* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Being “poor” once derived its meaning from the condition of being unemployed. Today, it draws its meaning primarily from the plight of the “flawed consumer.” This is one difference which redefines the way that living in poverty is experienced and in the chances and prospects to redeem its misery and suffering. This absorbing book traces the changes that have taken place over the duration of modern history and attempts to make an inventory of the social consequences of how poverty is currently being framed. This new edition features updated coverage of key thinkers in the field; a discussion of redundancy, disposability, and exclusion; the effects of capital flow and corporate reengineering; and a reexamining of issues relating to security and vulnerability.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

In this book, Bauman examines how we have moved away from a “heavy” and “solid,” hardware focused modernity to a “light” and “liquid” software-based modernity. This has brought profound change to all aspects of the human condition. The new remoteness and “un-reachability” of global systemic structures, coupled with the unstructured and under-defined fluid state of life politics and human togetherness, call for the rethinking of the concepts of and cognitive frames to narrate human individual experience and their joint history. Bauman selects five concepts which have served to make sense of shared human life – emancipation, individuality, time/space, work, and community – and traces their successive incarnations and changes of meaning.

Bauman, Z. (1999). *In search of politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

We live in a world which no longer questions itself, which lives from one day to another managing successive crises and struggling to brace itself for new ones, without knowing what is going on and without trying to plan the itinerary. Everything important in our lives feels transient, precarious, and uncertain. This book explores the connection between the shape of the world we inhabit and the way in which we lead our lives. Today, we are moving toward a privatization of the means to secure individual liberty. This book discusses the possibility of rebuilding the “private/public” space where private troubles and public issues intersect and where citizens engage in dialogue in order to govern themselves. Making this possible is urgent and imperative for the renewal of politics today.

Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The human consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press. This book attempts to show there is far more to globalization than its surface manifestations. Unpacking the social roots and social consequences of globalizing processes, this book dispenses some of the mist surrounding the term. Alongside the emerging planetary dimensions of business, finance, trade, and information flow, a “localizing” space-fixing process is set in motion. What appears as globalization for some means localization for many others; signaling new freedom for some, globalizing processes appear as uninvited and cruel fate for many others. Freedom to move, a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, quickly becomes the main stratifying factor of our times. The bulk of the population, the “new middle class,” bears the brunt of these problems and suffers uncertainty, anxiety, and fear as a result.

Bauman, Z. (1997). *Postmodernity and its discontents*. New York: New York University Press.

Society has held to the concepts of beauty, purity, and order for centuries; now a new worldview has emerged with the individual at its nucleus. The postmodern era can be said to be defined by the individual’s quest for sublime happiness at the expense of security. Framed by discussions of such thinkers as Foucault, Levinas, Jonas, and Rorty, this book explores this brave new era, tackling head-on such issues as the postmodernization of surveillance and social control; the often tenuous threads binding morality, ethics, and freedom together; contemporary artistic and aesthetic theory; and the complex associations between solidarity, difference, and freedom. Arguing that you need most what you most lack, Bauman asserts that freedom without security assures no greater happiness than security without freedom.

Bauman, Z. (1995). *Life in fragments: Essays in postmodern morality*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Life in Fragments is a continuation of the themes and motifs explored in Zygmunt Bauman’s acclaimed study, *Postmodern Ethics* (1993). This volume highlights the principle institutional dimensions of the radicalization of modernity, and of how social change today is transforming cultural values and ethics. Bauman interprets the ways in which modernity is coming to terms with its own limitations and contradictions. According to Bauman, postmodernity, an emerging condition of Western culture, should be understood against the backdrop of globalization and

monopoly capitalism. It is not a stage of development beyond modernity, but is modernity itself coming to terms with its own paradoxes, becoming reconciled to its own impossibility and deciding, for better or worse, to live with it.

Bauman, Z. (1993). *Postmodern ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Zygmunt Bauman's powerful and persuasive study of the postmodern perspective on ethics is particularly welcome. For Bauman, the great issues of ethics have lost none of their topicality: they simply need to be seen and dealt with in a wholly new way. Our era, he suggests, may actually represent a dawning, rather than a twilight, for ethics. Themes relating to postmodern ethics are followed and explored throughout the book in each chapter, from a different angle. The reader is warned that no ethical code emerges at the end of this exploration, nor could one be contemplated. The kind of understanding of the moral self's condition which the postmodern vantage point allows is unlikely to make moral life easier. The most it can dream of is making it a bit more moral.

Bauman, Z. (1992). *Mortality, immortality and other life strategies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

This book develops a new theory of the ways in which human mortality is reacted to, and dealt with, in social institutions and culture. The hypothesis explored in the book is that the necessity of human beings to live with the constant awareness of death accounts for crucial aspects of the social organization of all known societies. Two different "life strategies" are distinguished in respect of reactions to mortality. One, "the modern strategy," deconstructs mortality by translating the insoluble issue of death into many specific problems of health and disease which are "soluble in principle." The "postmodern strategy" is one of deconstructing immortality: life is transformed into a constant rehearsal of "reversible death," a substitution of "temporary disappearance" for the irrevocable termination of life.

Bauman, Z. (1992). *Intimations of postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

As postmodernism captured the imagination of sociologists, philosophers, political scientists, and writers on culture in the 1980s, society was said to have moved into a new phase which left many of our old assumptions forlorn and impotent. Zygmunt Bauman, a leading contributor to the debate, sets out his essential ideas on the sociological and philosophical antecedents of postmodernity. He shows us how to use the concept without falling into the snares of introspective nihilism or mindless euphoria. Where other writers have bogged themselves down in abstract discussion, Bauman shows us how to use the concept concretely. This book will be of interest to sociologists, philosophers, political scientists, and students of culture, and will become a model for future studies of postmodernity.

Bauman, Z. (1990). *Thinking sociologically*. Oxford: Blackwell.

In this lucid, stimulating and original book, Zygmunt Bauman explores some of the underlying assumptions and tacit expectations which structure our view of the world. The author elucidates key concepts in sociology: for example, individualism versus community, and privilege versus deprivation. While charting a course through sociology's main concerns, Bauman also examines the applicability of sociology to

everyday life. This book was written to assist individuals to see through our experience and to show how the apparently familiar aspects of life can be reinterpreted in new ways and seen in different lights. Each chapter addresses an aspect of daily life, dilemmas, and choices that must be confronted routinely, encouraging scrutiny of beliefs hitherto uncritically held.

Bauman, Z. (1973). *Culture as praxis*. London: Routledge.

The publication of *Culture as Praxis* marked an attempt by Bauman to acknowledge and move beyond sociological and anthropological assessments of culture that relied on modernist assumptions of linearity, predictability, and order. Bauman's analysis continues to be read by students of sociology and anthropology as a bridge between modernist and postmodernist accounts. Much of what Bauman suggests is new and innovative in sociological conceptualizations of culture, identity, and praxis lies in New Social Movement theory, and postmodern theory. Bauman works toward an attempt to reveal the extent to which these new developments have impacted sociological theory. Readers are left with some insights into contemporary applications of his now 30-year-old treatise.

Questions for Further Study

1. Reflect on the nature of postmodernity. How would you define the concept? Is it a positive, negative, or neutral component of today's society? Please justify your conclusions.
2. Can you describe some examples of how postmodernity has influenced your life choices? Discuss in small groups and be prepared to report your findings to the larger group where appropriate.
3. What are some of the characteristics of the producer society? Of the consumer society? What are some of the dangers/benefits inherent in each?
4. Do you believe that postmodernity raises questions of ethics and morality? If so, how do you interpret the issues involved in discussing ethics and morality with regard to postmodern life?
5. Zygmunt Bauman notes that postmodernity is an unrelentingly negative concept, yet he attempts to provide some small measure of hope for the future through an understanding of agency, citizenship, and a strong appreciation of morality and ethics. In what ways do you agree or disagree with his analysis?

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Chapter 7

The Philosophical Context

I'm not a researcher because I think a researcher, as many people understand it, explains something. And I'm not so interested in explaining. I'm interested in showing the meaning, but I can't prove it. Does that bother you...?

– Dr. Maxine Greene



Dr. Maxine Greene

This chapter features Maxine Greene in a discussion of the philosophical context of qualitative research. Included in this chapter is a video clip of Professor Greene and an excerpt from an article by this distinguished scholar. A selected annotated bibliography and a section for self-study complete this chapter.

An Interview with Dr. Maxine Greene

Professor Greene was interviewed in her home overlooking New York's Central Park on November 6, 2005. Her interview reveals both her wit and her wisdom as she talks about her autobiography, which includes her own personal history as well as some of the history of the times that impacted upon her choices and possibilities. For example, she speaks with disarming candor about how her Jewish roots created numerous political issues. This distinguished scholar's longevity allows for a long look at the past and how different the postmodern era is from times past. Maxine Greene offers numerous philosophical points in this brief video-clip.

The first point that Professor Greene raises in her video clip is the philosophic notion that interpretation is paramount when one is recounting past events. She notes that whenever one tells of something that happened in the past, it is impossible to tell it exactly as it happened because the distillation of the experience into words is necessarily different than the way the events were lived. She describes her school experience, although she came from a privileged background, as that of an outsider due to her Jewish heritage which caused her, among other things, to be sent to an Episcopalian school in order to "assimilate," to be excluded from being valedictorian due to the fact that the ceremony was to be held in a Methodist church and how Jews were excluded from the local equestrian society except in order to work at grooming horses.

Professor Greene also offers a hilarious account of her decision to leave Barnard College, an independently incorporated women's liberal arts college of Columbia University, to elope at 19 years with a young medical doctor. At the end of her personal vignette, she notes that her father commented that "the way of the pioneer is hard." Although Maxine Greene discounts this platitude as merely a "crazy" rambling, she has been very much a pioneer in so very many ways. It was only after she decided to write a novel that she realized that she had done some very good research in developing the historical context for the story. It was this, combined with the circumstance of having a young child that prompted her to choose a career in education. From this point she began teaching literature courses at New York University. From here, it was a relatively small step for Maxine Greene to help in establishing the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts. It was here that she began to refine her philosophy concerning teaching and research.

Also, in this video clip Professor Greene philosophizes about the difference between schooling and education. Education, she claims, encourages individuals to grow and to become, while schooling constrains students to become servants of a technocratic society. Her philosophy of education is to develop critical thinkers who are interested in art and artistic ideas and who are also capable of outrage. She attempts to introduce history into her work and connect it to art and education. Professor Greene eschews the separation of things into discreet categories and believes that there is no single definition of any given thing. This brings us full circle to the Merleau-Ponty (1962) quotation that opens this volume. Both Professor Greene and Merleau-Ponty suggest that all things fragmented by life and living

must come back to the whole; that one can dissect and separate as much as one wishes, but ultimately one must step back to see all the parts that make up the substance of experience. She carries this forward in the excerpt from her book, included in this chapter.

cooperwhite.com
 Password: cooperwhite
<http://cooperwhite.com/chapter7movie.html>

An Article by Maxine Greene

The title of the first chapter of her book, *Releasing the Imagination* (1995), is entitled “Seeking Contexts” and is a fitting excerpt to bring forward Professor Greene’s philosophy of schooling.

Chapter One Seeking Contexts

Standards, assessment, outcomes, and achievement: these concepts are the currency of educational discussion today. What ought 6-year-olds be expected to know, whoever they are, wherever they are? How can school achievement in this country be raised to world-class levels? What is required for national primacy in this postindustrial moment? How can we socialize diverse young people into a “cultural literacy” (Hirsch 1987) that will counter both relativism and ignorance at once? What sort of curriculum can halt what has been called the “disuniting of America” (Schlesinger 1992) by multicultural demands?

Discourse on such questions has given rise to what is generally conceived to be contemporary educational reality. On the lower frequencies of our conversations, there is still talk of “savage inequalities” (Kozol 1991), family deterioration, neighborhood decline, and diminishing opportunity. Racism, joblessness, addictions, and rootlessness are mentioned. But when it comes to schools, the dominant voices are still those of the officials who assume the objective worth of certain kinds of knowledge, who take for granted that the schools’ main mission is to meet national economic and technical needs. Traditional notions of ways to achieve efficiency feed into claims that schools can be manipulated from without to meet predetermined goals. The implication often is that for their own benefit, teachers and their students are to comply and to serve. How can teachers intervene and say how *they* believe things ought to be? What can they do to affect restructuring? What can they do to transform their classrooms?

Interested in shifting perspectives and different modes of seeing, I find myself turning to *Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* (1955), a novel by Thomas Mann. At the start, the young Felix asks himself whether it is better to see the world small or to see it big. On the one hand, he says, great men, leaders and generals, have to see things small and from a distance, or they would never be able to deal as they do with the lives and deaths of so many living beings. To see things big, on the other hand, is “to regard the world and mankind as something great, glorious, and significant, justifying every effort to attain some modicum of esteem and fame” (pp. 12–13). To see things or people small, one chooses to see from a detached point of view, to watch behaviors from the perspective of a system, to be concerned with trends and tendencies rather than the intentionality and concreteness of everyday life. To see things or people big, one, must resist viewing other human beings as mere objects or chess pieces and view them in their integrity and

particularity instead. One must see from the point of view of the participants in the midst of what is happening, if one is to be privy to the plans people make, the initiatives they take, the uncertainties they face.

When applied to schooling, the vision that sees things big brings us in close contact with details and with particularities that cannot be reduced to statistics or even to the measurable. There are the worn-down, crowded urban classrooms and the contrasting clean-lined spaces in the suburbs. There are the bulletin boards crammed with notices and instructions, here and there interlaced with children's drawings or an outspoken poem. There are graffiti, paper cutouts, uniformed figures in the city schools; official voices blaring in and around; sudden shimmers when artists visit; circles of young people writing in journals and attending to stories. There are family groups telling one another what happened the night before, describing losses and disappearances, reaching for one another's hands. Clattering corridors are like the backstreets of ancient cities, filled with folks speaking multiple languages, holding their bodies distinctively, watching out for allies and for friends. There are shouts, greetings, threats, the thump of rap music, gold chains, flowered leotards, multicolored hair. Now and again there are the absorbed stares of youngsters at computer screens or the clink of glass and metal in school laboratories in front of wondering, puzzled eyes. There are textbooks with all their flaws, rows of desks, occasional round tables and paperbacks from which students can choose. For the one seeing things large, there are occasionally teachers who view every act as "a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate/With shabby equipment always deteriorating/ In the general mess of imprecision of feeling, undisciplined squads of emotion" (Eliot [1943] 1958, p. 128). But there are also other kinds of teachers: those without a sense of agency, those who impose inarticulateness on students who seem alien and whose voices the teachers prefer not to hear. Yet the eager teachers do appear and reappear – teachers who provoke learners to pose their own questions, to teach themselves, to go at their own pace, to name their worlds. Young learners have to be noticed, it is now being realized; they have to be consulted; they have to question why.

The vision that sees things small looks at schooling through the lenses of a system – a vantage point of power or existing ideologies – taking a primarily technical point of view. Most frequently these days, it uses the lenses of benevolent policy making, with the underlying conviction that changes in schools can bring about progressive social change. As I have said, this may either be linked to national economic concerns or used to mask them. Whatever the precise vantage point, seeing schooling small is preoccupied with test scores, "time on task," management procedures, ethnic and racial percentages, and accountability measures, while it screens out the faces and gestures of individuals, of actual living persons. And indeed, it seems more equitable to many of those who take a general view to do their surveys and their measurements without consciousness of names and histories. They assume that existing social interests are identified with the value of what they are doing.

