

The SAGE Handbook of
Qualitative Research
in **Psychology**



Edited by
Carla Willig
Wendy Stainton-Rogers



The SAGE Handbook *of*
**Qualitative
Research in Psychology**



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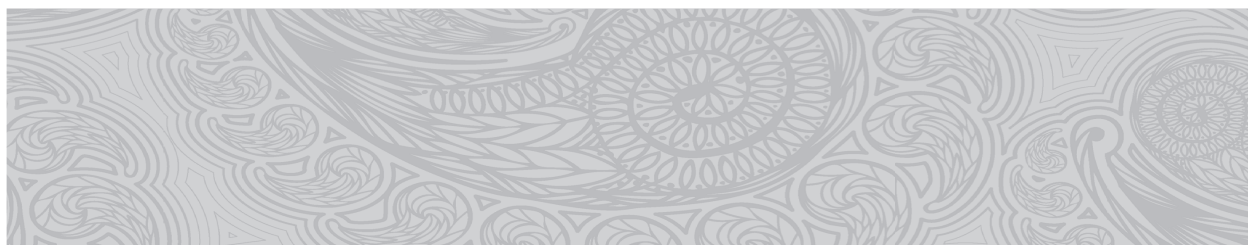
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Carla Willig and Wendy Stainton-Rogers

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
Precilla Choi (1962–2005)
who was an inspiration to many

Acknowledgements

You do not take on a task like editing a handbook without a degree of trepidation. For both of us this has been an initiation, and we started off a bit in awe of what we had to achieve. To our surprise and great delight, it has turned out not to be awful at all but immensely satisfying and rewarding. We have both learned a great deal and enriched our own knowledge and understanding of qualitative research in psychology, at a time when this field of work is really ‘moving and shaking’.

So when we thought about our acknowledgements we decided that the people we most want to thank are those who have made the handbook possible – the members of our Editorial Advisory Board and, most of all, our authors. It is they who have been truly awesome! Of course it has not been all ‘plain sailing’, but almost always we have met with abundant generosity in the time and effort that people have devoted, and been treated with great patience and with unstinting goodwill in our negotiations and the various demands we have made.

Most of all, we would sincerely like to thank our ‘awesome authors’ for the way they worked with us in a true spirit of openness – to ideas (some more off the wall than others); to suggestions (which often involved much effort); to requests (more often than not, pretty ‘big asks’); and especially to a deluge of peer critique (which was always challenging but seldom taken as anything other than constructive). We have also appreciated the way more experienced authors have worked so gallantly and effectively with those less experienced (and the patience with which the more organized have handled the more preoccupied). Thank you all for making the task of editing the handbook such a gratifying experience, and for making it such a damn’ fine book.

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Notes on Contributors

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Linden J. Ball is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Lancaster University in the UK, and primarily teaches on a methods-oriented MRes in human-computer interaction that is run collaboratively with the Computing Department. He pursued his PhD at Plymouth Polytechnic in the late 1980s on cognitive processes in engineering design. This PhD led him to appreciate the potent complementarity of mixed-method approaches for understanding the richness and sophistication of situated cognitive processes such as those arising in design reasoning. Since 1990 he has continued to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in much of his research on real-world reasoning in domains as varied as software design, investigative decision making, and road maintenance. Recently his research has become neatly balanced between *in vitro* experimental studies of fundamental reasoning mechanisms and *in vivo* studies of naturalistic decision-making processes. He derives considerable interest from the convergent (and sometimes strikingly divergent) findings that derive from both kinds of research.

Peter Banister is Head of the Division of Psychology and Social Change, Manchester Metropolitan University, England. His own psychology degree programme contained no qualitative methods and it became obvious to him in carrying out research that the approach had many advantages, and has a lot to offer the discipline. In his early prison research it was often the unsolicited comments made by prisoners which sparked off important lines of enquiry. With like minded colleagues at the university he set up masters and undergraduate level teaching in qualitative methods; this led to a successful textbook *Qualitative Methods in Psychology* in 1994, which was adopted as an Open University core text. As well as teaching qualitative methods he actively encourages our students to utilize them in their research. He do so in our own research; Peter has recently been evaluating an initiative in English prisons which aims to equip ex-prisoners for the world of work after release, and relied partly on extensive interviews with the prisoners.

Andrew Bengry-Howell is currently a Teaching Fellow/Research Officer at the Department of Psychology, University of Bath, UK. He is interested in the role that consumption plays in the identity work of young people. He has primarily conducted research on young men's consumption of motorcars and car-based processes of masculine identity construction. His research has examined the cultural significance of the motorcar to working class young men with a history of 'joyriding' (1996). ('Joyriding' is a common name for the offence of taking a car without the owner's consent (TWOC).) More recently, he conducted an ethnographic study of young men who modify their cars (often referred to as Boyracers), in which he examined how car modification and performative motorcar display operate in the construction of hybridized auto-masculine identities (2005). In 2005 he took up his current post on an Economic and Social Research Council-funded research project, which is exploring the relationship between the marketing and branding of alcohol and the meanings that young people ascribe to alcohol consumption. He has also just been awarded a First Grant from the ESRC for a three year project (due to start in October 2007) investigating how young people negotiate corporate attempts to brand youth leisure space, with a specific focus on branded music festivals and free party networks.

Kimberly Bess recently completed her PhD in Community Research and Action and is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Human and Organizational Development at Vanderbilt University. Her doctoral dissertation, 'Challenges of change in human service organizations: Identity, values, and narratives', takes a transactional-ecological approach to the study of non-profit organizational change. Using qualitative methods, it focuses on the experience of identity and values and explores the role of individual, organizational, and community narratives in shaping a planned organizational change process. In her work, she uses qualitative methods to address questions about meaning, process, systems, and complexity in community and organizational settings. Examples include research that explores organizational learning in community-based non-profit organizations, psychological sense of community through the study of narratives, and the role of institutional norms and values and more localized contextual factors in shaping human service workers' participation in action research.

Sunil Bhatia is an Associate Professor of Human Development. His research examines how globalization, formation of postcolonial diasporas, and transnational migration have forced us to redefine the meaning of culture, identity, community, acculturation, difference and development in the field of theoretical and cultural psychology. His book *American Karma: Race, Culture and Identity in the Indian Diaspora* (New York University Press) was published in July 2007. He has also published over a dozen articles and book chapters on issues related to self, immigrant identity and cultural psychology. His articles have appeared in journals such as *Human Development*, *Theory and Psychology*, *History of Psychology*, *Culture and Psychology*, and *Mind, Culture and Activity*. He is also the senior editor (along with Hank Stam) of a special issue of *Theory and Psychology* titled, Critical Engagements with Culture and Self.

Tom Billington is Senior Lecturer in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Sheffield, England, where he is also a member of the inter-disciplinary Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth. The focus of his research is on professional practices when working with children and young people, in particular, developing a researcher-practitioner model in which he explores discourse analytic, psychodynamic and narrative methods as means of addressing children's rights and other participatory issues as alternatives to simplistic psychopathologies. His own professional practice is as an expert witness in Children Act cases while he is a member of British Psychological Society working parties on child protection

and childhood autism. He has published widely including *Working with Children: Assessment, Representation and Intervention* (2006; Sage) and *Separating, Losing and Excluding Children: Narratives of Difference* (2000; RoutledgeFalmer).

Felicity Bishop is currently a Research Fellow in the Complementary Medicine Research Unit at the University of Southampton, UK. Her research interests concern psychological aspects of complementary therapies, and she is conducting a programme of research investigating peoples' experiences of therapies including acupuncture, homeopathy, and reflexology. She first used mixed methods with Lucy Yardley to study adherence to complementary therapies, and it is this project that is described in Chapter 20 of this volume. Despite (or perhaps because of) the challenges posed by mixed methods research, Felicity continues to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in her work. Her latest project involves using mixed methods to investigate the psychosocial context of acupuncture and how this context is linked to clinical outcomes. She is particularly interested in exploring the range of ways in which it is possible to combine methods, and to be both creative and rigorous in selecting specific methods for mixed method studies.

Svend Brinkmann is currently an Assistant Professor of Social and Personality Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Aarhus, Denmark. He is a member of the department's Centre of Qualitative Research, and he is particularly interested in ethical issues in qualitative research. He recently published a book on John Dewey, and he has co-edited an anthology with critical perspectives on self-realization, both of which have been published in Danish. In addition he has published articles in *Theory & Psychology*, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, *History of the Human Sciences*, *Philosophical Psychology*, *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* and *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. In the future he hopes that his work can contribute to the development of a psychology that does justice to the nature of the concretely lived lives of human beings.

Steven D. Brown is Professor of Social and Organizational Psychology at Leicester University, UK. Prior to this he taught psychology at Loughborough University (although he was not really a discourse analyst). He is also visiting Professor at Universiteit voor Humanistiek, NL (despite being firmly anti-humanist, by inclination). He has had the enormous good fortune to have learned at length from many wonderful colleagues at all three institutions, and from former colleagues and friends at Keele and Reading. Steve's early intellectual formation was within the Beryl Curt collective, who took their epistemology as seriously as their conviviality. Like many other parts of Beryl, he felt and continues to feel a lingering sense that psychology is so divorced from life that it fails to engage with its own subject matter (however Steve contains this sufficiently to act as associate editor of the *British Journal of Social Psychology*). He is curious about a number of things – what memory does to us, how affect is threaded into living, the possibilities for personhood in formally organized settings – but very rarely about methodology.

Erica Burman is Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Her inspirations include the challenges of researching with children, of teaching professionals whose engagement with developmental psychology is structured by a healthy suspicion, and working with colleagues whose positivist commitments require justifying the work she wants to do. Early methodological influences were Klaus Riegel's dialectical psychology and Piaget's clinical method (yes, really!), then debates in antiracist feminist research and post-structuralist and discursive approaches, including a critical engagement with psychoanalysis. Critiques of international economic development also highlight the political ambiguities

of developmental psychology. She is a qualified group analyst, which also informs her teaching, supervisory work and facilitation of research teams. Her recent work addresses the tense and complex intersections between women and children, and between women, feminisms and the state. One day she hopes to write fiction, instead of showing how psychology's truths are stranger than fiction.

Mark Burton is the Head of the Manchester Learning Disability Partnership which is a large public sector provider of health and social support for people who are intellectually disabled. He is also visiting professor at the Research Institute of Health and Social Change at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. For the last two decades he has been working in the same city in the same system of services, trying to find ways of improving what intellectually disabled people and their families experience, while trying to resist the erosion of welfare. Working with this constituency and mainly in organizational and community contexts has meant an interest in action orientated approaches and methods that do not over-rely on speech and language, whether in research or service development. Outside paid work he maintains an interest in social struggles in the majority world, particularly in Latin America and has also found this a source of learning and inspiration practically and conceptually. His published work crosses the fields of health and social care, social policy and alternative approaches in psychology.