How is the teacher to cope with this? How is she or he to avoid feeling like a chess piece or a cog or even an accomplice of some kind? The challenge may be to learn how to move back and forth, to comprehend the domains of policy and long term planning while also attending to particular children, situation-specific undertakings, the unmeasurable, and the unique. Surely, at least part of the challenge is to refuse artificial separations of the school from the surrounding environment, to refuse the decontextualizations that falsify so much. As part of this refusal, teachers can be moved to take account of connections and continuities that cannot always be neatly defined. That means attending to the impact of street life in all its multiplicity, danger, and mystery. It also means being somewhat aware of students' family life in its ease and unease. It means becoming conscious of the dramas played out on the playgrounds and front stoops, in the hospital emergency rooms and clinics, and in the welfare offices and shelters and social agencies that affect the lives of the young. Police stations, churches, drug-dealers' corners, shaded places in nearby parks, libraries, and always the blinking light of television screens: all these are part of the educational reality seen large.

Teachers imaginative enough to be present to the heterogeneity of social life and to what has been called the "heteroglossia," or the multiple discourses, of the everyday

(Bakhtin 1981) may also have strong impulses to open pathways towards better ways of teaching and better ways of life. As did John Dewey, they may make efforts to identify the kinds of aims that give direction to their activities and to know more clearly what they are about (Dewey 1916, p. 119). There is a significant restructuring movement underway today that does not require teachers to choose between seeing big and seeing small; nor does it require them to identify themselves as people concerned only with conditioned behavior or only with the conscious action that signifies a new beginning. Once granted the ability to reflect upon their practice within a complex context, teachers can be expected to make their choices out of their own situations and to open themselves to descriptions of the whole.

These emerging movements leave spaces for teachers to collaborate among themselves, with parents, and with teachers' colleges of various kinds. Networks are appearing of democratic schools, resurgent progressive schools, coalition schools, and magnet schools committed to renewal (Darling-Hammond 1992; Elmore 1990; Sizer 1992; Wigginton 1972). There is a general agreement among the educators involved that, as important as "caring communities" are, something more than such communities must be created. In the proposals coming from Howard Gardner at Harvard's Project Zero, Theodore Sizer, and others, "there is evidence of a very real concern that the curriculum be knowledge-based, interdisciplinary and capable of connecting with students" (Beyer and Liston 1992, p. 391). Care, an end to violations, connectedness, and moral commitment: these too are talked about in increasing depth (Noddings 1992; Martin 1992).

In this aspect of the new reform efforts, there is considerable sensitivity to grasping a total picture. There is a clear recognition that young people will require a great range of habits of mind and a great number of complex skills if they are to have any meaningful job opportunities in a day of closing doors. The capacities needed to deal with catastrophes have to be nurtured. Young people may have to deal with ecological disasters, floods, pollution, and unprecedented storms; they may have to cope some day with chemotherapy and life support decisions. Literacy in more than one medium will be required if people are to deal critically and intelligently with demagogues, call-in shows, mystifying ads, and news programs blended with varying degrees of entertainment. The ability to perform adequate planning, which takes a good deal of organizational thinking and a knowledge of how to see things small, will be needed.

Another part of the total picture, however, is that teachers are also being asked to treat their students as potential active learners who can best learn if they are faced with real tasks and if they discover models of craftsmanship and honest work. Only when teachers can engage with learners as distinctive, questioning persons – persons in the process of defining themselves – can teachers develop what are called "authentic assessment" measures (Darling Hammond and Ancess 1993), the kinds of measures that lead to the construction of new curricula. Refusing externally provided multiple-choice tests and being willing to see things big when they encounter students, teachers can devise the modes of teaching that are appropriate for these persons, that can launch them in diverse ways, into what we now understand as inquiry. As Donald Schon has said, a reflective teacher listens to her students. "She asks herself, for example, How is he thinking about this? What is the meaning of his confusion? What is it that he already knows how to do? If she really listens to a student, she entertains ideas for action that transcend the lesson plan" (1983, p. 312). Schon writes about the new meanings given accountability, evaluation, and supervision by teachers "willing to make independent, qualitative judgments and narrative accounts of experience and performance in learning and teaching" (pp. 333–334). These are the teachers now being asked to assess students by means of portfolios and exhibitions and by asking students to account for what they are saying and thinking as they try to become different and move beyond where they are.

Any encounter with actual human beings who are trying to learn how to learn requires imagination on the part of teachers – and on the part of those they teach. When I ponder the students I have met in schools and colleges, I think of a variety of quests. There is, for example, "the search" in Walker Percy's novel *The Moviegoer*, the quest that "anyone

would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life.... To become aware of the possibility of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair" (1979, p. 13). Again, it takes imagination to become aware that a search is possible, and there are analogies here to the kind of learning we want to stimulate. It takes imagination to break with ordinary classifications and come in touch with actual young people in their variously lived situations. It takes imagination on the part of the young people to perceive openings through which they can move.

In many respects, teaching and learning are matters of breaking through barriers – of expectation, of boredom, of predefinition. To teach, at least in one dimension, is to provide persons with the knacks and know-how they need in order to teach themselves. No teacher, for example, can simply lecture youngsters on playing basketball or writing poetry or experimenting with metals in a chemistry lab and expect them to meet the requirements or standards she or he had in mind for that activity. Teachers must communicate modes of proceeding, ways of complying with rules and norms, and a variety of what have been called "open capacities" (Passmore 1980, p. 42), so that learners can put into practice in their own fashion what they need to join a game, shape a sonnet or devise a chemical test. Passmore writes that this involves the pupil in taking steps she or he has not been taught to take, "which in some measure surprise the instructor, not in the sense that no other pupil has ever done such a thing before...but in the sense that the teacher has not taught his pupil to take precisely that step and his taking it does not necessarily follow as an application of a principle in which the teacher has instructed him. The pupil in other words has come to be, in respect to some exercise of some capacity, inventive" (p. 42). I think of Mary Warnock speaking of the ways in which imagination enables us to realize that there is always more in experience than we can predict (1978, p. 202). I think of her explaining how children, when they begin to feel the significance of what they perceive, "will make their own attempts to interpret this significance." And how it will be "the emotional sense of the infinity or inexhaustibility of things which will give point to their experience, not a body of doctrine which they might extract from it, if they were doctrinally inclined" (p. 206). I think of Wallace Stevens's "man with the blue guitar," the guitar that symbolizes imagination. The guitarist speaks of throwing away "the lights, the definitions" and challenges his listeners to "say of what you see in the dark" (Stevens [1937] 1964, p. 783). These are the listeners who have been asking him to "play things as they are," because it is disruptive to look at things as if they could be otherwise. There is tension in this looking; there is a blank resistance for a while. But then resistance, imagination, open capacities, inventiveness, and surprise are shown to be joined somehow.

To approach teaching and learning in this fashion is to be concerned with action, not behavior. Action implies the taking of initiatives; it signifies moving into a future seen from the vantage point of actor or agent. That is what those now involved in school restructuring mean when they speak of active learning. They are interested in beginnings, not in endings. They are at odds with systematizations, with prescriptions, with assessments imposed from afar. Recall Dewey describing an aim as a way of being intelligent, of giving direction to our undertakings. He knew well that there are no guarantees; he was talking, as I am attempting to do, about openings, about possibilities, about moving in quest and in pursuit.

Dewey may well have been drawn, as I am drawn, by the lure of incompleteness to be explored, the promise inherent in any quest. In *Moby Dick*, Ishmael (skeptical of all systems, all classifications) says, "I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete must be for that very reason infallibly faulty" (Melville [1851] 1981, p. 135). There are always vacancies: there are always roads not taken, vistas not acknowledged. The search must be ongoing; the end can never be quite known.

The chapters to come have to do with various kinds of searching in relation to teaching and learning and with unexpected discoveries teachers might make on the way. The silences of women and the marginalized have still to be overcome in our classrooms. The invisibility of too many students has somehow to be broken through. There are geographies and

landscapes still to be explored by those of us hoping that we do not all have to be strangers in each other in our schools but that we can strive to interpret our new and many-faceted world. Some lines from one of Rainer Maria Rilke's verses ([1905] 1977, p. 3), capture the power for knowing others that resides in how we choose to see things and that I will be exploring:

There's nothing so small but I love it and choose
to paint it gold-groundly and great
and hold it most precious and know not whose
soul it may liberate....

My interpretations are provisional. I have partaken in the post modern rejection of inclusive rational frameworks in which all problems, all uncertainties can be resolved. All we can do, I believe, is cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same. All I can do is to try to provoke my readers to come together in making pathways through that world with their students, leaving thumbprints as they pass. Our "fundamental anxiety," one writer has said (Schutz 1967, p. 247) is that we will pass through the world and leave no mark; that anxiety is what induces us to devise projects for ourselves, to live among our fellow beings and reach out to them, to interpret life from our situated standpoints, to try – over and over again – to begin. In a sense, I have written *Releasing the Imagination* to remedy that anxiety. It grants a usefulness to the disinterest of seeing things small at the same time that it opens to and validates the passion for seeing things close up and large. For this passion is the doorway for imagination; here is the possibility of looking at things as if they could be otherwise. The possibility, for me, is what restructuring might signify. Looking at things large is what might move us on to reform.

In this excerpt, Maxine Greene talks primarily about schools and the educational experience of young people. However, her words may resonate equally well with university educators, graduate students, and researchers. It is in this excerpt that Maxine Greene identifies issues that schools currently and historically have had to contend with in one form or another. Such issues as standards, assessment, outcomes, achievement, socialization, and curriculum are typical educational issues that jockey for preeminence with family issues. Unfortunately, she opines, it is the dominant voices of officials who assume that education is primarily useful in meeting economic and technical needs, as distinct from specific societal needs. Professor Greene then asks how teachers can become empowered to influence education in ways that they believe it should be influenced. At a glance, the politicization of schooling reflects the tensions between the needs of the individuals within the society and the needs of the economy. Through this excerpt, Professor Greene advocates a balanced viewpoint – that is, to see the world both "big" and "small."

The vision that sees things *small* views schooling as a technical system – a vantage point consisting of ideologies relating to systems of power and, ultimately to the standardization of education. Policy makers of this stripe, according to Greene, erroneously assume that this view produces positive social effects. However, to see things or individuals *big*, one must focus on their uniqueness, rather than on their similarities to other individuals, issues, or problems. Thus, the vision that sees things big requires more of a qualitative point of view than a quantitative view that attempts to reduce information to statistical data.

Maxine Greene notes that, even though some educators have not yet discovered the power that they have to change their own and their students' situations for the

better, others succeed in encouraging students to educate themselves – to learn how to learn – through their sense of agency and their attempt to democratize the educational system for their students. Professor Greene continues to advocate the view that educators need to balance educational policy with authentic teaching by refusing to recognize artificial separations between the school and the surrounding environment. Failure to recognize this artifice represents a falsification, in Greene’s eyes, and leads to a decontextualization of the educational experience. However, in order to open pathways toward better teaching methods and, ultimately, better ways of life for their students, Greene believes that educators of all stripes must make use of their imaginative talents and treat students as active learners who have an important stake in their own learning, who are faced with real tasks, and who can learn from models of craftsmanship and honest work. Both teachers’ colleges and parent communities represent caring communities and, as such, represent a resource for the democratic, authentic and, perhaps, critical educator.

To embark upon this voyage of discovery is to embark, at least in part, upon a journey of learning about oneself. As such, multimodal literacies, thoughtful planning, and the balance between seeing things big and seeing them small may serve as landmarks along the way. Professor Greene avers that it takes imagination to understand that not only is such a search possible, but that there are analogies to the kind of learning that teachers wish to stimulate. She notes that imagination is needed on the part of all educators to touch the lives of young people in their variously lived situations and that young people need imagination to reciprocally take responsibility for their own education. She says, “To approach teaching and learning in this fashion is to be concerned with action, not behavior.” This is an adventurous departure from the norm, the search is never ending and the journey to interpret our new and many-faceted world is never certain.

This excerpt from *Releasing the Imagination* (1995) frames not only some of the issues that Maxine Greene brings forward to educators, it also serves to provide an example of the philosophical context at work. The term *philosophy* refers to the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters of existence, particularly as it relates to knowledge, values, reason, and language. Philosophy maintains a critical, generally systematic approach to fundamental questions and tends to rely on the power of the rational argument. Maxine Greene adds the powers of the imagination to this concept. The word “philosophy” originates from the Greek, meaning “love of wisdom,” and it is this love of wisdom that embodies Maxine Greene’s work as an educational philosopher, innovator of the Lincoln Centre, and as a critical educator.

Summary

Dr. Maxine Greene has an amazing ability to connect disparate parts of complex ideas and distill them into clear and significant recommendations for improving and extending educational and social structures for the present and for future generations

of learners. In this chapter, the reader has experienced the nature of some of Maxine Greene's autobiographical details that have helped to position her with regard to her career and the course of her long and varied experience as a renowned educational philosopher. However, those autobiographical details are not devoid of historical context, particularly as it pertains to her acceptance into a society that was, to say the least, not entirely open to those who were traditionalists within a society that did not look favorably upon difference of any sort, specifically religious, ethnic, and gender differences. It was her view from the margins that prompted a radical Maxine Greene to adopt a political stance that challenged the orthodoxy of ideas about how children learn best and how they need to be taught. In today's postmodern, or at least liquidly modern, society, this is no small undertaking. Professor Greene's ideas about art and education have helped to encourage a variety of new thought about educative opportunities and have helped to influence epistemological beliefs about exactly what it is that constitutes knowledge and how that knowledge can be represented to best honor the intelligences of students learning how to learn. It is this positioning that has established Dr. Maxine Greene as one of the most renowned and revered philosophers in education today.

Selected Annotated Bibliography – Maxine Greene

Greene, M. (2007/1965). *The public school and the private vision: A search for America in education and literature* (Classics in progressive education). New York: Random House.

Maxine Greene is one of the leading educational philosophers of the past 50 years. She remains "an idol to thousands of educators," according to the New York Times. In *The Public School and the Private Vision*, first published in 1965 but out of print for many years, Maxine Greene traces the complex interplay of literature and public education from the 1830s to the 1960s – and now, in a new preface, to the present. With great eloquence she affirms the values that lie at the root of public education and makes an impassioned call for decency, morality, and ethical values in difficult times. This is once again a key theme in education circles. This volume includes a new foreword by Herbert Kohl, which discusses Maxine Greene's work and shows how her work resonates for contemporary teachers, students, and parents.

Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute lectures on aesthetic education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Maxine Greene has influenced thousands of educators in her role as Lincoln Center Institute's philosopher-in-residence. Her ideas are at the core of the Institute's philosophy and practice to re-invigorate education by bringing the vitality of the arts to teachers and children. For the past 25 years, those who have participated in the Institute's annual summer sessions have had the good fortune to hear her brilliant and inspiring words first-hand. Maxine Greene has the ability to transcend the "mythic" divide by speaking to your mind's eye and your mind's logic with words

that paint vivid images as they convey philosophic concepts. After listening to these lectures countless teachers have asked new questions, viewed ideas in a different way, and even transformed some part of their life or work.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This remarkable set of essays defines the role of imagination in general education, arts education, aesthetics, literature, and the social and multicultural context. The author argues for schools to be restructured as places where students reach out for meanings and where the previously silenced or unheard may have a voice. She invites readers to develop processes to enhance and cultivate their own visions through the application of imagination and the arts. Maxine Greene, with her customary eloquence, makes an impassioned argument for using the arts as a tool for opening minds and for breaking down the barriers to imagining the realities of worlds other than our own familiar cultures. Her work serves as a reminder that teaching is a moral profession and children's imaginations can be neglected only at the peril of our future.

Greene, M. (1993). The passions of pluralism: Multiculturalism and the expanding community. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 13–18.

This era is one of a multiplicity such as we have not experienced before, with many voices striving to be heard along with students competing for notice. The curriculum, then, should reflect this multiplicity and Greene provides numerous examples of marginalized minority writers who should be included in the literary canon. With this diverse expansion, assumptions are challenged and stereotypes are demystified, and such pluralistic inclusion challenges the monolithic expectations of others and culture. Greene identifies a link between class and minority in the understanding of race and the stereotypes surrounding it. She notes that contemporary culture has a nuclear family life of happiness representing the “official story” at the same time that it is “coercive and deforming” for everyone, whites and minorities alike.