Ivo Čermák works at the Institute of Psychology at the Academy of Sciences in the Czech Republic, and is a Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University in Brno. His professional interests are qualitative research, hermeneutic and narrative ideas in psychology, psychology of art and projective methods. At the beginning of the 1990s he met Jitka Linden from the University in Lund. Jitka's hermeneutic-narrative research mission encouraged him to follow his desire to carry out qualitative inquiry, which he has always considered closer to real life. This bore fruit in a joint book – *Profession: An Actor. The Critical Moments in Theatre Actors' Working Life* (2000). Wendy Stainton-Rogers, whom he encountered in the second half of the 1990s, captivated him with the charm of her critical spirit to such an extent that he decided to commit himself to qualitative research forever. This 'forever-ness' is significantly supported by his friend David Hiles.

Kerry Chamberlain is Professor of Health Psychology at Massey University in Auckland, New Zealand. He is co-editor (with Michael Murray) of *Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and Methods* (Sage) and co-author (with Antonia Lyons) of *Health Psychology: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge) and serves on the editorial boards of several health psychology journals. His engagement with qualitative interpretative methodologies emerged from an interest in questions about the understandings and meanings of health and illness, and has led his current research interests to be increasingly concerned with social and community processes, including medicalization, meals, mediation, medications and the mundane. He favours the use of innovative methods because they force attention to research processes. He is opposed to all forms of research methodolatry, believing that methodologies and methods, which irrevocably shape research findings, must be subservient to the research aims, and that research articles must be focussed on the key issues, theorizations, findings and implications of the research.

Kathy Charmaz is Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of the Faculty Writing Program at Sonoma State University in California, USA. She assists faculty in writing for publication. She learned grounded theory from Barney Glaser and studied with Anselm Strauss. Professor Charmaz's early interests in grounded theory, social psychology, and chronic illness have shaped her career and her publications, including *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic*

Illness and Time. Her first grounded theory publication resulted from a request to speak extemporaneously about it during a conference session. Afterwards the session organizer asked her to write a chapter in three weeks for his forthcoming edited volume. Since then, she has been writing about grounded theory, most recently *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, with Sage, London. Professor Charmaz received the 2006 George Herbert Mead award for lifetime achievement from the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction.

Patricia Conway is a PhD student in Community Research and Action at Vanderbilt University in the USA. She worked as a National Health Service (NHS) based researcher for seven years before returning to postgraduate studies. She has been using mixed methods throughout her years as an NHS researcher and continues to do so in her current setting. She is currently developing a critical methodology guide for those interested in utilizing research for social change. She is part of a team developing a new curriculum for undergraduate and graduate students to help them understand not only methods in research, but also the theoretical perspectives and methodological stances influencing our research choices. Her own research interests are in the area of food security and environmental justice more broadly. She is part of a growing food security movement in Nashville, and attempts to understand the development of the movement, the agendas driving it, and who ultimately benefits from any changes to our local and regional food systems.

Lisa DeSouza is an academic and professional tutor at the University of Nottingham, UK. She also works as a senior educational psychologist in Nottingham City. She has published in the British Psychological Society journal *Educational and Child Psychology*. Her research interests include work on discourse and challenging behaviour in schools and the education and care of children 0–5 years old.

Virginia Eatough is a lecturer in psychology at Birkbeck, University of London. Her focus on qualitative research methods grew out of her interest in lived experience. In particular, she is concerned with the emotional and feeling aspects of these experiences and how persons talk about and make sense of them. The idiographic emphasis of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) especially appeals to her and she is keen to promote the use of single person case studies within psychology. These interests are at the heart of her recent work on women's lived experiences of anger and how they make sense of them. This has led to her current work on adult crying looking at the subjective experience and the role of feelings in crying and its functional and situational aspects. A separate but related strand of research is using IPA to examine the lived experience of living with a chronic neurodegenerative condition such as Parkinson's disease.

Jonathan Elford is an Epidemiologist and Professor at City University's Institute of Health Sciences in London, where he conducts social, behavioural and epidemiological research among people living with HIV and those most at risk of HIV infection. One of his research projects, funded by the Medical Research Council, focused on the internet and the risk of HIV transmission among gay men in London. Additional funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) allowed the research team to examine methodological aspects of using the internet for research. Chapter 18 in this book emerged from the ESRC-funded PhD. Jonathan Elford also played a key role in developing the DIPEX website on HIV (www.dipex.org.uk/hiv). DIPEX is a public access website where people talk about their experience of illness. It serves as an 'expert patient' online. The HIV website contains video and audio clips of interviews with gay men as well as black African heterosexual men and women living with HIV in the UK.

Other research activities include work among ethnic minority men who have sex with men living in the UK and a social-behavioural survey of people living with diagnosed HIV in northeast London including black African heterosexual men and women.

Alison Evans is currently employed as a Research Fellow in the Department of Palliative Care, Policy and Rehabilitation at King's College, London. She developed an interest in different data collection methods and Internet research during her MSc in social research methods at City University, London. She was then awarded a postgraduate research studentship by the Economic and Social Research Council and a postdoctoral research fellowship at City University which enabled her to pursue these interests. Her PhD was an exploration of the methodological issues surrounding use of the Internet for collecting quantitative and qualitative data on sexual behaviour among gay and bisexual men. It took place in the context of the Internet and HIV study, an investigation of Internet-related sexual risk behaviour among gay and bisexual men. It explored issues of participation bias in web surveys of sexual behaviour and mode effects associated with collecting data on sexual behaviour via the Internet compared to offline methods.

Scotney D. Evans came to Canada's Wilfrid Laurier University after graduating from the Community Research and Action PhD programme at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. He is currently teaching courses in community psychology at the undergraduate and graduate level and conducting action research with community organizations in the Waterloo region of Ontario. He is also still involved with two human service sector research projects in Tennessee. Currently, he is working on a book focused on conceptualizing critical human service practice. Also, with colleagues at Laurier he is helping to establish a Centre for Community Research and Action. He is energized about exploring the use of photo, audio, and video media to conduct research with communities. With students at Laurier, he is looking for opportunities to use these creative approaches to help promote social change. He is fully committed to moving beyond the academic journal article as the primary dissemination of community stories, social justice issues and creative solutions.

Nigel Fielding is Professor of Sociology at the University of Surrey, co-director of the Institute of Social Research, and co-director of the Economic and Social Research Council-supported CAQDAS Networking Project, which provides training and support in the use of computers in qualitative data analysis. His research interests are in qualitative research methods, new technologies for social research, and criminal justice. He has authored or edited 20 books, over 50 journal articles and over 200 other publications. In research methodology his books include a study of methodological integration (*Linking Data*, 1986, Sage; with Jane Fielding), an influential book on qualitative software (*Using Computers in Qualitative Research*, 1991, Sage; editor, with Ray Lee), a study of the role of computer technology in qualitative research (*Computer Analysis and Qualitative Research*, 1998, Sage; with Ray Lee) and a four-volume set, *Interviewing* (2002, Sage; editor). He is presently researching the application of high-performance computing applications to qualitative methods.

Uwe Flick is Professor of Qualitative Research at the Alice-Solomon-Hochschule in Berlin. He was trained as psychologist and sociologist in Munich and Berlin. Research interests in everyday knowledge and practices of professionals and lay people motivated an orientation to qualitative research first and then in social representations in fields like health and illness. After studying social representations of health and aging held by general practitioners and nurses, his current research is about health concepts and practices of homeless adolescents. Most recent publications include *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (3rd edition 2006)

and the edition of the *Companion to Qualitative Research* (2004 with Ernst Von Kardorff and Ines Steinke) and of the eight-volume boxed set *The Sage Qualitative Research Kit* (2007), all at Sage Publications.

Juliet Foster is a Research Fellow in Social Psychology at the University of Cambridge. Her main interests are social perspectives on mental health problems. In particular, she has focused on mental health service clients' representations of mental health problems: her book on this topic, *Journeys Through Mental Illness: Clients' Experiences and Understandings of Mental Distress*, was published by Palgrave in 2007. She also works on wider representations of mental health problems, including those found in the media, and amongst mental health professionals. Her use of a wide range of qualitative methods to address these research questions stems from her epistemological commitment to social constructionism: as such, she is interested in the way people communally make sense of the world around them, and the importance and implications of the meanings that they construct.

Stephen Frosh is Professor of Psychology at Birkbeck College, University of London, UK. He is currently working on issues to do with intersubjective 'encounters' and the ways in which they produce change. He is especially interested in whether the psychoanalytic encounter can provide a model for this, and in what this means for group and political processes. This work arises out of a longstanding concern with the development of a 'social psychoanalysis', as in his books *The Politics of Psychoanalysis* (Palgrave, 1987/1999), *For and Against Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 1997/2006) and *Hate and the 'Jewish Science'* (Palgrave, 2005), work which has also fuelled his involvement with qualitative methods. Some of this is examined in a book with Peter Emerson, *Critical Narrative Analysis in Psychology* (Palgrave, 2004), which presents a very detailed interrogation of texts drawing on narrative and discursive procedures; but other work (mostly carried out by PhD students) explores ways of gaining access to the kinds of processes and validation mechanisms required of psychoanalytic interpretation.

Mary Gergen, Professor Emerita, Psychology and Women's Studies, Penn State University, Delaware County, is a scholar at the intersection of feminist theory and social constructionism. Her most recent book is *Feminist Reconstructions in Psychology: Narrative, Gender and Performance* (Sage, 2001). With Kenneth Gergen, she has edited *Social Construction: A Reader* (Sage, 2003), and written a primer, *Social Constructionism, Entering the Dialogue* (Taos Institute Publications, 2004). Her earlier edited books included *Feminist Thought and the Structure of Knowledge* (1988), and *Toward a New Psychology of Gender* (1997) with Sara N. Davis. Her involvement in qualitative research is extensive, with articles published in earlier handbooks and journals. She is a founder of the Taos Institute, a non-profit educational organization, and an advisor within their PhD programme with Tilburg University, The Netherlands. With K. J. Gergen she edits an electronic newsletter on positive aging, available at www.taosinstitute.net.

Besides writing, she enjoys travelling, tennis, family gatherings, and life with Ken and Julian, the Labrador-chow, who shares their home in the Philadelphia environs.

Amedeo P. Giorgi received his PhD in Experimental Psychology from Fordham University in 1958. He worked as a human factors specialist for Dunlap and Associates for several years and then moved on to an academic career teaching at Manhattan College, Duquesne University, and University of Quebec at Montreal and currently at Saybrook Graduate School in San Francisco. He studied phenomenological philosophy and developed the application of the phenomenological method for psychological problems based upon the work of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. He has directed over 100 dissertations that have used the method on all sorts

of psychological problems and he has published over 100 articles on the phenomenological approach to psychology. He has been invited to lecture on phenomenological psychology in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia and South Africa. He is the founder and original editor (25 years) of the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* and the author of *Psychology as a Human Science*.

Barbro Giorgi received her PhD in Clinical Psychology and Research at University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada, in 1998. She is currently research director of MA programmes at John F. Kennedy University in Pleasant Hill, California, where she teaches research methods as well as supervises students during their research. Her research orientation is qualitative in general but primarily phenomenological. Her own research focuses on the therapeutic process. Barbro Giorgi is also adjunct faculty at Saybrook Graduate School, San Francisco, and research adjunct faculty at Institute of Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto, as well as serves as committee member on doctoral dissertations with students using phenomenological research methods locally and nationally. She gives workshops on phenomenology as a research method in the Bay Area as well as across the USA and overseas.

Yevgeniya Granovskaya is a Counsellor at the Career Development Center of LaGuardia Community College, City University of New York. She was born in Uzbekistan, a republic of the former Soviet Union, and emigrated to the USA at the age of 14. Yevgeniya received a BBA in industrial and organizational psychology from Baruch College, CUNY and an MEd in counselling and personnel services from Fordham University. Her training and prior research experiences have been quantitative in nature and this project has served as an introduction into the qualitative realm. Yevgeniya's research interests include the constructs of individualism and collectivism and their impact on the adjustment process of bicultural individuals.

Christine Griffin is Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Bath, UK. She has a long-standing interest in representations of youth, femininity and young women's lives. Her publications include *Typical Girls?* (1985, Routledge and Kegan Paul); *Representations of Youth* (1993, Polity Press); and *Standpoints and Differences: Essays in the Practice of Feminist Psychology* (1998, with Karen Henwood and Ann Phoenix; Sage). She was involved in youth work with girls' groups in Birmingham during the 1980s, and still has links with youth and community work organizations. Recent research projects include a three-year Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) study on the relationship between consumption and social identity for young people. She is currently working on a major ESRC-funded study on the role of branding and marketing of drinks in relation to young adults' everyday drinking practices and a two-year ESRC-funded project on clubbing and dance cultures as forms of social and political participation.

Carrie E. Hanlin is originally from Fayetteville, Arkansas, and received her bachelor's degree in Psychology at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, 1999. She is now in her sixth year of doctoral study, at Vanderbilt University in the Community Research and Action PhD programme. She is enjoying teaching a section of the department's undergraduate research methods course and beginning work on her dissertation. The first two years of her graduate work were done in the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Community Psychology PhD programme. Carrie is currently a graduate fellow and a recipient of the Peabody College Graduate Honor Scholarship. In addition, she and her husband are proud parents of a new baby girl, Rosalind. Recent areas of interest, research, and action include labour unions, workers' co-operatives, and other labour arrangements; the facilitation of the development of community organizations

into social change agents; the social imagination; qualitative research methodology; alternative social organization; structural mechanisms for direct democracy; and theories of power.

David Harper is Reader in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London. He began using discourse analysis (DA) in 1990 while researching the social construction of persecutory delusions in interviews with clinical psychologists and psychiatrists for his masters degree in clinical psychology at Liverpool University. This project was extended for his part-time PhD at Manchester Metropolitan University in the mid-to-late 1990s when he interviewed psychiatric service users and their health professionals and analysed a wider variety of texts, including historical and professional accounts as well as representations circulating in popular culture. He has continued to research in this area and was a co-author of *Deconstructing Psychopathology* (with Ian Parker, Eugenie Georgaca, Terence McLaughlin and Mark Stowell-Smith). He is committed to publishing in a wider range of outlets, in publications which are more likely to be read by clinicians as well as by service users and their relatives and friends. He is also interested in applying these ideas clinically and works in a systemic therapy consultation service reflecting team in Newham.

Karen Henwood is a Senior Lecturer in the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, UK. Karen's longstanding research interests are in qualitative, interpretive and critical approaches to psychology, and in the development of methodology within interdisciplinary social science. Substantively, her core interests concern the ways in which differences in identity and subjectivity are forged in relation to biography, relationships, social context and cultural issues; troubled and troubling identities; social constructions and lived experiences of gender, risk, embodiment, and well-being. Her empirical projects investigating these topics have involved the use of interpretive thematic approaches, such as grounded theory, and discursive and narrative methods. In a new project to start in 2007 she will be taking forward, with others, the development of qualitative longitudinal methodology and innovative, collaborative approaches to data sharing, archiving and secondary analysis. She also has an interest in combining different qualitative, and qualitative and quantitative methods.

David Hiles is Principal Lecturer in Psychology at De Montfort University, UK, and sees himself as an eclectic psychologist fascinated by human meaning-making. His PhD from McGill was in the cognition of short-term memory. He has training in counselling, and he is passionate about teaching, the history of ideas, film, Sumo, and the clarinet-playing of Sidney Bechet. Disenchanted with experimental methods, he turned towards 'real world' inquiry. Recently, he has been exploring the paradigmatic assumptions of psychological research methods, developing a pluralistic model, called Disciplined Inquiry, which might rattle a few cages, e.g. it is critical of the simplistic distinction between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' methods. It incorporates three fundamental paradigms of inquiry: positivist, constructionist and participatory. For him, the challenge for qualitative research is to strive for transparency. On reflection, if he had his time over again, he would change one thing: he should have read Heidegger some forty years earlier.

Katherine Johnson is Senior Lecturer in the School of Applied Social Science, University of Brighton, UK. She is the course leader for MSc psychosocial studies and convenes the qualitative research methods teaching for postgraduate students. Her research focuses on themes of identity and embodiment often with reference to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered lives. She has utilized a range of qualitative methods in her research including discourse analysis, memory work, visual methods and participatory-action research. She is currently completing a community psychology project Understanding Suicidal Distress and Promoting Survival in LGBT communities and writing a book on sexualities for Polity Press.

Carolyn Kagan is Professor of Community Social Psychology and Director of the Research Institute for Health and Social Change at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. She entered psychology at the beginning of the 1970s and was heavily influenced by both the socialist feminist movement and the 'crisis' in social psychology. These movements gave her a framework for understanding both action and social change, although psychological theory and practice was of limited use. She turned to radical social work for ideas and inspiration about how best to work with those marginalized by social structures, trained as a social worker and spent many of the Thatcher years working in a small interdisciplinary regional development team. Collaborative action approaches enabled them to make the most effective use of small resources in order to achieve value-based organizational change. She has worked with those living poverty and marginalization in the UK and elsewhere. It is qualitative methods that have proven to be the most use in her current community social psychological work, which seeks to adopt ecological approaches to understanding.

Susan Kippax manages and coordinates a programme of research into the social aspects of the prevention and care of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in her role as director of the National Centre in HIV Social Research (NCHSR) at the University of New South Wales. She began her research in HIV in the mid-1980s and around the same time became extremely interested in 'memory-work' when Frigga Haug visited Australia. Memory-work provided her and a number of her colleagues with a way to deal with the conservatism of mainstream psychology: a way to do empirical research that is collective and involved the 'subjects' of the research as co-researchers; a way to do research that allows for the recognition of the ways in which members of oppressed groups participate in, and resist, their own oppression; and hence a way to do research that has a political force.

Geena Kuriakose is currently a Doctoral Student in School Psychology in the Graduate School of Education at Fordham University. Geena emigrated from the south Indian state of Kerala to New York City at the age of 8. She received a BA in psychology from New York University where she began her training in qualitative research methods with Niobe Way. She received training in and conducted both qualitative and quantitative research with Dr Way for five years. At present, she continues to develop her knowledge and competency with qualitative methodology through her work with Joseph G. Ponterotto. Her research interests include identifying and understanding the factors that contribute to resiliency among immigrant adolescents.

Steinar Kvale is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. He graduated from the University of Oslo with the PhD dissertation 'Prüfung und Herrschaft' ('Examinations and Oppression'; 1972). He has conducted a qualitative interview study on the educational and social effects of high stakes grading, which led to a discussion of methodological and epistemological aspects of interviewing, 'The qualitative research interview: A phenomenological and a hermeneutical mode of understanding', in the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* (1983). He founded Centre of Qualitative Research at the University of Aarhus in 1988. He has edited *Issues of Validity in Qualitative Research* (1989) and *Psychology and Postmodernism* (1992), and written *InterViews – An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (1996) and *Doing Interviews* (2007). Recent articles include 'The psychoanalytical interview as qualitative research' (1999) and 'Dominance through dialogues and interviews' (2006), both in *Qualitative Inquiry*.

Victoria Lewis is employed as a Senior Practitioner Educational Psychologist in Nottinghamshire, and as an academic and professional tutor on the doctorate of applied educational

psychology at the University of Nottingham, UK. Her research interests include the role of language in shaping social meaning and the historical and cultural effects of language and social practice as it applies to professional educational psychology.

Abigail Locke is a Lecturer in Psychology at Loughborough University, UK, who specializes in teaching qualitative research methods. She is the current editor of *Social Psychological Review*, the periodical of the social psychology section of the British Psychological Society and a member of the British Psychological Society's research ethics advisory group. Her work has a discursive flavour, beginning with her doctoral research, supervised by Derek Edwards. The thesis offered a study of how discourses of mind and emotion were built into the interactional currency and accountability practices that sports performers use when talking about performances. The interest in mental states and emotion discourse continued and was considered in other settings, for example in Clinton's cross-examination testimony (2003, with Edwards). Her current research focuses on discourses of antenatal care. Using recordings of antenatal classes run by the NCT, Abigail is looking at how gender, identity and accountability are constructed and negotiated.

Catriona Macleod started her career as a high school teacher of mathematics. Trained as an educational psychologist she has worked on a range of community mental health and education programmes. Currently she is professor and head of department of the Psychology Department at Rhodes University in South Africa. Her research interests have spanned the construction of gender differences in mathematics, inclusive education, the development of community-based mental health programmes, the governmentality of teenage pregnancy, public discourses on abortion, and feminist and postcolonial theory. She has published extensively in both national and international journals and has received awards for her research from the University of Zululand and the University of Fort Hare, where she worked previously. She is a rated social scientist with the National Research Foundation of South Africa.

Andy Miller is Special Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Nottingham, UK, and also works for a small part of his time as a senior educational psychologist with Derby City LEA. Over a period of more than a decade, Andy has published a series of research studies into schools and challenging behaviour in academic and professional journals, some of which have also received attention in the national print and broadcast media. He has published nine books on professionally relevant topics, including *Psychological Services for Primary Schools* (Longman, 1991), *Child and Adolescent Therapy* (Open University Press, 1992), *Silent Conspiracies: Scandals and Successes in the Care and Education of Vulnerable Young People* (Trentham, 1993), and, most recently, *Teachers, Parents and Classroom Behaviour: A Psychosocial Approach* (Open University Press, 2003).

Michael Murray is Professor of Social and Health Psychology at Keele University in England. In his early work he used qualitative methods to explore the experience of illness among sick children, smoking behaviour among adolescents and popular perceptions of cancer. This work was informed by social representation and narrative theory. Together with Kerry Chamberlain he edited a journal issue on qualitative research and an edited volume on *Qualitative Health Psychology* which attracted wider interest and contributed to the convening of a conference on critical and qualitative approaches to health psychology. Recently he has become more interested in community action research and edited a journal issue on community health psychology with Catherine Campbell and another on health psychology and the arts with Ross Gray. Increasingly his research is informed by an interest in

social change and social justice, issues he feels qualitative researchers should bring more to the fore.