Greene, M. (1991). Blue guitars and the search for curriculum. In G. Willis & W. Schubert (Eds.), *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry: Understanding curriculum and teaching through the arts* (pp. 10–122). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Maxine Greene is an educational theorist on the arts in education. Maxine Greene's philosophy of active learning is discussed and analyzed in this article. Greene uses the blue guitar of Wallace Stevens's poem as a metaphor for the nature of imaginative discovery. She chronicles her love of reading from a young age, including relevant titles that inspired her to imagine. It is that ability to reconceptualize and think in novel, innovative ways which Greene finds in literature that she seeks to reproduce for teachers and preservice educators as they begin to reflect on their own enacted curriculum. Her philosophy is centered on the topic of aesthetic education and how the principles of imagination could be infused into the standard academic curriculum.

Greene, M. (1991). Texts and margins. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61(1), 27–39. People still view art as primarily entertainment and, as a result, it occupies the educational margins. Greene embraces this reality and uses it as a metaphor in the essay to break away from society’s “main text” through the imagination possible in the margins. The artistic is a primary form through which the margin can be explored, but it can be neither elitist nor easy; the artistic should bring us closer to ourselves through our interactions and experiences with it. The article closes with a plea for larger open areas in schools, wider margins for such experiences – whether joyful, miserable, disturbing, and others. Art can elicit all of these responses and all are valid, none precedent over another. Greene calls for the arts to be allowed a more active role in society as we continually move to an identity of self.

Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press. In *The Dialect of Freedom*, Maxine Greene argues that freedom can only be obtained through the processes of resistance to oppression and all the forces that limit true expression of the person. She draws from the varied fields of philosophy, the arts, and history in order to accurately portray the actual struggles of women, immigrants, and minority groups. She provides a historical perspective on American concepts of freedom from the time of Jefferson to the present, integrating these ideas with what is needed in education to preserve freedom for individuals and groups in America. Greene believes that the primary ways to freedom are through resistance to oppression and expression through the arts. The average person quietly retreats, when the opposite action would be an act of freedom, to protest media conglomerates and sensation seekers of society.

Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning*. New York: Teachers College Press. The commitment of educators to human development goals is a major theme of the booklet’s 17 essays, compiled from lectures written by the author during 1974–1977. The essays explore individual potential, the cultural significance of various life situations, and personal fulfillment within each individual’s particular landscape of work, experience, and aspiration. Section I examines relationships among critical reflection, self-awareness, and morality. Contrasts are drawn between those individuals who strive to think and act in reasonable and scientific ways and those who view problems of modern society through magic, ancient myths, and mysticism. Section II focuses on social issues and their implications for education. Section III presents arguments for including arts and humanities in the curriculum at all levels. The final section concentrates on predicaments of women in education and society.

Greene, M. (1977). The artistic-aesthetic and curriculum. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(4), 283–296.

In this article, Maxine Greene identifies a “civilizational malaise” and addresses the ways in which curriculum can be used to combat it. The school’s function is narrowing, but it needs to open students’ eyes so that they can understand and

critique the complex world in which they find themselves. Literature and music, for example, are ways in which emotions can be stirred within the educational context and this can be a key component in breaking through the mundane. Art is not about knowing, it is about feeling and response. Just as we are in a society, so too are artists. The article closes with the recommendation for the student to go beyond the mundane and the banal. Teachers need to provide students with as many different opportunities to encounter the aesthetic – and their reactions to them – as possible.

Greene, M. (1975). Curriculum and consciousness. In W. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum theorizing: The reconceptualists* (pp. 299–317). Berkeley: McCutchan.

In this chapter of a volume edited by William Pinar, Maxine Greene concerns herself with the lack of attention to the individual student and the narrow understanding that the student has of curriculum. The student does not see a place for the self in education and yet wrestles with issues of identity both at and away from school, increasing the disconnect between the world of the student and the world of the school. Schools, then, should become a site for individuality and empowerment through the artistic so that students can go beyond shallow egocentrism. Here, Professor Greene states that consciousness is a catalyst to self-understanding and the notion of personal history. Teachers serve to stimulate students and to “aid in the identification of the thematically relevant, to beckon beyond the everyday.”

Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as stranger: Educational philosophy for the modern age*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.

When Greene published *Teacher as Stranger* in 1973, most philosophy of education saw itself as clarifying the concepts of education and providing these clarifications to teachers as tools and instruments. This work was helpful then and it remains invaluable today. It is important for teachers to be able to distinguish teaching from indoctrination, preaching, training, and the like. However, instead of merely analyzing concepts such as education and teaching, Greene cultivates a novel approach to understanding that leads her through literature, existentialist philosophy, John Dewey’s pioneering philosophies of education and of art, poetry, painting, and a good deal more. Greene seeks to elucidate meanings and significances in teaching as a humane practice.

Greene, M. (1971). Curriculum and consciousness. *Teachers College Record*, 73(2), 253–269.

Curriculum represents little more than an arrangement of subjects. There must be continual reconstructions if a work of literature is to become meaningful. As the growing child assimilates a language system, he moves outward into diverse realms of experience in his search for meaning. Here too there are standards of operation: the subject matter is organized into disciplines communicable and appropriate to educational aims. The structures of “reality” are contingent upon the perspective taken and experience is always incomplete. This opens up the possibility of presenting curriculum so that it does not impose or enforce. To plunge in; to choose; to disclose; to move is the road to mastery.

Greene, M. (1968). Art, technique, and the indifferent gods. *Teachers College Record*, 70, 256–261.

Teachers as artists are prone to “impersonality, manipulativeness and preoccupation with technique” and, therefore, are not an applicable model for the classroom teacher; the notion of artist is often romanticized and the true depictions of some artists’ lives run contrary to what we want from teachers. Artistic inspiration often comes from the need for self-expression with extreme emotional impetus; teachers have not the time of artists to be inspired or to create – they are unable to extricate themselves in the midst of a formed presentation. Teachers who describe themselves as artists need to reconceptualize what it means to be an artist. “The artist’s object is not to inspire, not to liberate, not to teach.” “Teaching is an endeavor to model self-awareness and provide room for students to become individuals.”

Greene, M. (1965, February). Real toads and imagined gardens. *Teachers College Record*, 66, 416–424.

Tension exists between the arts and the sciences because the anxiety created by meaninglessness and the search for individual meaning cannot find meaning in science. The cognitive and noncognitive power of poetry, experience of art and students’ need to identify with and feel the art – not merely be taught it allows room for the imagination to empower students to vocalize meanings and understandings in relation to their own world. Many literary allusions – characters, poems, novels provide references to contemporary real-world events that lead to questions of meaning. No rational, factual, logical answers can lead to meaning, yet one cannot deny the need to question. This article offers concern for the younger generation and underlines references that may inform issues relating to their safety.

Questions for Further Study

1. Explain how the philosophical context is necessary to any qualitative study. How does this relate to conceptual frameworks present in many qualitative research methodologies?
2. What elements of the autobiographical, historical, political, postmodern, and philosophical contexts are present within the video clip of Maxine Greene’s interview? To what extent are these elements present in other research articles or video clips?
3. What is the paradigm that Maxine Greene is operating from? What are her (epistemological) beliefs about the nature of the world, and sources of (ontological) knowledge about the world?
4. Consider your own history of contact with research in the social sciences and education. Have you been exposed to several different paradigms or primarily to one? What is your paradigm? For example, do you accept a world view based on the physical world or is there a mental, spiritual, or other element? What is the basis of your beliefs? Scientific research? Intuition? Subjective Experience? Religion? Spiritualism? Poetry? Folk Lore? Prophecy?

5. The knowledge and skills required to be a discerning consumer of qualitative research are similar to those needed in order to do qualitative research. What types of qualitative research would you like to do? Are there particular types you would like to become more acquainted with? Why?

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Chapter 8

The Art and Practice of Research in the Postmodern Era

People do have innate standards, but most do not know how to get at them. It is hard for people to separate the important from the unimportant, the primary geometry from the secondary applied symbol, if they do not know about pattern. When there is no play of form, people just look at other things, and they simply do not realize that the pattern is not there.

–Jonathan Hale

In order to return to a new beginning one must first embrace old endings. Such endings may represent themselves through a variety of responses. The final chapter of this volume consolidates the five contexts as a model for understanding and doing research within the current milieu. This chapter also explores several of the themes that have emerged as a result of this engagement with qualitative research. The chapter then cycles back to the beginning of the volume with a reinterpretation of the opening theme of “What is Research?” This theme is revisited through a discussion and “re-envisionment” entitled “Research is What?” and features a light-hearted video clip of graduate students embodying numerous concepts relating to qualitative research through “found poetry.”

“Research is What?” embodies a culminating response to a particular set of questions that represented the beginning of a particular journey of learning by a group of graduate students. It is not meant to be a polished work of art, but remains as an “elemental” way of understanding and organizing concepts and meanings that these students gained during the course of their studies. While their representation of research could have been “performed” in any number of ways, this particular group of students chose to represent their understandings through an arts-based approach to the research engaged in during their journey of understanding. We hope you enjoy this rendition of qualitative research as much as the students enjoyed creating this video clip.

The chapter ends with an introduction to the second volume in this series which will showcase major methodologies relevant to qualitative research. These methodologies will also be supported by video clips of key scholars representing their chosen methodologies.

Contexts for Research

It is hoped that this volume will serve to clarify some of the major notions relating to qualitative research, particularly in terms of the clarification of terms that have confounded students and researchers alike. Such concepts as ontology and epistemology, and the major distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research are important considerations that can benefit from discussion. Further to this, it is hoped that the five contexts presented between the covers of this volume will also be of some benefit for those conducting, engaging in, or performing research. A brief review of the five contexts follows.

The Autobiographical Context

This was the first context to be considered. As Clifford Geertz noted, the researcher is of prime importance to the research. Therefore, knowing *who* the researcher is becomes enormously important. This is also a valuable tool for the researcher involved, as he/she may be able to utilize this context to question his/her assumptions about research, and to develop guidelines for research using William Pinar's Regressive, Progressive, Analytical, Synthetical approach to autobiography. Hopefully, this context may assist the researcher in situating him-/herself relative to the qualitative research that is being conducted (Cooper 2008; Fine and Weis 1996). After all, to understand one's own motivations and to question one's own assumptions can allow the individual to be more objective when engaging in research endeavors (Gannon 2006; Peshkin 1988).

The Historical Context

Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests that one must delve deeply into history in order to reach the unique core of existential meaning which emerges, ultimately, within any type of research. It is important to recognize that one has a place in history, and that one can change that place from being merely an observer and a reactionary to being in a position of power within which one can insert oneself into the historical moment in order to influence the course of that history. It is in this way that the readerly text can become a writerly text. For the researcher, the historical context offers an important perspective on the past which, in turn, can inform future decisions, considerations, and methodologies (Blumenreich 2004; Foucault 1971, 1972).

The Political Context

It has been said that politics, by its very nature, is never neutral. It can also be claimed that politics is omnipresent in the lives of every citizen in today's society. Whether it be personal politics or those of a more general nature, it is important for the researcher to recognize the political nature of everything one does, from the point of view of the researcher or that of the participants in the research. Recognition of the political aspects of engaging in or performing research allows the researcher to bring an additional perspective to bear upon the research issue. Thus, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests, everything, including political matters, has meaning and points to underlying structures within relationships.

The Postmodern Context

Since we live in postmodern times, this context is an important consideration to any form of research. This context relates to the eighth moment of qualitative research that Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have identified. In this age of blurred genres and mixed methods, the postmodern era helps one to realize that things are not as they were. It is now more difficult to compartmentalize research into neat, mutually exclusive domains. Perhaps it was always thus and we are only now beginning to recognize that the messy, descriptive nature of qualitative research is the norm. In that sense, an understanding of these postmodern or "liquid" times can assist the researcher in seeing qualitative research in all of its complexities.

The Philosophical Context

But what does it all mean? It is the philosophical context that binds the previous contexts together in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities associated with engaging in qualitative research. It is through the philosophical context that one can contemplate those deep issues that the research embodies. This context allows for the necessary introspection and thoughtfulness that may aid in delving into deeper philosophical questions of meaning. Acting as a binder to the aggregate of the other contexts, it is the philosophical context that compares and contrasts meanings, seeks patterns, and attempts to come to an understanding of all that the research means, embodies, and foreshadows.

As such, these five contexts represent an orientation to inquiry that researchers, graduate students, and the professionals and practitioners who are attached to research endeavors may find useful, as they seek to develop ways by which they can engage with the research process, data collection and analysis, and the dissemination of their research findings.

Emergent Themes

This final chapter of the volume consolidates these contexts of research, which acknowledges a variety of methodologies across the social sciences and humanities. As such, these contexts may operate as standards or operating procedures by which one may conduct qualitative research. Jonathan Hale (1994) suggests that, while people do have innate standards, many are challenged to understand, develop, and know them.

It is just such a task that these contexts of qualitative research have been inspired to accomplish. In short, it is hoped that they will serve to augment the understanding of what is important in qualitative research and assist in the development of the knowledge of how to divest that which is of secondary importance from that which is of primary importance. The key for Jonathan Hale relates to the detection, recognition, and understanding of patterns. This is just what the five contexts may be able to contribute to qualitative research in the postmodern era. Just as Jonathan Hale attempts to identify and utilize patterns in order to interpret and to reinterpret public life, we, the authors, have also recognized that the five contexts are one of the most important themes that we have discovered through the variety of opportunities presented in the development of this volume.

Returning to the Merleau-Ponty (1962) quote that opens this volume, the starting point for the understanding of any matter rests in the ability to view it from a multiplicity of perspectives. As one attempts to understand a doctrine from its various contexts simultaneously, one may begin to recognize patterns that underlie all relationships. By viewing these contexts individually and in toto, one may ultimately attain the unique core of existential meaning that lies within each context separately but which is caught up in all contexts together. As intimated by Merleau-Ponty, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Ultimately, we believe that it is through the autobiographies of some of the most outstanding scholars in the social sciences and humanities that the reader may better understand qualitative research in all of its complexities. These autobiographies, to paraphrase Merleau-Ponty, are the starting point by which to view all other contexts.

To continue with the value of using the five contexts presented within the pages of this volume, let us return for a moment to the fifth and final context – the philosophical context. Throughout the interview with Maxine Greene, we were struck by the emerging themes that offer a perspective on important patterns and the shifting of those patterns over time.

Ethnic and Gender Issues

For example, Professor Greene mentions that the university where she got her first teaching position would only admit Jews for lunch, and because of this, she really could not stay there. Interestingly enough, she comments that the institution now

has a high proportion of Jewish faculty. This illustrates that traditions and customs are mutable over time. What is socially acceptable in one era may not be so acceptable in the future and vice versa. The exclusion of Jews, in times past, from positions of influence represented a foreshadowing of the future Holocaust in Europe (Bauman 1989). A number of scholars made mention of this historical tragedy, among them are Zygmunt Bauman, Henry Giroux, and Norman Denzin. Clearly, this was an event that marked a pivotal point in the movement of greater social justice for all people.

Maxine Greene acts as a touchstone when she comments that such prominent women as Margaret Mead and Louise Rosenblatt had difficulty getting academic positions within their field of study. While this was excluded from the video clip in this volume, this comment was made in the larger interview. The contributions that these women, and women like them, have made to the development of research – both qualitative and quantitative – are immeasurable. Essentially, these women helped to lay foundations for future academics to build upon. Maxine Greene’s contributions to qualitative research are by no means dissimilar.

Unfortunately, many of the women who were interviewed in the process of developing this volume say much the same thing. Women were discriminated against in times past. Perhaps, many women may say that not much has changed, but even if the barriers to academia are still largely in place for women, the script has at least changed slightly. The script is now more accepting of women, even if the reality is still somewhat hard-edged. Possibly, the future will promote greater congruence between words and actions when it comes to the validation of women in academia.

As such, women like Maxine Greene were pioneers. To her credit, Professor Greene was not bitter in recounting the prejudices associated with her academic history and other vignettes. She simply tells that story as she remembers it: she conveys the sense that “life is like that.” Certain doors were closed to women then that now may be open, at least in part. However, still other doors remain closed to other people for other reasons. Interestingly enough, Professor Greene’s story, relating to the exclusion of women from positions of influence, stands in sharp contrast to the stories of some of the men who were also interviewed. At the same time that Maxine Greene struggled (as did so many women in academics) to get a position and to hold on to it, a significant number of men reported that they were able to move quickly and easily into positions that were not available to their feminine counterparts.

The Scholars

Each of the scholars interviewed offered insights into to their lives, their work, and their commitment to qualitative research. These scholars have managed to do exactly what Maxine Greene articulates; they have discovered the power that they possess not only to create change but also to *be* the change they have created – to embody the change that they have willed into being.

It is in exactly this way that each of the scholars interviewed have influenced their own and their students' situations for the better. These scholars have succeeded in encouraging students to educate themselves – to learn how to learn – through their own and their students' own sense of agency, coupled with their ongoing efforts to democratize the educational system for their students and, ultimately, for the students of their students.

Each and every one of these scholars makes mention of battles fought and hardships endured in order to be free to engage in the kind of research that they believe to be essential to an understanding of life, society, and the appreciation of why and how individuals and groups of individuals do what they do in order to gain control over their own environment. To this end, these scholars have all sacrificed for their beliefs and ideals. However, to embark upon this voyage of discovery is to embark, at least in part, upon a journey of learning about oneself – the reason for this book. As the scholars “under the microscope” describe events, attitudes, and emotions that have helped to shape not only who they are but their research as well, they allow the observer to share their own personal histories – their autobiographies – to gain a greater understanding of their own particular circumstances and the influences, tensions, and effects that have helped them to achieve. We, the readers, are able to witness from where these individuals have originated and where they have arrived. We can observe, in somewhat greater depth, the various paths taken by them in order to attain the stature they currently possess. Not only does this allow the readers to observe in greater detail the journey that these great minds have embarked upon, it also allows readers to examine their own paths, their own histories and how events past and present serve to influence them. Such examination can be beneficial in understanding issues relating to their own senses of agency, or lack thereof. Such understandings of powerful exemplars in the form of these renowned scholars may also assist in allowing the reader to forge ahead through deeper understandings regarding the times in which we now live and the particular stresses and tensions that must be dealt with in order to not only survive, but to prevail. At the end of the day, to be able to look back and to see in retrospect, but in some detail, the ground that has been covered and the journey that still remains can help to answer some of the very fundamental questions that individuals may have regarding their own existence, particularly as it relates to qualitative research.

Historical Events

One of the themes that runs through this work is the idea that, as times change, it is often easier to view the era that has just passed more clearly than when it was being experienced. Professors Bauman, Denzin, Giroux, Greene, and Pinar all comment on this phenomenon. In all of their autobiographies, the scholars speak of feeling marginalized at some point in their lives and/or their careers. It is this sense of being an outsider that offers a very important view – the view from the margins. This view is important in that it is an outlier's vantage point that allows one a

greater degree of objectivity than that which is normally experienced in a more inclusive environment.

All of the researchers featured in the five contexts mentioned the political foment of the 1960s and of the Vietnam War. Such historical events aided in the recognition that “something needs to be done.” It is here that the notion of personal power and agency comes to the fore. It is at this point that Norman Denzin speaks of inserting oneself into the text as an active participant – in turning a “readerly” text into a “writerly” text. While the writerly text may be useful in engaging with qualitative research, it is based directly upon one’s own relationship to one’s sense of power and agency and, ultimately, to one’s own autobiography.

Reflections on the Art and Practice of Research in the Postmodern Era

So, why is autobiography important to qualitative research? Simply put, this is how the researcher relates him- or herself to the research at hand (Geertz 1983; Rosenau 1992). It was Professor Clifford Geertz, to whom this volume is dedicated, along with a host of other determined researchers who recognized that the methods used to research societal issues, questions, or problems were not up to the task of describing what it was that they needed to describe. Contemporary quantitative methods that were valued at the time were not useful in helping to describe a culture. In fact, Clifford Geertz was one of the first researchers to recognize that it was the researcher who was one of the major vehicles through which research was engaged. This led to a reevaluation and redefinition of traditional methods, honored by such powerful ethnographers as Margaret Mead, of conducting sociological research such as anthropology and ethnographic research. In short, Professor Geertz was responsible, at least in part, for helping to shift the paradigm of sociological research in general, and ethnographic research in particular, to a more qualitative type of research through his methods of “thick description.”

We, the authors, see the role of autobiography in this volume as at once intertextual and operating across disciplines, serving to displace traditional notions of what the author’s role means to the creation of the text. Returning to Barthes’ (1974) employment of the terms “readerly” and the “writerly” may be helpful to the understanding of this current text. Readerly texts make no requirement of the reader but allow for “ready-made” meaning, which does not disturb the surrounding culture, while writerly texts attempt to encourage the reader to be no longer merely a consumer but an active producer of text, constituting a more dynamic way of interacting with a culture and its cultural inscriptions (Barthes 2004).

This is a recurring theme throughout this volume. All researchers interviewed have actively created writerly texts within their respective practices. Barthes believes that all writing draws on previous texts, norms, and conventions, and that these are the things to which we must turn in order to understand the larger text, the text of life. In keeping with Barthes, as Karyn’s graduate course drew to a close, she

wondered how to have her graduate students reexamine these autobiographies and articles in ways that would invite the students to actively engage with these texts in new and dynamic ways. Karyn's graduate students were encouraged to construct a writerly text through a performative assignment on "found poetry."

Found Poetry – "Research Is What?"

Found poetry, in its simplest form, is an activity which asks individuals to generate a topic of interest found to be exciting or confounding. It was decided that there was a need to invert the question, "What is research?" which began the course, and to turn it into "Research is What?" After careful consideration, groups of graduate students worked together to compile a list of words or phrases from video interviews and other course material. Music and tableaux were employed, thanks to those graduate students in the performing arts. Found poetry engaged the graduate students in developing deeper understandings of qualitative research by inviting these individuals to become more critical, to develop and pursue socially just goals, to appreciate and use the arts and to become capable of outrage, which is Maxine Greene's recipe for a meaningful interface with life as it is lived and learned. Such empowerment resonates with views provided by Henry Giroux, Norman Denzin, and all of the researchers interviewed.

The following video clip is the culmination of Karyn's course assignment and represents the graduate students' response to "Research is What?"

cooperwhite.com
Password: cooperwhite
<http://cooperwhite.com/chapter8movie.html>

In this way, development of a writerly text has the potential to engage researchers, graduate students, and readers of research in ways that may allow them to broaden their understandings of qualitative research and, to return to the chapter title, the art and practice of research in general.

Reflections

One of the very first reflections about research really came as no surprise. This reflection relates to the entire process of engaging in and performing research. Simply put, good research takes time, effort, and patience, as attested to by the deep knowledge evidenced by the scholars interviewed for this project. Also, "think time" or the time required to process information, data, and procedures can take

months, often longer. It is quite common for graduate students to set aside their nascent theses for weeks, months, or even years, in some cases, in order to allow, belatedly realized in most cases, for the due processing of information or to come to grips with preexisting texts such as “readerly texts.”

Many thesis advisors and researchers have also noted, on an informal basis, that of all the weak spots regarding student theses, it is often the methodological considerations that show the least well. Why is this, the reader may ask? Often this is born of a lack of clarity on the part of the student regarding two separate but not mutually exclusive issues. The first issue deals with no clear picture of the overarching philosophy of doing research. That is to say, notions of ontology and epistemology are often fairly tenuous. It is for this reason that the Venn diagram toward the beginning of this volume was included. It is hoped that this and the accompanying information will serve to clarify major distinctions between quantitative and qualitative paradigms of research. In conjunction with this is the “artificial,” yet somewhat necessary, separation of qualitative research into the interpretive and the critical approaches to engaging in such research.

The second issue will be dealt with in detail in the subsequent volume of this series. This issue relates to the understanding of a variety of methodologies and the recognition of the methodology that is most appropriate to the research at hand. Interestingly enough, even seasoned researchers frequently utilize familiar methodologies for the simple matter that it is these methodologies that they understand best, even when other methodologies may be more appropriate. As such, the subsequent volume may assist in clarifying a variety of methodologies appropriate to various types of qualitative research. An additional, if somewhat tangential, issue is the differentiation between methodologies and methods. The methodologies, whichever they may be, are the overarching guiding light for the research that is to be engaged, whereas the methods may be borrowed from a variety of sources, including other methodologies. What makes these two categories of methodologies and methods distinctive is the point that the methodology drives that process of the research while the methods are used to collect, understand, and value the data. This does not mean to say that any method may suit any type of methodology. It is not a free-for-all with an “anything will do” approach. Methods must be compatible with the chosen methodology which must, in turn, be compatible with the research questions and the hypothesis, whether explicit or implied. From all vantage points, a successful research project will operate like a team, like a well-oiled, smoothly running engine, or even like a collage of disparate parts that combine to create a consolidated view of a particular topic, issue or problem.

Introduction to Volume II

Many researchers are still trying to force qualitative methodologies into molds created by quantitative researchers. This type of force-fit often leads to less than satisfactory results due to the nature of the methodologies being utilized. Often, quantitative

methodologies are less than appropriate for the type of qualitative research that is being attempted. A one-size-fits-all approach is less than appropriate for the messy complexities of qualitative research. Further to this, the paradigms of quantitative and qualitative research differ distinctly. As a result, the choice of methodologies tends to follow the paradigm within which the researcher operates and, if this paradigm is not conducive to the discovery of meaning, needless to say, the methodologies mobilized through the particular paradigm in question may also be less than appropriate in providing data that is useful to the researcher. This begs the need to choose appropriate methodologies, knowing that qualitative research is derived from quantitative methodologies within a scientific paradigm. To be informed regarding suitable qualitative research, methodologies are essential to the qualitative researcher. Further to this, there is a need for experimental research methodologies that takes qualitative research beyond the crisis of representation. What this looks like or how it will perform is not currently within the grasp of most qualitative research teams. There remains a need to continue to establish an operational vocabulary that is expressly qualitative in nature (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005), rather than simply borrowing existing terms from quantitative research processes.

The second volume in this series showcases major approaches and methodologies relevant to qualitative research. Video clips of key scholars will support the represented methodologies. The closing of this volume represents a bittersweet moment for the authors who hope that this volume is useful to the reader, and that it has helped to inform you in a multiplicity of ways. We hope that you enjoy this volume as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Selected Annotated Bibliography

Barthes, R. (2004). From work to text. In D. J. Hale (Ed.), *The novel: An anthology of criticism and theory* (pp. 235–242). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

A change has lately occurred in our idea of language and literacy. This is occurring because of the development of the social sciences and humanities fields. Roland Barthes describes seven characteristics of “the text.” The text must not be understood as a computable object, but as a methodological field. The text cannot be limited to “good” literature, but is to be valued by its force of subversion simply because the text attempts to locate itself specifically behind the limit of the “doxa.” Thus, the text is always “paradoxical.” It is approached and experienced in relation to the signified content – either scientific or interpretive. In short, the text functions as an institutional category of the civilization. The text is that social space which leaves no language safe. The text can only coincide with the practice of writing.

Barthes, R. (1974). *S/Z: An essay*. (R. Miller, Trans.). New York: Hill & Wang. *S/Z: An Essay* is Roland Barthes’ structuralist analysis of “Sarrasine”, the short story by Balzac. Barthes’s study has had a major impact on literary criticism and is historically located at the crossroads of structuralism and post-structuralism. Barthes

concludes that, since meaning cannot come from the author, it must be actively created by the reader through a process of textual analysis. Barthes established five major codes for determining various kinds of significance, which led him to define the story as having a capacity for plurality of meaning, limited by its dependence upon strictly sequential elements. He describes this as the difference between the writerly text, in which the reader is active in a creative process, and a readerly text in which the reader is restricted to merely reading.

Bauman, Z. (1989). *Modernity and the holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Bauman argues that modern institutions are characterized by dispassionate bureaucratic efficiency assisted by technology. Large government and corporate bureaucracies function in such a way that individual responsibility for the actions of the bureaucracy are dispersed. Bauman's thesis is that the Holocaust is not an aberration peculiar to a particular time and place, but a general symptom of modernity. In other words, events akin to the Holocaust are capable of happening again and again in the modern world. The book is thus frightening and sobering. The danger, according to Bauman, is that if a Hitler rises to the top of such a bureaucracy, he can set the system rolling toward an inhumane goal, and it is possible that nobody within the system or outside it will be able to stop it.

Blumenreich, M. (2004). Avoiding the pitfalls of conventional narrative research: Using poststructural theory to guide the creation of narratives of children with HIV. *Qualitative Research*, 4(1), 77–90.

The purposes of this article are to acknowledge challenges to traditional narrative inquiry that have been raised, at least in part, by post-structural theory, and to demonstrate how post-structural thought can assist in guiding narrative research. After placing narrative inquiry within the broad historical context of educational research, and offering a post-structural critique of what it is that constitutes more “traditional” narratives, the author uses this critique to guide the development of narratives of children with Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). This article also includes excerpts from the narrative of a 9-year-old HIV-positive boy. Further to this, excerpts from the author's own construction of the research and her post-structural stance are provided.

Fine, M., & Weis, L. (1996). Writing the wrongs of fieldwork: Confronting our own research/writing dilemmas in urban ethnographies. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(3): 251–274.

The authors of this essay struggle with how to produce scholarly texts drawn from narratives of poor and working class men and women—White, African American, Latino, and Asian American. They unveil a set of knotty, emergent ethical, and rhetorical dilemmas they have encountered in their attempt to write for, with, and about poor and working-class participants at a time when these lives and moralities are routinely maligned in the popular media; when the very problematic policies that may once have “assisted” them are being abandoned; and when the leverage of an audience for progressive social researchers and policy makers has become unfocused and weak. Writing to create a conversation about ethics, writing, and

qualitative research, the authors discuss the contemporary role of qualitative social researchers.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.

Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* presents an approach to the exploration of language and description of culture which differs from structuralist methods of inquiry. Instead of trying to integrate concepts of unity into a structural description of the history of ideas, Foucault explains that discontinuity is characteristic of every discursive statement. Foucault explains that systems of dispersion are the underlying reality of all discursive statements. He explains that the unity of any discourse is actually a dispersion of elements which involves discontinuity. Thus, the primary task of any discursive analysis is to discover the rules according to which this disunity of objects, forms, concepts, and theoretical options is present.

Foucault, M. (1971). *Madness and civilization: A history of insanity in the age of reason* (R. Howard, Trans.). London: Tavistock.

In this classic account of madness, Michel Foucault shows once and for all why he is one of the most distinguished European philosophers since the end of World War II. This text is a classic of French post-structuralist scholarship and is widely recommended for humanities courses across a variety of disciplines. Foucault's analysis of psychology is a devastating critique of the common understanding of insanity. *Madness and Civilization* is an examination of the ideas, practices, institutions, art, and literature relating to madness in Western history. This was Foucault's first major book, written while he was the Director of *La Maison de France* in Sweden. It is the abridged English edition of *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, originally published in 1961 as *Folie et déraison. Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*.

Gannon, S. (2006). The (im)possibilities of writing the self-writing: French post-structural theory and autoethnography. *Critical Studies: Critical Methodologies*, 6(4), 474–495.