Thomas C. Ormerod is Professor of Cognitive Psychology at Lancaster University, UK. His use of mixed-methods to study expertise in the workplace began during his PhD research on cognitive processes in logic programming. With funding from UK Research Councils' Cognitive Engineering and PACCIT Initiatives, he then explored the nature and support of design expertise. This work had a methodological message: experts only engage in activities that make sense within their normal context of performance. The search for meaningful tasks that capture cognitive aspects of expertise led to a growing interest in ethnographic approaches to observation. This 'mixed-method' approach has been used in most of his recent research. For example, he studied how families collaborate to categorize and retrieve digital photographs, and used ethnographic approaches to study experimental session transcripts. A recent focus of research has been on investigative expertise, exploring how scene-of-crime and fraud investigators differ in their use of inference.

Douglas D. Perkins was founding Director of the Doctoral Programme in Community Research & Action and now directs the Center for Community Studies (<http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/ccs/>). He is a fellow of the Society for Community Research & Action and has developed collaborations between SCRA and the Community Development Society, Environmental Design Research Association, and Urban Affairs Association. Perkins (PhD, community psychology, New York University) taught criminal justice at Temple University, environment-behavior at the University of Utah, and human-organizational development at Vanderbilt. Perkins' transdisciplinary, mixed research methods have included several innovations: development of a widely used Block (physical) Environmental Inventory, the Sense of Community Index, first use of multi-level statistical analysis in community psychology, an archiving and rating scheme for crime-related newspaper articles, and qualitative analysis of the news archive and GIS maps. His latest research on community-based nonprofit organizations emphasizes qualitative case studies using focus groups, in-depth semi-structured interviews, participant-observer field notes, and organizational records.

Joseph G. Ponterotto, Professor of Counselling Psychology, was born and raised in the Bronx, New York. He is a first generation Italian American with cultural ancestry in the Abruzzi region of Italy. Trained in counselling psychology at the University of California at Santa Barbara, he received comprehensive training in quantitative methods. Initially he received little, if any, training in qualitative methods. His interest in qualitative research converged as a result of strong student interest in these methods coupled with a resonance of the methods with multicultural counselling research. Joe's primarily scholarly interest is in multicultural counselling research using both qualitative and quantitative methods. His newest book is *Preventing Prejudice: A Guide for Counselors, Educators, and Parents* (2nd edition, 2006, Sage Publications, co-authored with Shawn Utsey and Paul Pedersen of the USA).

Jonathan Potter is a Professor at the Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, UK. He has had an interest in basic theoretical and analytic issues in social psychology for more than 20 years. This is seen in his engagement with and development of post-structuralism (in *Social Texts and Contexts*, with Margaret Wetherell and Peter Stringer), discourse analysis (in *Discourse and Social Psychology*, with Margaret Wetherell), discursive psychology (in *Discursive Psychology*, with Derek Edwards) and constructionism (in *Representing Reality*). He is currently interested in the way psychology can be reconfigured as an object in and for interaction. Working with naturalistic materials has provided a way of unlocking fundamental

and subtle issues about the nature of 'cognition' (in *Conversation and Cognition*, with Hedwig te Molder). This sits along side a long term critical and applied interest in topics such as racism (in *Mapping the Language of Racism*, with Margaret Wetherell) and, more recently, fact construction, morality and emotion in child protection settings (with Alexa Hepburn).

Isaac Prilleltensky is Dean of the School of Education at the University of Miami. Prior to that he was director of the Doctoral Program in Community Research and Action at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Isaac was born in Argentina and has studied and worked in Israel, Canada, Australia and the USA. He has lectured widely in South America, Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Isaac is concerned with value-based ways of promoting personal, relational, and collective well-being. He is the author, co-author or co-editor of several books, including *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being*, *Doing Psychology Critically*, *Critical Psychology*, *Promoting Family Wellness and Preventing Child Maltreatment*, and *The Morals and Politics of Psychology*. He recently completed with his wife, Dr Ora Prilleltensky, a book entitled *Promoting Well-Being: Linking Personal, Organizational, and Community Change*.

Paula Reavey is a Lecturer in Psychology at London South Bank University. She has been interested, for some considerable time, in how adult survivors of child sexual abuse understand their past experiences, in the context of their present concerns. While this interest originally emerged through discourse analytic readings of a variety of therapeutic and self-help texts and people's accounts of their abuse experiences, she soon became tired with the idea that discourse alone could provide insight into people's lives. In joining a research group in 2000, where a group of qualitative researchers became their own participants in the study of embodiment, she began to explore, through intense discussion and reflection (as well as embarrassing admissions and experimental hilarity), how experience was much more multiply layered than discursive approaches, conceptually and methodologically afforded. Some of the questions that she continues to address, through the embodiment research group, postgraduate student work, and work on remembering and mental distress (in collaboration with Steven D. Brown, John Cromby, Janice Haaken, Dave Harper and Katherine Johnson), return to the ever problematic nature of what experience is, and how we are able to 'access' it, in all its rich discursive, sensory, visual and auditory detail. Such projects involve a variety of visual, embodied and discursive approaches to gain access a range of modalities of experience. Though hugely challenging, this approach to research continues to be immensely enjoyable, often surprising and inevitably strange.

Poul Rohleder is a Clinical Psychologist, and a Doctoral Student at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. He is using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore organizational responses to HIV as it affects persons with disabilities. His interests lie in issues of diversity and how individuals, particularly from marginalized identities, are positioned in society. Qualitative research methods allows for an in-depth exploration of people's experiences. He has published on the challenges faced by lay HIV counsellors working within the public health care system, and the stigma experiences of HIV-positive women. South Africa continues to be faced with the challenges of transforming a divided society. Together with Prof. Leslie Swartz and colleagues, he is currently working on a teaching research project involving students from two South African universities, collaborating together across boundaries of race, class and culture.

Asiya Siddiquee is a Lecturer in Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, having recently obtained a doctorate in psychology. Her interest in action research began in the final year of her undergraduate psychology degree, when she encountered 'community psychology'.

Being fairly disillusioned by other ‘mainstream’ forms of psychology, it was definitely a breath of fresh air! As a result of this understanding, she continues to question established quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. This is best illustrated within her doctoral research: ‘A community psychology approach to investigating the impact of the internet’, which examines the impact of the internet on refugee women, ethnic minorities, community development workers and the health sector. In the future she hopes to expand on this research by contributing to the field of research methods, and applying action research to explore issues such as marginalization and the use of the digital technologies.

Christina Silver has worked with the CAQDAS Networking Project (CNP) (<http://caqdas.soc.surrey.ac.uk>) at the University of Surrey since 1998. CNP provides information and training for a range of software packages designed to facilitate qualitative data analysis. She has supported hundreds of researchers in their use of qualitative software and taught under- and postgraduate methods courses at several universities. Her interest in qualitative research began during her undergraduate dissertation at the University of Essex which explored motivations for partaking in the National Lottery. The analysis involved manual annotating and coding using highlighter pens, constructing paper spreadsheets and manoeuvring photocopied data segments between cells. At the University of Surrey pursuing her MSc in social research methods, Christina was first introduced to qualitative software which she also used for her PhD comparing the provision of school-based sex education in the Netherlands and England and Wales. Christina is co-founder of Qualitative Data Analysis Services (www.qdaservices.co.uk) which provides onsite customised software training, research consultancy and distance learning. With Ann Lewins, Christina has co-authored *Using Qualitative Software: A Step-by-Step Guide*, (Sage Publications 2007) the first book to provide step-by-step support for several qualitative software packages.

Jo Silvester works part-time as a Professor of Organisational Psychology at City University, London, and is a founding partner of a commercial organisation, the Work Psychology Partnership. Her involvement in qualitative methods is therefore research and practice based. She has a background in both qualitative and quantitative research, finding herself in the challenging, sometimes uncomfortable, but rewarding position of having to forge a bridge between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Her research into sense-making in the workplace reflects this interest. Since becoming an organizational psychologist, she has seen at first hand the considerable appeal of qualitative research with clients and end-users. Currently, she works with a range of organisations that span public, private and political sectors. She is particularly interested in how language shapes meaning in relation to work roles, and the function of stakeholders in mapping performance standards. She is currently working as a project looking at the role of scrutiny officers in local government with the Department of Communities and Local Government, and is about to begin working with the Liberal Democrat Party to redesign their selection process for prospective Parliamentary Candidates.

Jonathan A. Smith is Professor of Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London and previously held posts at the universities of Keele and Sheffield. His first degree was in English and this clearly influenced his interest in qualitative research. Conducting his doctorate on identity change during the transition to motherhood in the late 1980s he began looking for an approach which did justice to his research question and world view. His articulation of interpretative phenomenological analysis at this time drew on a wide range of sources – phenomenology, idiography, symbolic-interactionism, literary theory, humanistic psychology. A key feature of his academic career has been attempting to make qualitative methodology an integral part of psychology and he has tried to do this through writing accessible accounts of methodology,

giving workshops on the process, and publishing empirical illustrations. Most of his current research is in psychosocial aspects of the new genetics and in families and health.

Wendy Stainton-Rogers is a Professor of Health Psychology in the Faculty of Health and Social Care at the Open University. A critical psychologist for many years and a founder member of the Beryl Curt collective (stated aim: to trouble social and psychological science), her interests are much broader, as shown by her most recent publications: *The Psychology of Gender and Sexuality* in 2001 and *Social Psychology: Experimental and Critical Approaches* in 2003. Wendy's teaching at the Open University has mainly been in the field of promoting children's welfare, wellbeing and rights. Her current 'day job' is as director of the faculty's newly emerging Youth Justice programme – a field that needs all the practical criticality and promoting of children's welfare we can muster.

Paul Stenner is Professor of Psychosocial Studies in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton, UK. He uses Q methodology alongside other qualitative methods in the context of critical psychosocial theory. He became interested in Q methodology thanks to the influence of his doctoral supervisor, the late Rex Stainton Rogers. Having conducted a Q-based PhD thesis dealing with jealous subjectivity and the subjectivity of jealousy he went on to become a part of the Beryl Curt collective, a group dedicated, in a rather hedonistic way, to deconstructing and revitalizing social psychology. Before moving to Brighton, he held academic posts in the universities of East London, Bath and UCL. He is currently very excited by the writings of Albert North Whitehead and Michel Serres.

Niamh Stephenson is a Senior Lecturer in Social Science at the University of New South Wales, Australia. Her research examines the role of experience in socio-political change. This work has given rise to a book (co-authored with Dimitris Papadopoulos), *Analysing Lived Experience: Social Research and Political Change* (Palgrave, 2006). Together with Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos, she is currently finalising a book about the contemporary politics of experience in the fields of health, labour and migration, *Escape! Power and Revolt in the 21st century* (Pluto, forthcoming). She has published in the fields of critical and theoretical psychology, social research and cultural studies as well as also co-edited two collections on theoretical psychology.

Leslie Swartz is a Professor of Psychology at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. His interests range beyond 'psychology' – into anthropology, language studies, and public health. He started out studying culture and mental health; since then his interests have broadened to community psychology, applied psychoanalysis, and disability studies. He is part of a collaboration between a photographer, Angela Buckland, and social scientists (Kathleen McDougall, Leslie Swartz and Amelia van der Merwe). Angela, the mother of a disabled child, has produced photographs charting experiences of parenting and disability. We wrote the text for a book featuring Angela's work (*Zip Zip My Brain Harts*, HSRC Press, 2006). Crossing boundaries between art and social science raises ethical issues (particularly as photographs portray recognizable people), different investments in how stories should be told, and, in this case, insider/outsider issues. We are preparing publications in which we try to understand these issues better.