Post-structural theories problematize taken-for-granted humanist notions of the subject as capable of self-knowledge and self-articulation while simultaneously providing a rationale for incorporating the personal into research. The body, emotions, and lived experience become texts to be written and read in autoethnography. However, a paradox arises for post-structural autoethnography in that autoethnographic research presumes that subjects can speak for themselves, whereas post-structuralism disrupts this presumption and stresses the (im)possibilities of writing the self. The author identifies the implications for a reconfigured post-structural autoethnography, tracing textual strategies that evoke fractured, fragmented subjectivities and provoke discontinuity, displacement, and estrangement.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge: Further essays in interpretive methodology*. New York: Basic Books.

In essays covering everything from art and common sense to charisma and constructions of the self, the eminent cultural anthropologist and author of *The Interpretation of Cultures* deepens our understanding of human societies through the intimacies of

“local knowledge.” A companion volume to *The Interpretation of Cultures*, this book continues Geertz’s exploration of the meaning of culture and the importance of shared cultural symbolism. Cultural scholarship has grown to depend upon people like Clifford Geertz for the conceptual tools required for such studies. The conceptual tools and methods, such as those discussed in these essays, allow anyone interested in exploring the meaning of culture the opportunity to ride the avalanche of symbols which both clarify and confuse that meaning.

Hale, J. (1994). *The old way of seeing*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Gentle, wise, and perceptive, Architect Hale’s manifesto describes the grace that old buildings possess and contemporary architecture lacks, along with his ideas for how this older ideal can be reclaimed. Intended for the lay reader, this primer on design explores a number of interesting byways, from symbolism to scale, context, regulating lines, and pattern languages. A practiced New England architect and architectural writer, Hale offers a paean to the past, more specifically a preindustrial past when, in his words, “one could walk down any street and be surrounded by harmonious buildings.” It all began to fall apart in the 1830s, according to Hale, when the Greek Revival replaced substance with symbol. Hale revolts at the prospect of rampant industrialism and everything else implied by Modern Architecture.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception*. London/New York: Routledge.

While phenomenology is concerned with providing a direct description of human experience, perception is the background of experience which guides every conscious action. The world is a field for perception, and human consciousness assigns meaning to the world. Merleau-Ponty argues that we cannot separate ourselves from our perceptions of the world. He claims that both traditional Empiricism and Rationalism are inadequate to describe the phenomenology of perception. Empiricism maintains that experience is the primary source of knowledge, and that knowledge is derived from sensory perceptions. Rationalism maintains that reason is the primary source of knowledge, and that knowledge does not depend on sensory perceptions.

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity – One’s own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17–22.

It is no more useful for researchers to acknowledge simply that subjectivity is an invariable component of their research than it is for them to assert that their ideal is to achieve objectivity. Acknowledgments and assertions are insufficient. Beginning with the premise that subjectivity is inevitable, this article argues that researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress. The purpose of doing so is to enable researchers to be aware of how their subjectivity may be shaping their inquiry and its outcomes. In this article, Alan Peshkin demonstrates the pursuit of his own subjectivity in the course of a year-long fieldwork project in a multiethnic high school.

Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 959–978). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

The world of ethnography has expanded in ways that were unimaginable a decade ago. In view of this, in Part I, Laurel Richardson discusses the contents of social scientific writing, historically and contemporaneously. Also, the authors describe the creative analytical practice of the ethnographic genre and the direction her work has taken during the past decade. In the second part of this article, Elizabeth St. Pierre provides an analysis of how writing as a method of inquiry coheres with the development of ethical selves engaged in social action and social reform. In the final part, Richardson provides some writing practices and exercises for the qualitative writer. Of particular note is the authors' use of "crystallization" as a qualitative term for the more empirical "triangulation."

Rosenau, P. M. (1992). *Post-modernism and the social sciences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Postmodernism offers a revolutionary approach to the study of society. In questioning the validity of modern science and the notion of objective knowledge, this movement discards history, rejects humanism, and resists any truth claims. In this comprehensive assessment of postmodernism, Pauline Rosenau traces postmodernism's origins in the humanities and describes how its key concepts are today being applied to, and are restructuring, the social sciences. Serving as neither an opponent nor an apologist for the movement, she cuts through postmodernism's often incomprehensible jargon in order to offer all readers a lucid exposition of its propositions. Rosenau shows how the postmodern challenge to reason and rational organization radiates across academic fields.

Questions for Further Study

1. What methods (data collection/analyses) can you use to provide data relevant to your research questions? For example, will your independent study focus on an in-depth look at a particular methodology?
2. Using the five contexts in your own academic or personal practice, do a self-study on your own learning as a result of interacting with this volume. Report on your process and progress to the larger group.
3. What implications do paradigms and approaches to research have for a specific methodology?
4. Can you identify a paradigm and one or more approaches or methodologies that might be appropriate to your research issue?
5. In pairs or small groups, perform a culminating activity that you believe captures the essence of qualitative research.

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Appendices

Excerpts of Interviews Transcripts

Chapter 1 “What Is Research?”

A transcript has not been provided for this video clip as it is a compilation of a number of scholars’ comments regarding the nature of research in general.

Chapter 2 The Qualitative (R)Evolution?

2.1

Dr. Raewyn Connell:

Well research generally is, you know, organizing knowledge, communicating knowledge and putting knowledge into the public domain. So, that is so broad a definition that can apply to almost anything and, of course, that applies to the natural sciences, too. In the social sciences, research always involves communication that the..., since the..., you know, the subject matter of research is people and their social circumstances. It involves communication between researchers and the participants in research, however indirect that communication might be. I mean, some research is done, for instance, on census statistics but they, in turn, are built on a communication, highly formalized communication sometime in the past, similarly with historical research. So what one does in research is assemble and organize information that comes out of some organized system of social communication and attempts to turn that into knowledge that is accessible in the public realm. Now, I make a distinction between information and knowledge and that distinction has to do with theory. I don’t think it is possible to separate, as some of the textbooks do, research and theorizing, field and empirical research in theorizing. I think theory of some sort is always present in empirical research because our concepts shape the kinds of questions we formulate, the question we put to people or to existing bodies of information and the information automatically reacts on and affects our concepts. So, theorizing is a moment in research rather than a separate activity. And, I would also always intimate..., argue that there is an intimate link between collecting information and putting into the public domain even though those might be separated by years. The purpose of collecting or analyzing information is always

ultimately to put it into the public domain and the kinds of audiences we might get are for our writings, for our research reports ultimately shape the kinds of... like our prior concepts... shape the kinds of questions we think are worth asking. So that is to say, research itself is a social process and in universities, of course, it is a highly institutionalized social process with ethics committees and funding bodies, of training programs, formal research teams very often, as well as individual scholars in pursuing their own personal agendas and similarly the putting it into the public domain is a fairly institutionalized business, involving journals and publishing houses, book reviews and moments like this.

2.2

Dr. Peter Freebody:

I think research is two things. I think research is science and research is project and I think that, when we think of qualitative research, we... you know, we can see that on both of those counts qualitative research has made, in the case of science, conceptual theoretical contributions. In fact, it has been largely through qualitative research, qualitative analysis of some sort that most serious social science questions have actually got going, I think, in sociology and anthropology certainly and in education as well.

...[I]t is to understand the ways in which you can think rigorously in a qualitative way is also kind of prime, you know, primordialily relevant to the matter of quantitative research as well, is that the production, the understanding of constructs and concepts is the nature of the qualities of the things you wish to quantify. But that initial reasoning, unless you are simply taking on hand-me-down constructs or hand-me-down scales or tests or something or other, then you are actually having to do work about conceptual models and this is necessarily qualitative. It is not just theoretical, it's about qualities, it is about the association, the relationships among qualities of practice or among conditions and practice and so on and so on, and what features of an environment produce what kinds of outcomes and qualities of teachers and students and so on. So, there is necessarily, often covertly, built into any quantitative... apparently largely or solidly quantitative program... an awful lot of at least covert qualitative thought. So, it strikes me that there should be at least some understanding of the nature of theorizing about qualities that is built into this, prior to simply going to constructs and their measurability or otherwise. So, I think that that is a second layer of a possible answer to these things.

Qualitative research in education is... is one of those kinds of questions where again you... in the background, you are always reflecting on qualitative research vis-à-vis or in contrast with quantitative research. So, ...which is okay, as long as we sort of know we are doing that and I think... I have some fairly simple-minded responses, I think, to the significance, to the question of the significance of qualitative research in education and one of them is that I think that in... If there is no active and... and well-theorized community of qualitative researchers in education, then it is very hard to find out anything new because you are working with compact concepts that you have, you know, that you have developed and, if you like, encased into conceptual objects that are framed and defined by their statistical properties and their statistical coherence as a thing, if you like, as things. And so those things can be re-found and correlations between those things and other things can be found.

...[B]ut also as project, qualitative work as part of a set of activities in the world that people who want to use organized inquiry to effect policy or practice, you know, directly with those goals and the ability of qualitative researchers to partner with researchers from different frameworks in order effect something worth effecting in terms of policy and practice.

I think the qualitative work, the experience of rigorously conducted qualitative..., the presentation of it is what can really be very convincing morally and emotionally. You know, in terms of it changing policy, or changes practices.

...[T]here was a confluence of mathematical ideas, computational processes and notions of probability that allowed Catalan and other people to introduce the notion of the average citizen and then the deviations from the average citizen and normally distributed features and that got worked up again by Binet, as you know, fifty years later. So, it has always struck me that that was a relatively late intervention in thinking about the state and society, but also that it was also a conceptually very radical intervention. It is not, you know, it is quite a long way away from thinking organically about human individual and social experience, to start thinking that you can locate people on a normal curve and they have got attributes that are statistically stable following certain kinds of measurements and so on and so on. That seems to me to be a potentially implausible way of thinking about human behaviour, which has gripped partly because of its efficacy, apparent efficacy, in informing administration policy, but also because I think, you know, it is gripped partly because we have developed measurement techniques which give us a view of the individual as a bundle of relatively stable attributes that we should be able to assess as we can biologically and that we can give them social and psychological significance. So, I think the twentieth century brought with it a theory of individualization particularly in the west that married up relatively nicely to..., to these ways of using computational methods for mapping people.

...[T]he thing that has always struck me, and I am speaking of somebody who is trained as a statistician..., you know, a quantitative researcher within cognitive science. It has always struck me how defensive qualitative researchers have been. They have always been, in a sense the, you know, I guess you could say the poor cousin, but they have often behaved as if they are the unstable member of the partnership quantitative/qualitative, that they are the member that needs to defend itself, defend its existence, justify its existence in some way. And that is curious to me because, when you go back and look at, you know, even the very sort of embryonic things of observational studies that you would think of in the ways in which people try to theorize in the presence of observation and data. A long time ago, I think of Charles Darwin's studies of childhood and, you know, more recently Piaget and people like that and a whole lot of people in between. If you look at those big questions that remain with us, even if Piagetian theory as an edifice has been set aside, those big questions about growth and development and change, they were not formulated by experimentalists or by measurement theory people. They were formulated by people trying to theorize in the presence of observing the qualities of experience and practice that they saw around them. So it strikes me that there is this sort of ancestral privilege that is due to qualitative work, which is not to say it is not modern....

2.3

Dr. Maxine Greene:

For example, I've been working at Lincoln Center. I helped to start the Lincoln Centre Institute and I'm the so-called philosopher in residence, and more and more the bureaucrats at the institute want me to write things to sell aesthetic education to superintendents or to talk about it in a way that will support some kind of grant proposal and I keep saying you cannot prove it. You know, how can you prove that doing this or that will make an aesthetic experience more likely? And then, I keep asking people how do you know when someone else has an aesthetic experience? How do you know when you have one and how do you explain it? So, you know, I get very unnerved by the research they ask me to do. And

I started a research circle on aesthetic education. I kept saying it's unethical to talk about proving something.

I would like to say first, if I know more about perception and I know more about imagination, I can talk more meaningfully about what happens in an encounter between a person and a work of art. And I was just writing that I can't prove that either; that, for me, like for a lot of people, the perceiver or the appreciator is at one side and the work of art is at the other. Well the work is at the other. And the work of art is an event that occurs in an encounter between consciousness and the work. I don't want to say it's measurable. That's not good enough for my bureaucratic people, but I think that's true. I think you have to think of it as an event and it's never the same for different people.

Chapter 3 The Autobiographical Context

Dr. William F. Pinar:

My parents had, as they do I suppose on all children, a performative influence. In retrospect, I would say that my father had a kind of mantra that he would repeat and which, you know, intermittently I would find irritating but has, nonetheless, achieved his result. I've never forgotten it and it was this, "Son, whatever you get out of life, get understanding." And, from Mother, I learned to be irreverent and spontaneous and to seek pleasure. And so Father's kind of meditative, contemplative, obsessiveness was balanced by Mother's restlessness and interest in diversion. And so those were kind of two constellations of factors that Mom and Dad communicated to me. Dad's parents had been academics and had died, left him an orphan in fact. And he was quite preoccupied with my academic career. I would say that Dad erred on the side of being too intimate, too in my face as a child. And so I found separation extremely difficult, although not as difficult as it turns out he found it. Mother was much more, I think, balanced psychologically and so we were able to have a kind of intimate reciprocal relation. At the same time she could let go and let me find my way. My grandmother kind of completed the "ménage trois" there and she kind of adjudicated their disputes. She lived with us until her death in '62 and from her I learned what feels like an exquisite sense of the momentary. Grandmother would sit silently in her chair and I can remember, as a child on the floor, I must have been under five and I would simply watch her. And she would point out the dust floating in the afternoon sun and how exquisite that pattern was. And so Grandmother was the inspiration for, I suppose, my interest in the phenomenological and the aesthetic.

As an undergrad at Ohio State, I found the courses I took in existentialism and phenomenology the most compelling, although the English department is where I finally transferred after initially being a history major. I would say an enduring interest for me. In fact, I'm reading now a study of historians' autobiographical experiments. And I'd read a couple of them, like George Moss, who's well known in the history of masculinity and so on. ... It was the fourth year, though, that was pivotal for me. I had transferred into teacher education, not because I wanted to be teacher, I confess. I wanted to be a professor, but it was the draft, actually, to be truthful. And I think it's a little awkward to say that because people sort of dismiss my interest out of hand after knowing that. But I think people enter professions for all kinds of quirky and even what appears to others be dishonest reasons and yet develop an authentic interest. And for me, I think that it was a kind of flight path that enabled me to keep a certain distance from it that served me well in the sense of being able to be critical and theoretical even when I was immersed in the first year of teaching high school English. But in that fourth year, I signed up for an experimental urban education program. It was 1969 and Don Bateman, whom I still am in touch

with and arranged an 80th birthday party for a couple of years ago, Don Bateman, who's basically a linguist, although in his background he had studied with Robert Penwarren of Minnesota and knew southern letters. But his big research money was all in transformational grammar. But he had been radicalized like so many people by the 60s and, when I met him, he was clutching a book that had just appeared in English and it was *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. And so, that became the key and has been for so many [laugh], for you as well, then, by your response. In that seminar, then, we grappled with those ideas and went into Columbus's inner city to work with.., in tutorial relation with struggling students. And, it was really my first. I grew up in a suburb of Columbus that was absolutely all white.... absolutely all white. And so, as critical as I have been and continue to be of racism in the south and the segregation of especially the private life, public life has been forcibly integrated in the south.

And then, in the spring, I did my student teaching in an inner city, all black junior high school [laugh]. And not that further documentation is necessary, but I ended up teaching *Soul on Ice*, which shows how naïve I could be. My mentor teacher was this white West Virginian woman and she just bleached white when we were discussing Cleaver's notion of rape as political action. The eighth graders were quite beside themselves, you know. Suddenly they weren't diagramming sentences [laugh]. They were talking about Cleaver's idea of the menial. And even though that went well [laugh]; that is, they played along with me and I managed to get through student teaching, mainly because this Don Bateman had such clout and so, even though I think the local officials in the school were kind of horrified at what I was up to, they nonetheless let it happen and approved. But, I did have a dim sense that I was out of my element and that I really didn't know what I was doing and maybe I should do something else. And, so I took a job in an elite public high school outside New York City, which was a profoundly imprinting experience in that it was really, I would say, where my own class trajectory was heading. That is, if we had been successful and reclaimed the church pew wealth, we would have the kind of money to live in a place like that and send my [emphasis] kids to a school like that. It was nine-period day. I taught four classes, never more than fifteen students. It was an elective system, and so we had to, of course, teach Hawthorne and Shakespeare, but I was also able to teach a course on existentialism and even run an encounter group, which had been an interest of mine in grad school and I had continued, not the Esalen version, excuse me, but the NTL, National Training Labs. And I had done some Tavistock work.