Valerie Walkerdine is Professor of Psychology in the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, UK. She has been working in what has become known as critical psychology since the 1970s. Together with Julian Henriques, Couze Venn, Nikolas Rose, Diana Adlam and Angie Salfield she set up the journal *Ideology and Consciousness*. Through this medium, they

introduced French feminism, Lacan, Althusser and Foucault to an English-speaking audience. Later, Couze Venn, Julian Henriques and Valerie Walkerdine worked with Wendy Hollway and Cathy Urwin to produce *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity* (1984, Methuen) which became a highly influential text, perhaps more so outside of psychology than within the discipline. It was during this time that Valerie first began to introduce the work of Foucault into developmental psychological issues. More recently, she has become interested in relational methods including psychoanalytic ones, and the work of Deleuze, Bergson and the development of intuition as a research method. Issues of femininity have always been important to Valerie and she continues to address these in her work. Currently, she is working with Couze Venn, Julian Henriques and Lisa Blackman on a book exploring subjectivity given recent theoretical and political developments.

Simon Watts is a Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for the MRes/MSc psychological research methods in the Division of Psychology at Nottingham Trent University, UK. Simon teaches qualitative research methods and personal relationships and publishes in the same areas. He discovered Q methodology as a third year undergraduate and went on to do a PhD which examined the theory and potential of Q as a qualitative method, with particular reference to its application in the context of partnership love. Simon has also taught in the Department of Human Relations at the University of East London, in the Departments of Psychology at University College Northampton and University College London, and he currently supervises masters-level qualitative dissertations for the Open University.

Dick Wiggins is Chair of Quantitative Social Science in the Faculty of Policy and Society at the Institute of Education, London. His research interests include a strong methodological component which crosses disciplines in sociology, epidemiology, psychology and geography. The work with Alison Evans and Jonathan Elford at City University on the use of the internet as a research tool has given him a great opportunity to review approaches to collecting qualitative and quantitative data in the context of new technologies. Other funded activities include work on quality of life and resilience in early old age, an analysis of patterns of consumption across generations and an evaluation of the London Borough of Camden's strategy to enhance the quality of life of its older citizens. As Director of Social Research Methodology Centre at City University (www.city.ac.uk/socology/srmc) he has coordinated Economic and Social Research Council research training in social statistics, methodology and computing and host one of their Regional Research Training Centres.

Sally Wiggins is currently a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Strathclyde, UK, where she teaches qualitative methods and social psychology to undergraduate and masters students. Her research to date has focused on eating practices within family contexts, using discursive psychology to examine, amongst other things, the ways in which food and embodiment issues are negotiated on a mundane level. She is currently engaged in a project that aims to unpack some of the processes involved in National Health Service weight management groups, specifically those that address the expert/lay relationship between 'obese' patients and health professionals, and the means by which individual responsibility is encouraged and subverted. She became interested in critical ways of understanding psychology as an undergraduate at the University of Dundee, inspired by Suzanne Zeedyk and Nick Hopkins, and developed this interest more fully during her postgraduate study at Loughborough University, under the supervision of Jonathan Potter.

Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger are conversation analysts, based at the universities of Loughborough and York, UK, respectively. They are well-known for their work on feminism,

gender and sexuality, having published between them 11 books and some 150 articles in these areas. Active members of the Loughborough Discourse & Rhetoric Group (present and past), they both (re)trained as conversation analysts at UCLA. Their current projects include analyses of reaction tokens (exclamations of, for example, surprise ['oh!'] or disgust ['ugh!']), and person reference formulations (for example, the uses of 'I' and 'we'). Celia is working with data drawn from home birth and birth crisis helplines and Sue with data drawn from cancer support groups and a fibromyalgia helpline, as well as (for both) ordinary, everyday talk-in-interaction. Sue and Celia legally married in Canada in 2003 (when Sue was working at Simon Fraser University), and in 2006 – with the support of Liberty – they brought a high-profile human rights case to the UK High Court, seeking a declaration of the validity of their (valid Canadian) marriage in the UK. They lost their case, but continue to campaign for equal access to marriage for same-sex couples (see www.equalmarriagerights.org) as well as to research and write on this and related issues.

Carla Willig lectures at City University, London. A major theme in her work to date has been a concern with method(ology). Ever since she chose to use a qualitative research method for her doctoral research at a time when such approaches were still very much on the fringes in psychology, she has felt compelled to engage with questions around the nature, status and legitimacy of knowledge claims. She has published empirical as well as theoretical papers and book chapters concerned with epistemological and methodological questions. Much of this work constitutes an attempt to marry a social constructionist perspective with a critical realist epistemology. She is the editor of *Applied Discourse Analysis. Social and Psychological Interventions* (1999) and the author of *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology. Adventures in Theory and Method* (2001), both published by Open University Press. More recently, she has developed an interest in phenomenological approaches to research and has completed training in existential counselling psychology. Her current research is concerned with the role and function of interpretation, both in research and in the psychotherapeutic process.

Marcia Worrell has been teaching and conducting research using qualitative methods for the past 14 years. She is currently senior lecturer/assistant programme convenor in psychology at Roehampton University and a member of the Clinical and Health Psychology Research Centre. Previously Marcia worked at the University of Bedfordshire (formerly Luton) where she was involved in setting up the Centre for Psychology and Culture which brought together innovations in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and research rooted in social constructionist philosophical frameworks. She got into 'Q' following her involvement with the Beryl Curt collective and used the technique in her doctoral thesis on child sexual abuse.

Lucy Yardley is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Southampton, UK. She was fortunate to have a PhD supervisor (Alan Costall) who took a non-realist approach to experimental research, and introduced her to pragmatic and phenomenological theory. This theoretical background allowed her to see how constructivist analysis of talk could be linked with analysis of the material dimensions of our lives (see her edited volume *Material Discourses of Health and Illness*, 1997). In her research she has always used a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve her objective of empowering people to cope with their illness or disability. An understanding of many different research methods has also proved valuable for her new role as joint editor of the journal *Psychology and Health*, as mixing methods in her own research has enabled her to develop principles that can be used to evaluate the validity of the diverse types of research submitted to the journal.

Lisa Saville Young trained as a Clinical Psychologist in South Africa where she first began using qualitative methods and in particular narrative analysis. In 2001 she relocated to the UK to further her studies at Cambridge University, where she worked with Juliet Mitchell conducting an analysis of narratives by people who were evacuees during World War II. This research had a particular focus on the role of sibling relationships during the evacuation and looked critically at psychoanalytic writings at that time which emphasised the parent-child relationship. In 2006 she completed her doctoral thesis at Birkbeck College, University of London entitled “‘Doing brother’ and the construction of masculinities: A psychosocial approach’. The thesis explored the experience and meaning of being a brother by focusing on the social dimension of brothering as well as on the deeply personal nature of ‘doing brother’. It has been during her PhD under the supervision of Stephen Frosh that she has really begun thinking carefully about how one can usefully and appropriately apply psychoanalytic concepts to interpretive research. She recently returned to South Africa where she plans to continue researching fraternity and masculinity from within a psychosocial framework.

Introduction

Carla Willig and Wendy Stainton-Rogers

Until recently, qualitative research methods occupied a contested space on the margins of mainstream psychology. We are now witnessing a process of incorporation and expansion. In the UK at least, qualitative approaches to psychological research are increasingly being integrated into the mainstream. The British Psychological Society now rules that for a degree programme to be accredited, qualitative methods must be taught. UK funding bodies (such as the Economic and Social Research Council) are now starting to favour research proposals which use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. UK Government sponsored bodies (such as NICE – the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) that make recommendations on ‘evidence based practice’ are beginning to open up their reviews to qualitative as well as quantitative studies in areas such as health psychology.

Equally qualitative research in psychology is growing. Both undergraduate and higher degree students are increasingly opting for qualitative methods for their dissertations. As the chapters in Section 3 of this handbook indicate, more qualitative research is being published and, for example, journals like the

British Journal of Social Psychology and the *Journal of Health Psychology* are beginning to get more than token numbers of qualitative psychologists on their editorial boards. At the same time, a number of psychology journals have recently devoted whole editions to qualitative work, guest edited by qualitative researchers and usually devoted to a particular field or approach (e.g. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology* in 2000, *Canadian Psychology* in 2002, and the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* in 2005). A number of new journals have recently been established specifically to promote the status and use of qualitative methods. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, launched in 2004, is the best example, its mission explicitly to explore and expand ‘the territory of qualitative psychological research’ as well as ‘strengthening its identity within the international research community and defining its place within the undergraduate and graduate curriculum’. In 2006, within less than one year of being formed, the British Psychological Society’s Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section with its 1500 members became the biggest section within the society. As we go to press, a new Division for

Qualitative Inquiry is in the process of being established within the American Psychological Association.

Nobody is claiming that the dominance of quantitative research is threatened by immanent overthrow. But there is something stirring, and the turning point in the fortunes of qualitative research in psychology is an ideal time for this handbook. It has provided us, as its editors, with a fascinating and rewarding opportunity to trace its trajectory from the past into the future. It also offers an ideal opportunity to identify key debates, their historical origins and their implications for future developments, and to map how qualitative perspectives have been accommodated and operationalized across the sub-disciplines of psychology.

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

As we have found as editors of this edition, there is not a lot of agreement about what kind of 'beast' a handbook actually is! A good place to start may well be what it is not. Certainly a handbook is not like a manual for a car or a washing machine – lots of 'how to use it' information together with advice for trouble-shooting when the various bits go wrong. It is more conceptual and contextual than that. But neither is it an amazingly erudite – but highly specialized – collection of technical, speculative or rhetorical articles intended for elite in-groups preoccupied with teasing out the more arcane or procedural minutiae of the method (or its application) in question. It is much more down to earth than that.

Somewhere between the two a handbook is supposed to be useful, especially to those with an interest – either in qualitative research in psychology generally, or in a specific method more precisely – but limited prior knowledge. It is more of a 'get-to-know-you' device, an up-to-date map of qualitative research methods in psychology at the beginning of the 21st century. It is all about what these methods are; how they do (and do not) fit together; how and

where they are being used (and for what); and in what ways some key, overarching positions and standpoints (such as ethics, feminism and postcolonialism) frame, and are framed by, the qualitative research agenda in psychology.

Our aim has been for the map to be rich in its coverage, reviewing – reasonably comprehensively – the wide diversity of approaches to qualitative research in psychology that have been developed over the years. The chapters also explore how and why the various approaches have been brought into play at a particular time and in particular ways. As editors of the book, we invited our contributors to review the use of qualitative methods within their area of expertise, to evaluate the contribution these methods have made and to critically examine the ways in which qualitative research has informed both theory and practice. Finally, we asked contributors to anticipate possible future developments and trends in the application of such methods. As we read through the chapters, we were struck by the sheer diversity and range in positions and approaches. For example, it became clear that practitioners (i.e. those whose work primarily involves the application of psychological knowledge to 'real world' problems) and academics (i.e. those whose work primarily consists of producing and evaluating knowledge) work to different concerns and priorities and thus experience (and construct) different cultures within which qualitative perspectives are used and evaluated. We shall return to the theme of diversity in our concluding chapter.