And what I had to confront, at Schreiber High School, was that, even though the faculty, I thought, were in general superb and so the quality of instruction was, in general, as excellent as I could imagine at that time. And the curriculum was strong and even though 98% of these kids went onto college, some 30% went to the ivies, it was a disaster. Partly it was the historical moment, of course. It was 1969 and the disaffection was palpable. But the question of meaning seemed to hang over the high school like a hard, large shadow. And so, even though these kids had it all, in the sense that this mid-western middle class kid had imagined having it all might be, they even had the intellectual resources that I had worked so hard to obtain. And they had the critique of society. They were articulate. They were everything I had struggled to be and they were that already. And it was very insufficient and, so, that left me with this problem of secondary school education as a problem of meaning.

...[T]here was never that kind of bureaucratic surveillance of what I was doing and, so, I was able to focus on the kind of the affect of the place and got to know some students quite well and personally. And it was that experience that left me thinking I wanted to study education as an academic field.

And I became interested in autobiography after I graduated in '72 from Ohio State. The dissertation was really focused on this kind of shocking problem for me at Schreiber; that they could be so educated [laugh] and be so unhappy. And I didn't focus because, in part, I think I was too immersed in the historical moment to gain any distance from it. But I focused instead on the way that the school seemed to me specifically contributed to the

estrangement and its effect on the subjective formation of the students, and in particular the way that it split off the official curriculum, if you will, from their own... their own sort of quote "private and subjective" meaning, pre-occupations. And so, there was this kind of divide. Rather than seeing the curriculum as an opportunity for them, in fact, to understand their own situation, the curriculum became this kind of elaborate distraction from it. And so I ... the main part of the dissertation was what was later published as "Insanity, madness in the school." It was these twelve ways in which schools drive children mad. And then, at the end, I tried to imagine what kind of curricular organization might, in fact, support some bridging of this divide between the curriculum and subjective formation and how it might be organized. In particular I focused on ... the importance of solitude and solitary study as one means of the student struggling to find language for what might seem strictly private and particularly academic language. And then group experience, some kind of dialogical encounter that Freire had spoken out and that I had experienced in the Tavistock and NTL that is the way that really opened honest confrontation sometimes, but also self, sort of, confessions [laugh] and authentic speech. The effort of that authentic speech, you know how that can be revelatory and that... so that group itself also, then, could be a kind of contrapuntal – not contrapuntal – well, contrapuntal to the solitary study. And so, that's how the "existration" ended. And after I took the job at Rochester, I focused ... on the subjective formation. It wasn't clear to me initially. I even have an essay from the period called "Search for method." And I came upon the Latin infinitive for curriculum and seized upon it as a kind of, you know, iconic symbol for what I thought I was searching for; that is, the site of the curriculum as simultaneously academic and subjective, and then tried to devise a method by which one could ... systematic, I put that in quotation marks, study that site. And that was the regressive-progressive-analytic-synthetic method. And it's a hodge-podge, speaking of umbrellas. ... The regression, the notion of regression, is pretty much in the psycho-analytical tradition and derived from my reading in psychoanalysis, which had been fairly, I would say, superficial at that stage. In abnormal psychology and in the Tavistock work especially, which was about peeling back layers. ... And in the regression, the idea was to try to return, not to remember from the point of view of sitting here today, but to try to return and enlarge the pool of memory that is to try and re-experience. And the device I employed for that was to focus on sensory elements like the dust in the air or the pigtailed on the girl who sat in front of you; to try to remember what it felt like in that room. ... In the progressive I added that, really, in deference to Sartre who really is one of the major influences in my life – the early Sartre, before the Marxist conversion.

...[T]he incompleteness and indeterminacy of subjectivity is an opening onto the future and its contemplation of the future that the progressive moment then invites. What fantasies, and it can take many forms as a teacher, intellectually... I've always supposed that those fantasies really are about the present, that it's really a kind of device to try to disclose elements of the present, but by thinking about the future. And then the analytic moment comes later and, at first, I thought I would employ an already extant theoretical grid to enable us to try to think about what we... But I concluded quickly that it was really better, even though it meant that it was more clumsy and it could go in innumerable directions, but to leave it really open to the student to decide how to... so whatever sort of sense you wanted to make of it. The point of the analytic isn't to try to superimpose a grid, but rather to see what kind of narrative coherence can be made toward a re-synthesizing of the subject in the public space. So, you know, after you sort of dismembered your self and hopefully re-experienced... aspects of your past, some of which you may wanted to forget. And then re-imagine the future and then narrativized what you've discovered. Then you pull yourself together [laugh] and go into the classroom as it were and operate from, presumably, a much more complex and profound reservoir of subjective possibilities, by means of which you can engage students' responses. So that's the autobiographical method and Sartre and Freud were obvious influences.

Chapter 4 The Historical Context

Dr. Norman K.:

...[C]oming from a kind of a reading family, a family that liked to engage in literature and art, I was raised in a kind of a rural environment, but we moved a lot so there is a sense of – my father was a salesman and there was a sense of transience and also moving – forming an identity and then carrying it with me to a new place and starting over again. So, feeling kind of the edge, on the margin, during several moments of my childhood and somewhat alienated from my environments, distanced from them and from my troubled home. My parents were divorced and there were issues with them in that environment, so when I moved into college, I gravitated almost immediately to an identity as a scholar, as someone immersed in literature and books and I began to acquire a library to define who I was as a someone who wasn't what I had been. And that was in the humanities, philosophy, history and literature. I did a triple major in English philosophy, psychology and sociology. So, in the arts, I was sort of deeply immersed in the humanities but also grounded in sociology and psychology and influenced early on by C. Wright Mills, and by Weber and by Marx, and Veblen. We tried to locate and read through American history, American capitalism, the relationship of the US to the larger European global space. And this is to say, this is the early '60s where my generation was sort of enthralled with existentialism and post World War II literature; Sartre and Camus. So we were reading *The Stranger* and thinking these deep thoughts and being sort of post-war students at a state university, mid-West, all-white campus..., being a serious intellectuals but not knowing what that was all about. And, learning how to write first person narratives and..., sort of drawn..., knowing I wanted to go to graduate school and uh, in sociology. But I formed a kind of, out of Mills, a commitment to a first-person biographical approach to doing sociology, writing out of history and my current space, but not knowing what that meant.

Sociology at that time in Iowa had nothing on qualitative research. It was all statistics and surveys. So, my sort of self-teaching as a graduate student carried over into my first teaching year, which then led to the writing of the book, *The Research Act*, which was an attempt to say what happens if you look at methodologies from a particular theoretical framework. But this is... this still being done under um, sort of the umbrella of '60s sociology which was dominated by the competing schools of structured functionalism, with talk of Parsons, logical positivism or positivism, from Lundberg and Dodd, and Blalock and... was emerging on the scene. And then, sort of the symbolic interactionists, that school. And they were all, those frameworks were all circulating at the same time and they sort of get punctured in sociology by Alvin Gouldner who wrote *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* and he just outraged everybody. This was '68, I think, Gouldner's book comes out right at the beginning of the Viet Nam, middle of the Viet Nam conflict, and the.... the American campuses becoming a site for a counter-discourse on the war.... coming out of the civil rights movement and the women's movement and the beginnings of the gay liberation, and all liberation movements are sort of circulating in the 60s, in the late '60s as Viet Nam heats up, but they are all suppressed within the academy. They are not part of the discourse of the academy. They are marginalized; they are kept out of the classroom.... They are present in protests and the quad and in the street but they are not in the classroom because the classroom is still sort of governed by the Mayberrian notion of a value-free, value-neutral discourse on campus. The classroom is supposed to be a place for knowledge not values....

I'll fast forward to the present so... after 911, when everything blows up or sort of ruptures, after the stolen election, I decide that, and as we invade Iraq and Afghanistan, this war I am going to write about because you wouldn't have known that we had been in a war if you had read what I had written in the '60s and '70s. And somehow, I wanted myself... I

wanted to insert myself into history. If I was true to Mills, which is what brought me into sociology in the first place, which was to write history and biography together, then how, when I left out..., how could I justify leaving out the Viet Nam experience in my work in that pivotal decade, and of course I couldn't except to have recourse to this scholarly discipline and said you don't write yourself into your work. Or you do a subjective interpretive sociology, but not on yourself in relationship to the broader historical environment. You just focus on self-concepts and identities and open-ended questions and methodologies that probe those aspects of life, like I did in *The Research Act*, but you don't bring anything in there that is about history and politics at the current moment.

Um, through the early 80s I struggled with my own versions of the same disease my father had and ended up going into treatment and coming out and have been in recovery for 26 years. But that struggle, that decade that proceeded that sort of, that experience for me was a decade of profound doubt and feeling that everything I had been taught, I had reached a dead end in. In terms of..., I felt that symbolic interactionism had reached a set of walls. I felt that, methodologically, we had sort of hit dead ends and... as I am experiencing that there, on this campus we have suddenly, we are forming a unit for interpretive theory and I am an early person in that interdisciplinary, um, program which is still existing to this day. But what we were doing then – this is scholars from a dozen disciplines, but mostly humanities – was reading.... This is early, mid 70s, reading all of the post-World War II social theory coming out of Europe that was being translated. French social theory, German social theory, uh, British transformations of continental theory and so forth. We were reading...., we were re-reading psychoanalysts. We were re-reading..., we were reading the translations of Heidegger and Schiller and Sartre and Merleau-Ponty and Schuyler, all of that we were reading....not knowing exactly what we were doing but, you know, we were...., Lacan, and Barthes and Derrida, so.... I was in that space that really complicated conceptual space as I am experiencing this crisis of doubt with sociology and my own methodology and my own theory.

And everything is coming together and falling apart at the same time and then I come out of it on the other side with this kind of, um, understanding now that I want to frame a particular formation... a way of doing interpretive work, which I was going to call interpretive interactionism. And it was going to come out of experiences that made differences in people's lives. That is the place to start. I wasn't going to do ordinary life sociology. I wasn't going to do the kind of social psychology I had been taught in graduate school. I was going to start from experiences that left marks on people's lives and try to articulate a biographical interpretive approach that would be consistent with that commitment that would be thoroughly informed by all these formations we were reading um, in this theory group. And so then coming of that, then, meant, um, learning to write the new way. And learning how to write. So could I write the personal? How do I write the personal? And how do I write myself into the personal? And how do I write the biographical and the autobiographical and that has been the agenda for the last 25 years. That has been the agenda and evolving... So now where I am is, we can talk about that, but in my new book, it is... I have moved progressively to the performance text, the multi-voiced text, the text that inserts itself into history and uses multiple perspectives within historical moments and, we can move to that later. But has been the trajectory....

When we laid out the five or six moments of inquiry in the handbook, in the editions, you know, we had sort of the Geertzian moment. He was profoundly influential here what with "thick description" and the crisis of representation and getting the text right, using the text to represent the world, thick text. And we moved to the triple crisis where suddenly we realized that what we are writing is itself part of the problem in that the Derridian insight that everything is in the text, there is nothing outside the text. The social is always within the text. That, that then moves Geertz to a somewhat different space because there is still that sense within Geertz, I think, in the '73 book that a literary ethnographer, skilled anthropologist, can represent, can capture experience in a way that allows others to experience. So we simply recapture. We capture experience so it can be re-experienced by others. I am paraphrasing.

Now, Dwight Conquergood founded one of the strands of performance ethnography. Conquergood inserts himself in that Geertzian moment and says that it is not representation that we are talking about. He says that led to inscription, of writing the social. In fact Clifford & Marcus's book, "Writing Culture", that was the culmination of Geertz's thick description essay. That book was the culmination of that in a certain sense. So you went from representation to inscription; representation to writing. Writing becomes a way of making the social visible.

So, when I write performance ethnography that is an attempt to absorb that literature around the Conquergood search – that we perform culture. Now, there's another move that's made here, and Henry Giroux makes this. Paulo Freire had made this. That is the pedagogical move and the, so.... That is the critical pedagogy move, that what we engage in – so, there are two strands – what we engage in pedagogically is the destruction in the practices of cultures. Those practices of cultures are ideological and political. So, critical pedagogy attempts to interrupt those pedagogical practices that instill a particular political ideology, like I could believe in capitalism and democracy and so forth. That is critical pedagogy.

Chapter 5 The Political Context

5.1

Dr. Henry Giroux:

It is always, it is always difficult to sort of take yourself so seriously that you actually have to narrate your own biography but, at the same time, it is very clear that it is impossible to separate the personal and the political. But what often becomes interesting for me is that the personal becomes interesting not so as to collapse the political into it but, in fact, to use the personal to illuminate the political. I mean, that when your life is, is able to speak to larger issues I think, then, your life might, becomes interesting and, at least to others hopefully, you know... I mean for me, you know, I was a working class kid. I grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, and I grew up in a very tough neighborhood actually. My., my early experiences are really marked by a kind of enormous division and that is that I learned very quickly that your sense of agency was largely dependent upon physical matters; that you had to be able to defend yourself. You had to be able to talk fast. You had to be able to negotiate terrains in ways in which the knowledge that I got from school was never very helpful. So you.... I immediately began to recognize that there was a relationship although I couldn't theorize this at the time between questions of context, the definition of oneself the question of survival, and how one negotiated the world. And, for me, it was a very interesting world because I grew up in a neighborhood that consisted of lots of Irish, lots of Italians and on the periphery Black neighborhoods. And the question of survival was always deeply embedded in our everyday lives and we had to find ways to get money because we all were poor, actually terribly poor.

So there was a sense, but there was also a sense in the midst of that poverty of modes of solidarity that marked me forever. If somebody gets sick, the entire neighbourhood would come out and help people out. They would cook. They would provide food. You know, if somebody went to the hospital, you knew people and there was a sense in, amidst the struggle, not just danger but also a certain sense of solidarity, a certain sense of what it..., what it meant to become part of a collective. We..., I never saw myself in the earlier parts of my life in.... And clearly this has had a profound effect on my life. I never saw myself as an isolated individual living, for instance, in a suburban space in which my connections to

other people were relatively minor and incidental. Actually I could not identify myself in the early parts of my life in that neighbourhood outside of the context of the social because the social both established constraints, offered contradictions and spoke to possibilities that were so rigidly embedded in the contours of everyday life that it was impossible. You never went to school alone. You walked in groups, right. You didn't hang on a corner alone. You didn't engage in recreational facilities alone. There weren't tutors to come in to help you learn how to eventually take the GED, you know, whatever, you know... the test that you needed to go to college. None of this happened. So, you had to rely on each other and that... that had a profound effect on me. What also had a profound effect on me was the fact that in the midst of learning how to survive you also, you know, you also develop a sense of self reliance. I mean, what it means to be in opposition to forces that clearly place constraints on you that, ordinarily, most people don't see. So, the early part of my life was not frictionless, that is for sure. And, you know, I went to high school. I was a, fortunately, I was a basketball player who ah, received a scholarship. But because I never took the SATs because I wasn't aware that I had to, I couldn't go to college so I had to, I had to... I went to a junior college. You know, I dropped out of that and then I worked for a couple of years in a bank and variety of other jobs. And all of a sudden, it dawned on me I had to go back; that there was no way I could endure counting money, you know, (laughter) and working under those circumstances. And so I did. So, I went back. I got another scholarship. I went back. I went a place now called the University of Southern Maine, graduated, got a scholarship to a place called Appalachian State University which is in Boone, North Carolina. And, at that time, during that period, my political consciousness was really beginning to emerge because there was... it was also, you know, it was the 1960s. It was impossible in the 1960s not to be aware of what was going in the outside world.