WHO IS IT FOR?

One of the main audiences for the handbook will be students (mainly postgraduate but also some undergraduates) starting out on a piece of their own psychological research (possibly their first and probably for a dissertation). Our intention is to take them beyond what they gained from their basic research methods training and to offer them a 'first port of call' to gaining a more

in-depth knowledge and understanding both about a specific qualitative method and/or qualitative approaches more generally. The handbook is also designed for more established researchers and teachers. We particularly hope it will attract those interested in moving into – or at least learning about – the expanding range of different qualitative methods, techniques and applications currently being developed by psychologists.

The 13 chapters in Section 1 ('Methods') each offer an up-to-date review of a specific method, written by authors with considerable experience in using them. We chose people who know the methods well, can enthuse about their merits, point out their pitfalls, illustrate what they can do and speculate where they are going. We specifically invited our 'experts' to co-author with one or more less experienced – or maybe just less well known – colleagues or graduate students and many of them did so. Our plan was to get on board co-authoring partnerships and teams who could, between them, combine the sagacity and shrewdness of experience with the passion and freshness of the newcomer.

These chapters are not detailed 'how-to-do-it' manuals – although advice will be given where to find this kind of information. Rather the aim is to provide a sufficiently detailed review and overview to help the reader decide whether the method is worth considering, and, if so, where to go next to get themselves up-to-speed.

Second, Section 2 ('Perspectives and Techniques') engages with overarching concerns and positions which inform the ways in which qualitative research is conducted and disseminated. Here, questions around ethics, feminism and the uses of technology are raised. Section 2 also looks at new developments in visual modalities and arguments around mixing methods.

Finally, Section 3 ('Applications') gives readers an alternative take on choosing a method. This section contains reviews of qualitative methods as used in 12 of psychology's sub-disciplines, demonstrating the ways in which context interacts with methodological concerns.

As such, the sections of the book constitute different kinds of maps which the reader can use to navigate the terrain of qualitative methodology. Depending on the researcher's objectives (that is, their destination) they may require lexical direction from Section 1, topological guidance from Section 2 and/or a view from the various perspectives identified in Section 3. Overall, the purpose of this handbook is to help readers gain a sense of the territory and to enable them to make well-informed methodological choices.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our triumphal start to this introductory chapter superficially buys into a common perception that 'qualitative psychology' is a new phenomenon which has emerged over the last 20–30 years and which has finally succeeded in establishing itself as a distinct branch of psychology. This position is well exemplified by Kelley:

Qualitative methodology has emerged as part of a broad movement that Rabinow and Sullivan (1979) call an 'interpretative turn' in social science epistemology ... There can be little doubt that this 'turn' has had a pervasive influence, and qualitative research has become much more widely accepted as a valid approach within the social sciences.

Kelley (1999: 398)

However, we would like to challenge this interpretation of history. Qualitative approaches have been part and parcel of psychology from its very beginnings. While marginalized and muted for about the first 80 years of the 20th century, they never completely went away. The insights gained through their application constitute much of what is now considered to be psychological knowledge.

Going back a good way – to Vico's *Scienza Nuova* (1752) – the idea that, for instance, knowledge is contingent is a very old one indeed. It is encapsulated in his *verum ipsum factum* principle that we can only logically guarantee the truth of that we ourselves make (see Shotter, 1981: 267).

From the start both Wilhelm Wundt and William James, who are often associated with the founding of psychology as a discipline, acknowledged the importance of both subjectivist (introspection) and objectivist (measurements of behaviours) approaches to psychological research (see Farr, 1996; Jones and Elcock, 2001). Both of them were also concerned with meaning, culture and identity (see Richards, 1996; Stainton Rogers, 2003) because, for both of them, mind was still the object of study in psychology (Farr, 1996).

Moreover, as Kvale (2003), for example, has pointed out, key figures like Freud, Piaget and Adorno used the qualitative interview as the basis of substantial areas of psychological knowledge (about child development, personality, sexuality, prejudice, motivation and so on).

Certainly quantitative research came to dominate psychology at the turn of the previous century (1890–1912) when mentalism gave way to behaviourism (Leahey, 2000) and introspection as method and consciousness as the subject of study were abandoned by the mainstream. At this point psychology, as a discipline, became reformulated as the science of behaviour (see, for example, Farr, 1996: 22 on 'Wissenschaft').

Danziger (1990) provides a detailed account of how research in psychology began as a subjective, if not qualitative endeavour, and how quantitative methods gained dominance, 'relegating any other method ... to the realm of the unscientific' (Danziger, 1990: 107). This shift from introspection to experimental and survey research also involves a 'demotion' of the subject of the research from expert observer of the self to naïve response unit. Danziger (1990) describes how in the early days, experimental subjects were highly trained, their names or initials identified in research reports, and their responses almost always reported at the individual level. Theoretical discussions centred around the nature of the individual response patterns, even where average responses were included. It was only when scientific enquiry began to be concerned with aggregates and generalization that the object of psychological study

was reconfigured into the experimenter's quantitative measurement of the 'mindless' response of the experimental subject.

It has been argued (e.g. Jones and Elcock, 2001; Richards, 1996) that this shift was at least partly driven by a socio-economic demand for psychology to become more utilitarian – for it to generate knowledge which could be useful for managing society and its problems (in areas like crime, mental hygiene, selecting children for schools and people for jobs). One of its consequences was the marginalization and consequent devaluing of subjectivist methods of psychological enquiry. Another was a tendency to make judgements about individuals on the basis of aggregate data.

Questionnaires allowed social scientists to create and then statistically interrogate data gathered from large samples (such as crime rates) and then, using indices (such as age, gender and 'race'), to discover associations – for example, that criminal behaviour is more common among the 'lower social orders'. From there, it was not hard to make the conceptual leap to, for example, viewing 'the poor' as collectively more prone to criminality. And then all too easy to go one step further and transform these associations found within aggregate data into evidence for individual 'predispositions' (for instance, towards crime, to suicide, to insanity). Through this tortuous logic, simply by being a member of a particular group defined by demographics (e.g. living in a certain neighbourhood) individuals became imbued with what Quetelet (1842) called 'propensities'.

A preoccupation with quantification was also reinforced by a more general movement in the social sciences at the end of the 19th century towards the view that there was a single 'philosophy of science' – a single set of principles that underpin research. This was certainly the aspiration, expressed succinctly by Karl Marx when he proposed that 'Natural science will in time subsume the science of man [sic] just as the science of man will subsume natural science: there will be one science' (Marx, 1975: 355; emphasis in the original).

As a young man Sigmund Freud, too, declared his goal was to ‘furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science’ (Freud, 1950: 295) and for most of his career at least saw this as an ideal to be pursued. However, in later life he became convinced that ‘mental events seem to be immeasurable and probably always will be so’ (cf. Jones, 1955: 470).

The construction of ‘scientific psychology’ as natural science (hence ‘proper psychology’) and the consequent rendering of soft/unscientific psychology as human science (hence the delinquent Other) had serious consequences for the development of the qualitative research tradition. The dispute about whether psychology was a natural science, or whether it was part of both the natural and human sciences was resolved in favour of the former and in favour of the new generation of experimental psychologists who defended this position (see Danziger, 1979, 1990, in Farr, 1996: 20). Farr (1996: 21) notes that, as a result, the history of psychology has typically been portrayed as the history of psychology as a branch of natural science, neglecting/obscuring its social/human science heritage. Social psychology alone maintained its dual social/human scientific orientation until the second half of the 20th century (Farr, 1996: 22).

Several authors offer reflections on the history of qualitative research methodology within their contributions to this handbook. In particular Brown and Locke (Chapter 21) develop some of the themes raised in this introduction.

POSITIVISM

In this handbook we have taken the position that there should be no more need to justify the use of qualitative methods than there is to justify quantitative methods. We envisage no long explanations appearing in our companion *Handbook of Quantitative Research* that argue such a case. Neither handbook should get bogged down in a debate about which is

the better, more valid or more useful route to knowledge.

However, given its historical positioning as ‘failing’ the gold standard, a number of authors have chosen to clarify their perspectives by way of contrast with what is often glossed as ‘positivist’ approaches to psychological research. Since ‘positivism’ is invoked repeatedly within this volume, we would like to take the opportunity to offer some thoughts on this concept.

First of all, it is obvious that in the context of qualitative methods the term carries negative connotations. Someone new to the world of qualitative research may not find it easy to come to grips with the complexities of social constructionism, hermeneutics and post-structuralism. But they would soon become all too aware that being a ‘positivist’ is something to be avoided at all cost! However, it may not be so clear to them what is actually involved in ‘being a positivist’. This is because sometimes the label ‘positivist’ is deployed for polemical purposes, in place of an argument. This can create confusion and misunderstandings, especially since people may have different definitions of what the term designates.

So, to clarify, in contemporary discourse, ‘positivism’ refers to a set of beliefs about how legitimate knowledge about the world may be acquired. Key positivist ideas are that:

philosophy should be scientific, that metaphysical speculations are meaningless, that there is a universal and a priori scientific method, that a main function of philosophy is to analyse that method, that this basic scientific method is the same both in the natural and social sciences, that the various sciences should be reducible to physics, and that the theoretical parts of good science must be translatable into statements about observations.

Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy
(2000: 696)

This has meant that in psychology, positivism has been associated with a preference for quantitative data and controlled experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. Positivist principles have also been invoked in order to undermine knowledge claims and

critiques generated on the basis of qualitative and/or critical perspectives.

As a result, it is often forgotten that positivism has a radical history. It was conceived as a challenge to religion and metaphysics, regimes of truth which had functioned to perpetuate society's 'common sense' and the socio-economic structures which it supported. In 19th century France and Latin America, Comtean positivism drove anti-clerical and anti-conservative politics and activism. 'Progressive' political ideas were associated with scientific progress and the victory of reason over prejudice and superstition. It was only later, during the 20th century, that positivism lost its connection with radicalism and that its commitment to scientific objectivity began to take on a conservative hue.

A similar argument could be made in relation to 'science', although this concept is much more ambiguously positioned within qualitative methodology discourse. Some of our authors very explicitly claim the term (e.g. Giorgi and Giorgi in Chapter 10), using the word 'science' in its broadest sense – as a systematic, rigorous, empirical endeavour that needs to be carried out properly if it is to produce knowledge which is trustworthy and reliable. They are taking a stance – as advocated by Brickman, for example – that:

[c]ontrary to what is sometimes asserted, science is a question of aim, not method. Science is an effort to make accurate observations and valid causal inferences, and to assemble these observations and inferences in a compact and coherent way.

Brickman (1980: 10)

From this perspective science does not have to be defined solely in terms of the hypothetico-deductive method. Other – qualitative – methods can be equally rigorous and valid.