People were really beginning to re-theorize what it meant to connect schooling to politics. Bowles & Gintis had just written *Schooling in Capitalist America*, an enormously important book for many of us. Paulo Freire, of course, his work we had already known. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was an enormously important book because it linked education to social change, whereas Gintis linked education to questions of capitalism and exactly what that relationship did and what it meant and the metaphor schools as factories and schools as modes of social and cultural reproduction began to emerge and became dominant in the language. I was never comfortable with this language. I always felt that in some way it belied what I had seen in the neighbourhoods in which I had grown up. I had never viewed workers as simply duped. I had never viewed students when I taught as simply passive. I had never viewed schools as simply prisons. In other words the reproductive logic, in a way, struck me as an outgrowth of a kind of elitist ideology that never took seriously, not only the contradictions in terms of the spaces that people occupy but also the multiple ways in which people insert themselves in the world and how they mediate that. So I started writing about resistance and I wrote a book at that time called *Theory and Resistance in Education* and that book had, I think, an enormous influence in the field, although the field was dominated by a group of Marxists at the time that refused to publish it. Routledge was the dominant publisher and... and I somehow got excluded from this group.

...[I]n growing up as a working class kid the first battle that you really have to fight is that you are always defined by a lack. You are not defined by the strengths you have, you are always defined by what you don't have. You are defined by the fact that you don't in the elaborated code. You are defined by the fact that you use double negatives. You are defined by the fact that you don't really write as well as kids who were trained in local elite prep schools. You are defined by the fact that you don't look as if you dressed in a way that suggests you fit comfortably in the country club or the golf course. So you, you have to begin to sort of theorize these tensions and what it would mean within a community that is largely middle class how you would define yourself as an academic.

And so, to go... to speed forward a bit. So, here I am, at BU, sort of with Howard, carrying around this legacy, writing this work, trying to negotiate the university but... I had... but I was still labouring under something that was quite false. And I was labouring

under the assumption that, if you did your work and you wrote and you published, then you would get tenure and that is how it worked. This was a liberal institution. This is 19... 1977 to 1981, but, at the time, Boston University had a new president, a guy named John Silber. And John Silber was a different kind of reactionary. He was an engaged reactionary. He didn't hide in the shadows and make decisions that crippled people's lives. He boasted about it. I mean he made it very clear that people on the left were not going to get tenure at BU. The feminists, the people who do Frankfurt School theory, the people who, you know, did Holocaust work... I mean it was endless, right, endless... And so I came up for tenure. Went through the process unanimously at every level and, all of a sudden, I was denied. I was denied tenure.

And I guess the point of that story is that, what I learned is that not only is the university an intense sight of struggle but to presuppose for one moment that politics is trumped by virtue of intellectual production, by virtue of playing the rules of the game, I found entirely false. And I think that those sets of experience politicized me more than probably any other experience I had. I mean, it was very clear to me that in this, in these positions, you fight for what you believe in. Hopefully, you do it collectively and you are more protected but, that..., you know it is a difficult journey and... and, for me, it raises questions, of course, about upcoming generations of young people who increasingly have to face conditions that are even, I think, worse than they were when I began, that is for sure. I mean tenure is now being considered a luxury, you know. In the United States only 30 percent of the people in the faculty have tenure, full time positions.

...[T]hat I could no longer support... That I could no longer live in a country that in many ways was becoming ah..., not Nazi Germany, I think that is nonsense, but was inventing a mode of authoritarianism that in many ways was increasingly as dangerous, particularly to the issue of democracy.

Hey, I mean this is not a romanticized story about my experiences. I think this is a story that suggests and has implications for experiences that hundreds of people go through who have the courage to believe that education has something to do with taking risk, that, in fact, authority should be held accountable; that, you know, we should push the envelope around questions of social justice; that societies should be seen as never just enough; and that intellectuals have responsibilities, to say the very least, not just simply to produce knowledge but, in some ways, do what they can to expand and deepen the possibilities of democracy itself, you know.

5.2

Dr. Henry Giroux:

[This is] the problem that one sort of addresses. Research is also about the question of power and who can be bought and who can't. So what we often see is we see corporations, we see the Pentagon in the United States, you know, we see non-governmental sources coming into the university and with the enormous funds that they have... They not only buy space, they buy consciences. And they drive research in a way that is actually antithetical to the notion of community and justice. It is antithetical to the notion of democracy. You know, research for instance ah, that is aimed at creating more sophisticated technologically computer-driven weapons, ray guns, you know... forms of surveillance that now can be organized around the construction of what looks like flies. You know new ways to watch people and utterly control them. So I, so I think the question of research, while it often has a kind of neutral sounding ring to it, really is central and is at the heart of how we want to view the educational project because it seems to me that research doesn't come first in this discussion of education, the project comes first. What is the purpose and meaning of education? And that is what should drive research. And if the purpose

and meaning of education is essentially to expand the possibilities for human agencies, human agency, human possibilities and democracy, then there is no place in the university for corporate money that in a sense is being used to undermine the environment. I mean, there is no place in the university for the kind of money that is really investing in death and profits rather than in human life. So for me the question of research has always taken on a very political and ethical overtone.

I mean critical inquiry has to, in a sense, take seriously its possibilities for translation; for linking the private to the public or, as Zygmunt Bauman has said, endlessly in his work for allowing us to understand how private considerations are basically linked to public issues and how public, public issues bear and impact on individual issues. I mean this is an absolutely crucial issue it seems to me at a time when the social is under attack everywhere.

Yeah, there is a small story about cultural capital that I think you would really enjoy. Part of your life as a working class kid, I think ah, is often organized around confronting problems once you step outside of the luxury of your neighborhood that you can't imagine exist, you know. A world where the symbols, the gestures, the rituals, the disciplines are entirely foreign to you. And I, there was a period in my life when I was involved with a very ruling class woman. I actually married her, but we got divorced. And that was not meant to be. I went to her house and her mother descended from the staircase, you know, and in some kind of gown. The father was the Chairman of the English Department at Brown University and we sat around and she said, "The thing that we usually do here at dinner is we all begin by talking about our favorite novelist", and I thought, "Oh, no. Oh, my God!" I couldn't believe this was happening to me. They were actually going to come to me and ask me to begin to explicate, you know. I was reading Jack Kerouac, I think, you know... But I left that house that night thinking, "I have to learn this language," you know. I mean that this language is punishing, it has a punishing quality to it. You have to learn the elaborated code and I remember I went home to my third floor apartment on the East Side and I was reading *One Dimensional Man*, and I stayed up all night and I read every line, and I remember, "I have got to learn how to talk like this. I have got to learn this language," you know. And it was kind of a turning point for me, you know, because I really have two languages right... You really have the elaborated code and the other restricted code. And people often say, "Oh, it is just amazing how you talk," you know. This kind of silliness.... And yet, for me, there is nothing amazing about it at all. I mean, it is actually about the outgrowth of a kind of struggle in which, if you don't become multiply literate, you can't survive, particularly when you are on the receiving end of a kind of discourse that punishes you if you don't know it, right? I mean, so you really have to learn... It is very important to understand the registers of human interaction as they interface with matters of race, class, gender, you know... I mean it is, ah.... This is not, as some Marxists would say, a purely surface issue, you know, that this is pre-phenomena. That is nonsense. This is really about the stuff of agency. It is about the stuff of connection, you know. It is about the stuff of understanding.... It is about being in the dialogue, somehow and, if not, being able to stop a dialogue, particularly when that dialogue borders on terrorism.

Bourdieu was right about questions of distinction and about questions of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence can be as deadly as material violence, yeah. The way people can destroy you by humiliating you, you know; "That isn't the right pronunciation." "Don't you know your history?" I mean, you know this kind of stuff.... We have all sort of experienced this. But this is a political issue around questions of language and, for me, that was crucial and the Frankfurt school educated me. No question, I mean, in *Theory and Resistance*, the first chapter I wrote was the application of Frankfurt theory to educational theory. That was my first chapter in the book. It took me an entire year to do the research for that, to read, as a working class kid totally untrained in philosophy to be able to master that, to just go through it, learn how to research it, learn, you know, particular research methods which, as Maya will tell you, I had mastered, I mean, in terms of my own capacities, you know. And so it is very important, you know. So... so, I mean that, I mean that, when we talk about research and we talk about language, all of these things ah,

are situated within social/biographical formations. So I don't believe that these questions exist externally in ways in which we can separate them from the places we have come from or from the institutions that have official legitimations about what counts and what doesn't. I mean, endless numbers of people have been fired in universities because they are not positivist, right, because they don't believe in the end, that questions of mathematical regularity are really what matter in education and... I just never believed that.

I am more inclined to talk about the mix of modernity, modern and you know.... Let me put this differently. I am probably more inclined to go with somebody like...Bauman. I mean... I mean, I guess what I am trying to avoid, in a very clumsy way here, is I am trying to avoid a kind of periodization that would suggest a break, as much as I am trying to complicate the social formations in which we now find ourselves. To suggest that there is no difference between what was imperialism, for instance, in the 1940s, and the conditions that produced it, and the way in which global capital works now, I think is absolutely wrong. Conditions have changed. The key is to mark those conditions. Personally, I am indebted more to Raymond Williams than I am to most people around this issue. I mean, I think there are elements of the culture that are residual. I think there are elements of the culture that are traditional and I think there are elements of the culture that are emergent. And I think it behooves us to mark, in a complicated way, both the relationships between those elements and how they configure something that we need to address that produces new problems. So, rather than simply go to the postmodern, the question for me is, "What is it about the global political sphere that needs to be marked that is distinctive and unlike anything we have seen before that therefore demands a new politics and a new language for that politics?" And so, that would be the entry that I would go in, now, that I would take. Now, at the same time, I think that Zigmunt is very right in pointing to the collapse of the social state; what he calls "liquid modernity", this massive sense of insecurity and indeterminacy that has now come to mark all aspects of social life, which in itself is a political analysis. I mean, he is talking about the collapse of the social state. He is talking about the rise of neo-liberalism. So, for me, I would like to say something like, "We live in a neo-liberal age," you know, that the age is marked by the rise of new modes of fundamentalism. So, I would rather provide characteristics of that age and talk about how they relate to the past, rather than provide these categories that are so neat and so clean and so uncomplex, and so generalized that, in the end, they really don't tell us very much.

Chapter 6 The Postmodern Context

6.1

The video-clip entitled "Modern Man" has not been transcribed due to the performative nature of this video. In this video-clip, George Carlin develops a comedic routine around what he calls the "modern man." It could be considered postmodern in its understandings of the variety of products that are constantly being developed for public consumption.

6.2

Dr. Zygmunt Bauman:

I was born in Poland, as everybody knows, in a city called Poznan, which is the western part of Poland. My family was poor, eh... not impoverished, but fairly poor so..., but a very warm

family. My, ah..., my father spent most of my conscious life, if I remember, as an accountant but, it was a different kind of profession. Like today, today accountant is, particularly in this country, seen in the context of chartered accountants, which was very privileged, a very high level profession. It was not like that at that time. He was hired by all sorts of entrepreneurs, you know, and worked under something which you would describe as dignified, dignifying. [Emphasis] conditions. Then, I was thirty years old. War broke. We ran away to the east... succeeded to run away. That was our luck. And, I spent war in Soviet Russia, far north, and then joined the Polish army who was formed in the Soviet Union and re-conquered Poland together with the Polish army at that time. And, then young, I was, I decided to be a physicist and I even managed extramural studies when I was in Soviet Russia – two years of physics, but I arrived back to Poland and it was a devastated country, as you know. It was very poor and struck by chronic unemployment and a lot of ethnic quarrels and..., and animosities, a very deeply class-divided society. But if you, on the top of it, add five years of foreign occupation and you will see in what condition the country was. It was sort of a black hole, so... Somehow, and besides, I remained in the army for several years. We were not demobilized immediately. The only thing I could do, and the only thing I wanted to do, is to help in reconstructing, somehow, the country and, therefore sociology, political science, economics were the obvious choices, really, other than physics. It can wait, somehow. And that is how I became sociologist and I did not... My first schools were high school, sorry, higher education schools, academy of social sciences where we met – Janina. She studied journalism. I studied more social sciences. I don't remember even there was a word "sociology." Social science was a combination of philosophy, sociology, law and political science, something... Very, very journalistic sort of thing. And that is how it started and uh..., when I was kicked out of the army during the..., one of many anti-Semitic purges in Poland, I joined the Warsaw University and I remained, I remained there from starting from the junior assistant to professor and had a sociology, general sociology department from which I was for the second time purged in '68 and, well, officially under the charge of revisionism and anti-socialist activity, which I don't accept because I believe myself to be still a socialist... really. But that was what happened. So we had to leave Poland and that was unexpected. I was hoping to retire from Warsaw University at the age of 70, but it didn't happen like that. We left Poland and we went for three years to Israel, because my wife's family was there. She wanted to join them. I didn't last long because, I was running away from, nationalism – violent nationalism in Poland and I didn't fancy becoming nationalist myself, as it would be a very strange medicine, more poison rather than medicine. And I got a telegram from – there were telegrams once upon a time, do you remember? – a telegram from Leeds asking whether I am interested in talking to the university. I sent another telegram, "Yes, I am interested," so I came here and, and settled for more than twenty years until retirement. So I want to..., I am the least interesting subject of all I can think of. But that is the story.

6.3

Dr. Zygmunt Bauman:

Well to be quite frank, postmodernity, I used quite a lot this term, but it was a stopgap concept for me for the lack of anything better than that. Postmodernity was a natural concept to accept when one realized, as I did after the... what I called the modernity trilogy which I wrote; *Legislators and Interpreters*, *Modernity and the Holocaust* and then *Modernity and Ambivalence*. After that, I realized that the categories, which were quite useful in order to analyze virtually all aspects of human life and human togetherness, say until 1960s, 1970s, are less and less applicable to the new kind of experience which was emerging in 1970s and

became quite clear, visible, tangible, about 1990s. So it was not like that. That is one thing I understood and I felt rather intuitively about and understood yet at that time that we need new categories, new concepts, new cognitive frames in order to analyze what is going on currently and it is my understanding that the duty of sociology is to be engaged continually with the changing human experience as it changes. If sociology is to be open to use, it should supply categories, concepts, frames, which enable... well, the recipients of sociological services to cope with their new experience, to understand it. So, postmodernity meant to me at that time, the concept conveyed one message: It is not like it used to be. It is different; hence the "post". But it... this concept had two very essential shortcomings. So there was at the start, I said it was a stopgap concept only on these grounds it was useable, but shortcomings were the following: First of all, it suggested wrongly that we are on the other side of modernity, modernity ended. That, of course, is a very misleading suggestion because we have never been so modern as we are at the moment and I think that modernity has reached the biological limits of its own development. So, what we have now are the consequences of modernity's success in implementing its program and the program was to obsessively, compulsively modernize everything around, make it better, improved on, and so on and so on.... However the difference was, all the difference between what I provisionally call postmodernity and modernity is that modernity melted the solids, the extant realities, in order to replace them with more solid realities than there were. The solids inherited from the previous era were resented not because they were solid. Solidity was okay, but they were not solid enough, so they had to be replaced by some artifices constructed according to the rules of reason, discovery and science, development of technology, which will be better because precisely they will supply more solid ground, more solid bases for human planning, for human organizing their lives and things like that, the elimination of contingency, elimination of accident, elimination of fate. Fate.... The idea of fate stands for something unpredictable. Reality, which the modernity was after, was a fully transparent reality, predictable, knowable. You could actually bit by bit arrive at the full knowledge and understanding and, therefore, full management of reality.

However in post-modernity, this finishing line disappeared. There is no longer an end point. At some point, having modernized everything, we will arrive at the full modern life which won't require any further change. It will be a perfect society and perfection, as everybody knows, is a state of affairs which can't be improved on. Further change would be a change for the worse. So in this respect, modernity and post-modernity differ, but it doesn't mean that it stopped being modern. On the contrary, we are more obsessively compulsively modern than ever before. We modernize today what we modernized yesterday, we re-modernize. Modernity is, post-modernity is modernizing itself continually.

And the second shortcoming; well, that post-modernity is so typically, fully a negative concept. Negative concept, it says what we are not... not already, sometimes excessively. It implies more different than there is but, anyway, it limits itself to saying, "Well, we are not already like this modernity, where our grandfather, great grandfathers were and so on." But it doesn't contain any positive information, so what are the distinctive features of this reality we live in? You know, very widely, what is suggested is that we should speak about late-modernity instead of postmodernity. That is unwarranted in my view. We can speak about Late Middle Ages because Middle Ages are finished, so we know exactly when the Late Middle Ages started, but how do we know it about modernity when we are in the midst of it? Perhaps my grandchildren will be able to speak about this period here now as Early Modernity because they will have a better cognitive perspective. Retrospectively, they will understand what we can't understand. So, it is unjustified concept, late modernity; on false pretences, in a sense, [as] if we had a cognitive perspective, which we don't have.

And, after a lot of struggle, I selected the concept of liquid modernity, on one... on one... for one reason mostly that, if you look into encyclopaedia, under liquids or fluids you will find out that these are substances which cannot keep their shape: in... organically incapable of keeping their shape. Even the slightest push to a glass full of water will immediately

cause a change of shape; slightest forces are sufficient, you know, to do that. And that if I think the constitutive for defining future of our reality, this inability to keep shape for long, the inability to feel secure about future shapes because everyone is given, in our experience, until further notice, it may disappear overnight, unexpectedly, without any warning and long-term thinking is to no avail, to no avail, because, well, it may be belied our expectations. It could be belied by, again, the slightest change of terms of the game, you know, rules of the game and so on.

Everything changes. Paradoxically, the individual human bodily flesh and life, which was always bewailed by philosophers as laughably short by comparison with longevity and stability and solidity, majestic solidity of all other realities, collective realities, allow the individual mournful, short human life is the only entity in the whole universe which has – human universe, I mean – which has actually a growing life expectation because all other allegedly stable identities like political entities, companies which could be trusted because they will give you job for life, you know, this sort of thing and human partnerships, families. They are all, they all have shortening life experience, expectancy from one decade to another, the average length of marriage for example shrinks by..., by..., you know, by half or something like that. Um, the mergers between companies, the pressure which is exerted on companies to modernize all the time, causes constant change of the labour market.

You entered the labour market, you are here, but you don't know what will happen tomorrow. In Silicon Valley, Silicon Valley, which is, I think, the paradise in the dreams of young, ambitious people, they would like to go there, you know, that is where the action is. In Silicon Valley, the average employment is eight months long, so people who go there have no idea what will happen to them next year. Daniel Cohen, professor of economics in Sorbonne in Paris pointed out that..., in the middle of..., experience in the middle of 1970, the 20th century, when a young apprentice went to work for Ford or for Renault or Citroen or whatever, he could be pretty sure that he would spend his whole professional life there, with retirement at the end of it, in forty years or something, from the same place. Now, people who go to work for Bill Gates, for example, who is the equivalent of Ford – Ford was the symbol of commercial success at that time, and Bill Gates is now – those who will go to work for Bill Gates have no inkling what will happen to them next year. That is the difference – fluid environment – fluid environment, which has enormous psycho-sociological consequences really for our reception of life – life split into episodes and projects, projects. Two-year-long projects are considered to be long-term projects. No one thinks in terms of projects for life. What I would like to do when I would be forty years older than I am today, things like that. And younger people would probably laugh at me if I suggested they should now plan for life because they are pretty happy if they have more or less a reliable idea of what they would do for the next year and, hence, the reticence which is so visible today among people to commit themselves for the long term.

They, they... ah, Max Weber, if you remember, spoke about how the beginnings of modernity started. It was guided by..., it was motivated by..., it was pushed by the idea of delay of gratification. I think the principle today is delay of decision, delay of commitment. That is today..., that is the only delay which we accept. Otherwise, we want everything now, immediately, instant..., instantly; but the only delay acceptable, actually favoured in contemporary culture, is delay of commitment. Ah..., many examples.... Young people graduating from the secondary school postpone as long as they can commit themselves to a particular discipline, particular skill. They would like generalized studies which no options are closed, you know, everything is possible because, quite rightly so, they are rational beings and they look around and they see that skills in acquisition of which they invested three or four or five years, hoping that they will give them interesting, well-remunerated employment.... before they actually finish acquiring them, they are already out of market because other skills are required.

Consumer society, which is, of course, a very important aspect of liquid modernity groomed us to expect that if you are dissatisfied with a commodity, just return it to the shop

and exchange it or throw it away to the dustbin; rubbish it. So, why relationships between human beings should be different? If your partner doesn't fit your expectations, replace it. That's the.... I have developed, in the most recent book, the distinction between productivist syndrome and ah..., consumerist syndrome. They are two different attitudes toward life. Productivist syndrome, which was the dominant one when I was a young person, extend that..., colonize..., in fact, invaded, colonized all aspects of human life, also human relations and Productivist syndrome tells you that if the first attempt to produce a satisfactory product fails, try harder, acquire new skills, you know, make another attempt, sharpen your tools, this sort of things. But proceed! By all means, proceed! Try again!

Consumerists are a little bit different. If your mobile is not as good as the neighbor's mobile, throw it away and replace it. Ah..., that applies eventually to everything, to your cars, to your computers, to your house, to your partners... to everything around. It is ah..., we are a civilization now of spare parts. Throw away the wrong part and put in another one. Ah..., the part..., these parts which were replaced are black boxes. We have no idea what is inside. We can't repair them. Skills of repairing things are completely lost. You invite to your home even a very skillful craftsman but, if something is wrong with your appliance which you want them to repair, he will simply go to the shop and buy the replacement. He won't be able to repair it himself.

So these are..., the whole complex I am telling you about in a very scattering way because virtually every aspect of life is affected. But it only was..., always was the same. We are..., we are modernizers in the traditional modernity by choice. Now we are modernizing by necessity. We have no other choice. We have no other choice. The need to compulsively, daily, all the time, modernizing is itself not a matter of choice any longer because of fluidity of our environment.

Chapter 7 The Philosophical Context

Dr. Maxine Greene:

You know, it's funny when you look back, you tell it differently. At the beginning of my documentary, I said everything, everything that you are going to hear is a lie because, you know, when you tell a story about your life, it's not the way you lived it. And so, you know, once you give it a shape, it's not the way it was [laugh] you know, because your life is only one damn thing after the other. I was born in Brooklyn...with a father who came from a German background. They were both born here. He wasn't educated. She went through high school.

[T]here were four of us. ... There were four of us and I was the oldest and then there were twins, a girl and a boy, then my younger sister who I always thought was my child. And she, of the four of us, she also became an academic, but a social worker, and she taught social work at Columbia. But anyway, I grew up, my father sent us all and then he never had enough money to send the others to an Episcopalian School so I would assimilate. You know. So I still know Episcopalian hymns... [Laughs]...a whole batch of Episcopalian hymns. But my brother and sisters went to public school. Although my younger sister came to the private school near the end, but my best friend couldn't invite me home because her grandma didn't like Jews, you know. And, when it was time to graduate, the principal said, "It's such a shame you're Jewish!" She said, "I could get you a scholarship to Mount Holyoke," and I remember I apologized and I'm so ashamed that I apologized [laughs]. I should have hit her in the face, you know. But anyway, I went to Barnard because the quota was..., well, there was a quota system. It was larger. And the other thing was, I was supposed to be the valedictorian, but they decided to have the graduation in a Methodist church, so I couldn't be the.... Those weren't terrible things, but I think it did give me a kind of

being an outsider, the feeling of being an outsider. I didn't suffer like they would in Europe or anything. And the other thing I remember, I would visit my friends around there. And a lot [laugh] of them were horseback riders. There was a stable that didn't take Jews, but my brother used to groom them in there. I thought if you would have been an acceptable Christian person, you had to have ribbons over the fireplace. Red and blue, you know, for horseback riding. It's so funny the ideas you get. So anyway I did go to Barnard and...I really didn't like it when I think back now, it was so..., I don't know..., so arbitrary and so formal and nothing like we do now – nothing like involving the student in the learning process. And then, in three-and-a-half years, I thought, "Oh, I had enough of this and I had enough points; you used to get honour points. So I eloped [laughs]. I wanted to get away from home and the best way to do that was to elope [laughs]. I was very sort of radical then. We were going to a cause party or something. So I get all gussied up in an evening dress. And I think I was nineteen, so I couldn't have a regular marriage, so we stopped at a roadside Rabbi, like [laugh] you know. He married us. And they have a..., what are they called, like a hoopah, they call it. It's like an awning. He had a collapsible one [laughs]. I always remember, he put it up; so we were married and our friends were witnesses, then we went to the dance. And we stayed at the Hotel Commodore. And in the morning, he had to call his service, and he found out he had to go to Long Beach, out on Long Island, and take a medical. And here I am and I remember I forgot to bring any other clothes, so I'm there in my evening dress. So I had to call my mother [laughs]. So, my mother came and picked me up. I think she was sort of relieved in a way [laughs]. Then when I got home, I remember my father, who was my main love in life and my authority, you know. He's standing at the window. When he got angry he had a muscle. It went like this. So he turns around, and he says..., I still can't make sense of it [laughs]. He says, "The way of the pioneer is hard" [laughs]. I always remember this nonsense, you know. Sometimes, when people are watching my documentary, and I said I adored my father. He came out with these platitudes. He would take me for walks and I said, "And I didn't realize he was crazy" [laugh]. And everybody laughs [laugh] like they had some experiences [laugh], you know, with....

Many women had that special relation with their fathers and they say.... Even though, I think he was smart, he built up a good business, you know, in artificial pearls. And it went up and down, up and down over the years. We had a house he built, you know, so it was a privileged kind of life. I have to say that, but I was...ashamed to know anything he didn't know. And he was sort of scornful about college and university people and experts and they didn't encourage me to go to college at all. So I went to Barnard and I came home every night. And it was much cheaper of course. And then when I got out of Barnard and got married, I went to the new school, I remember. And I took some course and I wrote a paper that they thought was too radical, so they withdrew my... they didn't give me my degree. And then I had a baby. And my husband was a doctor. So I was taking the tests to the doctor's office. In those days, for an office visit you paid two dollars and for a home visit you paid five. So, it was hard you know. And I remember holding the baby and crossing the waiting room. The one thing I did.... I was miserable, really. I thought I had missed everything. I missed living in the village. And I missed getting drunk. And I missed all the wonderful things that artists and writers had, you know. Once a week, I guess, I got off and I went to the public library. And I wrote a very long book, a novel [laughs] and it was called "The Axe to the Root" and it was about the time of the French Revolution and the Alien and Sedition Acts and now I realize I did very good research. I went to Philadelphia and I looked up the minutes of the Democratic Society, you know, the Philosophic Society [laughs]. So, then I finished the book and an old lover used to meet me at the library for lunch and he knew a literary agent, so they sent it to..., what is it..., something and Brown in New York, and they sent it to their Boston office. They liked it. But a book of almost the same period came out at the same time. The one in New York..., Little, Brown and Company..., they took an option on it, of all things. When I got it back, I thought it was like getting your term paper returned because I felt... [Laughs]. So I put it away.

I didn't ever try fiction anymore. And then I thought I wanted to go to school. I guess Linda was six or seven, so I wrote to all the colleges. I said I want to be a special student but I only have one requirement. The courses have to be between 10:00 and 2:00 because I take my kid and then pick her up for 2:00. So, then I decided.... She had gone to public school in Queens and the teacher said.... I said, "You know she's having trouble. We had a divorce. She's nauseous all the time." The teacher said, "If she were mine, I would take a baseball bat to her." So I thought, "Out she goes," and I took her back to her school in Brooklyn, you know, so.... It was a private school, a little private school. So, I had to get her in there. So, I thought, "I could really go to school [Emphasis]." So that's why I wrote to all these.... And then, one of them was NYU and it was a course that met twice a week, eight points, from 10:00 to 2:00 [laughs]. So I could, you know, combine Linda, and that's how I....

I didn't mean to get into education. But the courses were philosophy and history of education. At the beginning, I taught from the notes from the professors [laugh], you know, because we would have huge classes there, so I was all of sudden teaching, like the summer classes where they get a hundred and fifty students from the south. So then, I decided might as well get a doctorate here, because I get it cheap because I was teaching there. So I did and then I tried to get a job. First of all, the philosophy that was becoming fashionable, that was fashionable, was analytic philosophy, British philosophy, language philosophy and I [Emphasis] was an existentialist. You know, I was interested in that kind of philosophy. And nothing could have been more outside the...., you know. It was hard, but then finally, I got a job in Montclair, which is in New Jersey, and not a small trip from Forest Hills where I lived, you know. And I had the kid. It was hard, but you took what you could get then, because there weren't many women in philosophy. But what I taught was world literature and I had never taken a course in English because I was like excused. I liked books and I thought they'd spoil it for me with the way were teaching in Barnard so I majored in history. All of a sudden.... And so, I learned more in that year, I think, than ever in my life because, I said., world literature., the curriculum was made in Trenton, the capital of New Jersey [laughs]. It said world literature from the scriptures to Shakespeare. So, first I thought how can you let a New Jersey population go out without knowing Shakespeare? So, I really had to study both scriptures because you couldn't teach just the St. James version to Catholic kids, so we had to use the Douai version and the St. James version and all kinds, you know, right through. I loved it, but I read all the critics or so, and then I shifted over. I wasn't a feminist, but my last course was from Hamlet to Moby Dick. It was the theme of the hero, you know, because I didn't want to stop at Shakespeare. And then after that... I didn't really want to stay because my husband didn't want to anyway. For example, the faculty., it does sound funny now., the faculty would have lunch in a club that didn't admit Jews. I think they would admit you for lunch, but you know.... And the golf club wasn't taking Jews. It's very different now. I think Montclair's mostly Jewish but, at that time and I told my husband, we couldn't do that.

I keep trying to talk about the difference between schooling and education. Education helps individuals grow and become, and schooling makes them proper servants of the technocratic society [laughs]. But I want people to be angry. When we were.... We set up a school and then we had to be interviewed by the department of education downtown. So they asked me, you know, "What do you expect of your children when you graduate?" I said, "Well, I hope they're critical thinkers and I hope they love the arts and I hope they're capable of outrage."

I was interested in so many disciplines, weaving it together like the public school and the private. That still interests me, you know, the history of the public school and the connection with the cultural history and the contrast among things. I used to say that educators never talked about money even though education was about money. But American writers always talked about money, like in Moby Dick, Ahab says, "Cash, hard cash," you know, and "Daisy's voice sounded like money," you know [laugh]. And it's so interesting to me that, you know, they wouldn't mention money. Not if your Horace Mann or John Dewey

[laugh]. And then I guess, in the, I think it's in the *Release of Imagination*, maybe another one.., I still brought in some history and wanted to connect it with the arts and with education. So, I kept wanting to go.., maybe because Karyn emphasizes my radicalism, I didn't want to give up the radicalism just to talk about art. So it must be that too, to talk about social issues. That's why I admire Marcuse. He managed to do it all without cheating us. You know, but I'm no Marcuse. I can't stand the separation of all these things. But that's probably why I want to write philosophy and literature, because there's no one definition of either one of them.

Chapter 8 The Art and Practice of Research in the Postmodern Era

“Research Is What?”

The video clip entitled “Research Is What?” has not been transcribed due to the performative nature of this exercise with Found Poetry. In this video clip, students have developed and performed their poetry, which originates from their understandings of qualitative research that they have developed from interacting with this volume.

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