The identification of 'science' with hypothetico-deductivism is a relatively recent development (Popper, 1963). Before that time, 'science' was treated as a much more malleable concept. Until the end of the 18th century, for example, it was natural philosophy that concerned itself with

experimentation and the identification of factual knowledge about the natural world, whilst 'science' was concerned with something more akin to logic and with knowledge of what is necessarily the case.

If we accept that 'science' is an historical concept, and that arguments around the extent to which qualitative methods can be 'scientific' contribute to its definition and evolution then we should not be overly concerned with whether or not to invoke the concept. Rather we should focus on the various ways in which qualitative researchers have tried to inspire confidence in the value of their findings. We shall return to the question of quality (and its appraisal) in qualitative research in our concluding chapter.

EMPIRICISM

Another key concept, 'empiricism', also captures a variety of meanings. In one sense, all qualitative research in psychology is 'empirical' because it gathers data, analyses or interprets it and draws conclusions. Claims made and conclusions reached are based upon an engagement with material that is, in one way or another, part of the social world that is being studied. Whether we work with interview transcripts, video-recordings of a social event, written memories, paintings or photographs, we are researching 'the world'. On the other hand, we know that there is no simple and direct relationship between 'the world' and our experience of it which means that our analyses of the data will always be mediated by us, the researchers.

Reflexivity is, therefore, a necessary dimension of all research, including qualitative research. Perhaps 'empiricism' is best thought of as a reference point in our reflections about our relationship with 'the world' rather than as a label which we either identify with or reject. Finally, the concept of 'reductionism' is perhaps the hardest to salvage. In frequent use since the mid-20th century, it describes an approach to knowledge which aims to reduce complex phenomena to more fundamental, underlying (usually material)

causal factors. These tend to be seen as pre-existing, self-contained and as such not subject to processes of transformation and feed-back loops. As such, reductionist versions of scientific thought contrast sharply with systems approaches and dialectical perspectives. It is probably safe to say that reductionist thinking is incompatible with most qualitative approaches to research in psychology.

THE 'TURN TO LANGUAGE'

A major challenge to psychology's claim to natural-scientific status did not emerge until the 1970s when the ideas and experiences of the emancipatory movements of the 1960s filtered through into the discourse of academic psychology. For example, feminist psychologists questioned research methods which had produced 'findings' confirming women's inferior intellectual abilities and moral character (e.g. Gilligan, 1982). The nature of psychological knowledge itself was interrogated and its reflexive, historical character was exposed (e.g. Gergen, 1973). Far from simply describing human behaviour and its causes, psychology as a discipline and a practice was actively shaping people's experiences.

The 'turn to language' describes an intellectual orientation which pays attention to how our ways of talking about and representing 'reality' contribute to its very appearance and effects. Such a perspective provides the tools for a fundamental critique of the type of psychological research which uncritically deploys commonsense concepts (such as prejudice, anger, aggression, self-esteem, intelligence) and seeks to measure them. The 'turn to language' allowed researchers to deconstruct the very concepts that appeared to underpin psychological knowledge (e.g. Parker, 1992). Since it is concerned with the construction of meaning (and its consequences), the 'turn to language' gave rise to a burgeoning of qualitative research in psychology. Over the years, a range of approaches to discursive analysis have emerged, the most influential of which are

discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this volume. Some researchers (e.g. Chapter 6) are particularly concerned with the ways in which talking about, and therefore representing, 'reality' feed into wider power relations, that is, with how discourse maintains the institutions and commonsense of a society. Others (e.g. Chapters 4 and 5) are more interested in the ways in which individuals deploy discursive resources in particular social situations and with what effects. Yet others (e.g. Wetherell, 1998) prefer not to choose between these two foci and aim to integrate them in their discursive analyses.

Although the 'turn to language' and the research inspired by it seem to have taken centre stage in contemporary qualitative psychology, other qualitative traditions have continued to develop and thrive alongside discursive work. For example, at Duquesne University in the USA, phenomenological research procedures were refined and disseminated throughout the 1960s and 1970s (see Chapter 11), whilst in the UK Harré and colleagues (e.g. Marsh, Rosser and Harré, 1978) formulated the ethogenic approach to the study of (dis)ordered behaviour. Both descriptive and interpretative (hermeneutic) forms of qualitative research continue to coexist with discursive perspectives although the latter have perhaps been better at attracting attention amongst psychological researchers. This, however, appears to be changing now that 'interpretation' is becoming a major concern among qualitative psychologists.

THE 'TURN TO INTERPRETATION'

Recent years have seen a growing concern with the role of interpretation in qualitative research. Although there has, of course, always been a hermeneutic tradition within qualitative research, many qualitative psychologists had avoided overt interpretation and, instead, preferred to use qualitative methods as a way of capturing and systematically re-presenting participant-generated meanings in the form of descriptive themes.

It has been argued (e.g. Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2002) that until now much qualitative research has implicitly adhered to a positivist epistemology. The format in which such qualitative research is presented tends to mirror the structure of the quantitative research report (introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion). Data are taken at face value and the work of analysis consists of a process of careful and systematic categorization of participants' statements into themes which are then presented as 'findings'. Interpretation does not enter the picture until the very end, when the 'findings' are reflected upon in the discussion section of the report.

This approach to qualitative research has been strongly encouraged by the format and style conventions adopted by the vast majority of psychological journals. It probably also helped qualitative researchers to gain acceptance among their quantitatively oriented peers, as it lends an air of objectivity to the research. Chamberlain (2000) has identified this tendency to avoid theory and to fall victim to methodolatry in qualitative health psychology.

Increasingly, however, qualitative psychologists are engaging with the question of interpretation. They are asking questions about the social and/or psychological structures and processes which may generate the themes which are identified in participants' accounts, and they interrogate existing psychological theories in the light of qualitative data. Qualitative research is becoming more interpretative, less content to see careful description as the endpoint of the research. Frosh and Young (Chapter 7) advocate 'binocularity' as a way of combining 'ground up' (i.e. descriptive, focus on 'what is there') with 'top down' (i.e. theory-driven, interpretative) approaches. They propose that thick, detailed description followed by an attempt to draw on psychological theory in order to explain phenomena can enrich our understanding. In their chapter, they demonstrate how qualitative researchers can produce analysis which is both grounded in data *and* theoretically driven.

Eatough and Smith (Chapter 11) address this question in relation to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and they acknowledge that for both IPA and for qualitative psychology as a whole 'what is actually involved in interpretation ... is ... a pretty neglected or undeveloped area' (p. 190). Interestingly, it seems that the preferred theoretical orientation within this movement towards interpretation has, so far, been psychodynamic although more explicitly political perspectives such as Marxism and feminism have also been adopted.

There is also a difference between qualitative methods of analysis which presuppose a clearly defined theoretical orientation and those which do not. For example, discourse analytic research presupposes that discourse constructs rather than reflects versions of reality, and that language use is performative. This means that what research participants say is not taken at 'face value' and that the application of the methodological procedure itself constitutes an act of interpretation, generating a theoretically informed reading.

By contrast, methods such as IPA offer methodological guidelines for the identification of themes, but they do not specify how, or even whether, these ought to be linked theoretically. Here, interpretation comes after representation, although it is clearly acknowledged that the researcher's identity and standpoint will inevitably colour the way in which s/he represents participants' material thematically. Eatough and Smith (Chapter 11) identify differing 'levels of interpretation' ranging from the empathic-descriptive where the researcher tries to 'stand in the shoes of the participant' and produces a rich experiential description, to the critical-hermeneutic level where the researcher builds an alternative narrative which differs from the participant's own account of what is going on and which offers a deeper understanding of the participant's experience (see also Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006).

The latter may be informed by existing psychological theories. What distinguishes qualitative research concerned with description from qualitative research concerned with

interpretation is that the latter aspires to generate an understanding of how people come to experience the world and themselves in a particular way. In other words, there is an attempt to understand, as well as to describe, phenomena. This also means that overtly interpretative work is based on the premise that people may not be aware of all the processes that are involved in their behaviour and experience, and that the task of psychological research is to bring these to light.

Interpretation, then, means gaining a better understanding of phenomena than those who manifest or enact them would normally have themselves. This means that engaging with the question of interpretation raises issues of ownership and power. It entails addressing questions such as who has the last word (e.g. does the research report constitute the last word and where does that leave the research participants?) and what happens when the research participants do not agree with the researcher's interpretation (e.g. does such disagreement get further interpreted as resistance to the emotional significance of the interpretation and where does that leave the participant?).

One of the reasons for adopting qualitative methods in feminist research was to give voice to participants and to allow their own perspective and understanding of their experiences to be foregrounded. This was partly a response, and challenge, to traditional ('male-stream') research which had discounted women's voices and interpreted the meaning of women's behaviour and experiences through the lens of theories which had been developed on the basis of male research participants' responses (e.g. Gilligan, 1982).

We believe that it is important that a 'turn to interpretation' in contemporary qualitative research does not mean a return to the unreflected imposition of meanings upon participants' material. There has already been some debate regarding the ethical implications of reading research participants' accounts through a set of pre-defined theoretical constructs (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2005a,b; Spears, 2005; Wetherell, 2005). Whilst established theories provide powerful

tools for analysis, they can also create blindspots and projections which can cover up meanings as much as reveal them. It is important to bear in mind that interpretation ought to be concerned with understanding rather than with explanation (cf. Dilthey, 1976), and, as such, it should not aspire to the production of certainties, of definitive knowledge and facts, of last words.

Cohn (2005: 221) reminds us that interpretation is inexhaustible – what Curt (1994) termed the *interrogation interminable*. Moreover, all understanding is partial: 'something always remains un-understood'. Pujol and Stainton Rogers (1996: 17) describe this as 'the irritating little bits and bats that cannot be neatly accommodated within pre-existing theoretical frameworks'. The phenomenon of interest should not become something different through being interpreted; it does not get translated into, and thus replaced by, its underlying meaning because it is not 'a disguise for what is "real"' (Cohn, 2005: 222). Instead, interpretation means amplification of meaning, an exploration and clarification of the many strands of meaning which constitute the phenomenon of interest. This includes paying attention to absences and their significance. Cohn (2005: 224) writes, 'We need ... to remember that the process of revealing the unknown part of a phenomenon does not replace a deceptive manifest utterance or symptom with the reality of a true meaning which invalidates what we have seen so far. On the contrary, the perceived phenomenon gains clarity, richness and meaningfulness whenever a new aspect of its totality is discovered'.

The challenge to qualitative researchers is, therefore, to go beyond what presents itself, to reveal dimensions of a phenomenon which are concealed or hidden, whilst at the same time taking care not to impose meaning upon the phenomenon, not to squeeze it into pre-conceived categories or theoretical formulations, not to reduce it to an underlying cause. In practice, it may not always be easy to distinguish between the two which means that sustained attention needs to be paid to the ethical dimensions of qualitative research.

METHODOLOGY

Curt (1994: 106) defines methodology as the worship of method (notably scientific method), according it a separate, revered status as the only self-respecting means by which 'true knowledge' can be discovered. Method is idolized because it portrays research as exacting and highly skilled, the province of 'experts'.

Methodology thus serves the purpose of enabling psychologists to cast themselves as the sole architects of legitimate knowledge about 'the science of behaviour' ... The ability to select and use appropriate methods of enquiry (and their associated statistical techniques) is held to be the key to extracting the 'gold of pure truth' from the dross of opinion, prejudice, folk-tale and superstition. Methods are the alchemies of these modern day alchemists. In marking its territory with the Academy, mainstream psychology, almost throughout its history, has presented scientific methods of empirical enquiry as the antidote to the ills of 'armchair psychology'.

Stainton Rogers, Stenner, Gleeson and
Stainton Rogers (1995: 226)

Although the target of these critical comments is 'mainstream psychology' using 'scientific methods', qualitative psychology is not immune to methodology. There are times when methodological preoccupations and conflicts dominate the debate at the expense of ethical and political concerns. There is also a range of views, within the qualitative research community, about the relationship between methodological and ideological considerations. At one end of the continuum, there are those who argue that qualitative (and indeed all) research serves a political purpose in that it either challenges or supports the (political, economic, social, cultural) status quo, and that, therefore, ethical and political issues need to be at the top of the research agenda (e.g. Parker, 1992). From this point of view, the methods we use in our research are essentially a means to an end such as the empowerment of socially disadvantaged groups of people. Researchers in community psychology (see Chapter 29) are likely to take this position. At the other end of the continuum, there are those who are

rather more agnostic about values and who prefer to focus on the specific ways in which a particular method can shed light on specific processes or phenomena. From this point of view, our research has no purpose other than to increase understanding and this is made possible by the application of the method (which is not to say that such understanding cannot also be used in order to bring about positive change). Such a position is likely to be taken by phenomenological researchers (e.g. Chapters 10 and 11) or by those whose work is influenced by conversation analytic principles (e.g. Chapters 4 and 5). An example of an engagement between these two positions can be found in the exchange between Sims-Schouten, Riley and Willig (2007) and Speer (2007). Most researchers will choose a position somewhere in between the two ends of the continuum and it is likely that one's position evolves over time. The chapters in this handbook offer a wide range of positions on this, and related, questions.

Throughout this introduction, we have emphasized that qualitative psychology is characterized by a range of positions and approaches regarding epistemology, ethics and politics. There is also a difference in priorities and concerns between academic researchers and practitioner researchers. We have drawn attention to qualitative methodology's complex relationship with knowledge, and we have stressed that this handbook is about mapping and navigation rather than about recipes and rules. Whilst these are all worthy sentiments (as well as, in our view, inevitable features of a qualitative perspective), we have to admit that our task as editors would have been a lot easier, had we been able to use a positivist framework from within which to read our contributors' chapters! As it was, we were presented with the challenge of having to ensure that a hugely diverse range of treatments of the topic of 'qualitative research in psychology' was presented within the confines of the aims and objectives of a research methods handbook. This was no easy task. As there is no single authority on what is 'right' or 'wrong' in qualitative research, we decided to use our

contract with the reader as our guide to the editorial process. This has meant that, as editors, we tried to ensure that each chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the 'state of the art' within a particular area of work. We invited authors to write clearly and accessibly so that readers new to the field would be able to understand and appreciate the ideas presented in the handbook. Although we encouraged authors to position themselves in relation to other approaches and perspectives, we did not feel that partisan treatments of the subject matter would be helpful. We hope that we have achieved the right balance between description and interpretation (!) within these pages, and that readers will be able to use this handbook as a clear, comprehensive and reliable guide on their journey through qualitative psychology.

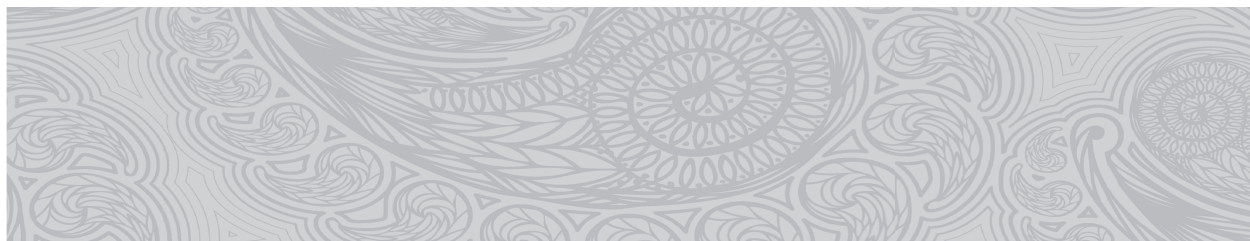
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SECTION I

Methods



Ethnography

Christine Griffin and Andrew Bengry-Howell

INTRODUCTION

It is relatively unusual for textbooks on qualitative research in psychology to include a chapter on ethnography. Despite the rapid increase in the number of texts on qualitative research in psychology over the past twenty years, several key books on this subject still make no mention of ethnography (e.g. Hayes, 1997; Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001). However, a few texts with a focus on psychological research do cover ethnographic methods to some extent (e.g. Banister et al., 1994; Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network, 1999; Richardson, 1996). One general text on research methods in psychology covering a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches does include a chapter on 'ethnographic and action research' (Uzzell, in Breakwell Hammond and Fife-Shaw, 2000), but this is an exception.

Ethnography is more extensively covered in general social science texts on research methods (e.g. Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 2003; Silverman, 1997, 2001), and of course ethnography is discussed in considerable depth in anthropological texts (e.g. Aull Davies, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994;

Fetterman, 1998). To a great extent this reflects the fact that qualitative methods in general and studies using ethnographic methods in particular have been more pervasive and more influential within sociology, education and other social sciences than in psychology. However, it is also a reflection of the selective forgetting process that can assail psychologists. A number of the classic studies in psychology, and especially in social psychology, involve ethnographic and other observational methods, as discussed later in this chapter. In addition, ethnographic methods remain a substantial force in contemporary psychology, and not only in qualitative social psychological research.

HISTORY AND DEFINITIONS

Historical and philosophical context

The historical and academic context in which ethnography emerged is well documented. As a research technique intended to describe the cultures of particular social groups, ethnographic techniques were employed by anthropologists such as Malinowski (1922) and Mead (1928), who investigated the

sexual practices of island peoples in the Pacific and Polynesian islands respectively. Banister et al. (1994) cite studies by Fanny Wright in 1821 on 'A View of Society and Manners in America', and Harriet Martineau on 'Society in America' in 1827 as early examples of ethnographies of 'everyday life'. A good working short-hand definition of ethnography is 'participant observation', since anthropologists used ethnography to immerse themselves in the culture of the society under investigation in order to describe life in that culture in depth (O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994). In many cases, anthropological studies employing ethnographic methods have involved 'First World' researchers investigating various 'Third World' communities. During the 1940s and 1950s, however, American sociologists linked to the University of Chicago used similar techniques to produce ethnographies of urban American working class communities (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). William Whyte's 'Street Corner Society' (1955) is a classic example of this approach. Whyte's study of the 'Norton Street gang' in Boston's North End focused on a group of young white working class American men. Since then, ethnography has been used widely across many areas of social science research, including psychology.

What of the philosophical underpinnings of ethnography? Contemporary ethnography belongs to a tradition of 'naturalism' which emphasizes the importance of understanding the meanings and cultural practices of people from within everyday contexts. This approach draws on the *verstehen* ('understanding') tradition of interpretative analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Naturalism can be contrasted with positivism, which treats people as objects of scientific investigation, such that the researcher aims to eliminate all traces of his or her 'subjective' bias (e.g. emotional responses, political beliefs, prejudices, expectations etc.) and aims to take an objective, detached 'scientific' stance. Although ethnographic research tends to be allied to the naturalistic tradition rather than to positivism, some ethnographers have also

used this method in conjunction with a positivist approach (e.g. O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994).

Definitions

The textbook by Banister and colleagues on *Qualitative Methods in Psychology* includes a chapter describing ethnography as 'perhaps the original and quintessential qualitative research method' (Banister et al., 1994: 34). In addition, Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994) locates ethnography very firmly at the centre of the qualitative research tradition, especially as developed in sociology and anthropology. Ethnography is variously defined (in *non-psychology* texts) as a form of observation involving qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, and usually a degree of participation by the researcher in the world that they are investigating. Hammersley and Atkinson's classic text on ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983), represents it as a process in which the researcher participates, overtly or covertly, in people's everyday lives for a sustained period, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions and collecting any other relevant information (see also Punch, 1998).

What are some of the defining features of ethnographic research? Ethnography focuses on cultural interpretation, and aims to understand the cultural and symbolic aspects of people's actions and the contexts in which those actions occur. Ethnographic research usually focuses on a specific group of people or a case involving culturally significant practices or actions. In addition, Punch (1998) and Denscombe (2003) identify several important features of the ethnographic approach:

- a) Ethnography is founded on the assumption that the shared cultural meanings of a social group are vital for understanding the activities of any social group. The task of the ethnographic researcher is to uncover those meanings. For ethnographic researchers, routine and mundane aspects of everyday life are considered worthy of investigation as research data.

- b) Ethnographic researchers are attuned to the meanings that behaviour, actions, contexts and events have from the perspective of those involved. Ethnography seeks an insider's perspective, aiming to understand a phenomenon from the points of view of those involved – which can be diverse, complex and contradictory.
- c) A specific social group or case will be studied in its 'natural' setting: i.e. not in the research laboratory or in an artificially manipulated or controlled environment. A full ethnography involving participant observation entails the researcher becoming part of this 'natural' setting.
- d) Ethnographic studies tend to be relatively loosely structured, evolving and developing over time in relation to the activities, events and cultural practices and priorities of the group being studied. Research questions, hypotheses and data collection procedures may develop as the study proceeds, although most ethnographic studies do begin with a set of research questions, an overall research design and a strategy for data collection and analysis.
- e) Ethnography is a multi-method form of research including structured or semi-structured questionnaires and/or interviews, non-participant through to full participant observation (PO), diaries, film or video records and official documents (Banister et al., 1994). A sustained period of fieldwork is central to the ethnographic approach, in which the researcher spends substantial periods of time 'in the field', working or living alongside the research participants in order to immerse themselves fully in the cultural and social milieu of those under investigation. Fetterman (1998: 35) defines PO as combining 'participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance'.
- f) Ethnographic research frequently involves prolonged periods of data collection. This is partly because it usually takes time for the researcher to become sufficiently familiar with the cultural world being studied. Ethnography tends to involve a holistic approach, emphasizing the inter-connectedness between people and social processes. There is a commitment to avoid isolating aspects of a given culture or social process from the wider context in which it exists (Denscombe, 2003).
- g) Ethnographers have devoted considerable attention to reflexivity: that is, they recognize that as researchers they are part of the social world they are studying and cannot avoid having an impact on the phenomena under investigation. Unlike

many positivists or experimental researchers, ethnographers do not set out to deny their impact on the world they are studying, rather their aim is to understand this in a systematic and rigorous way as an inevitable part of the research process (Aull Davies, 1999).

Increasingly, ethnographic researchers tend to draw on a social constructionist approach. That is, their accounts of the world of a specific group or culture being studied are viewed as skilled, informed and crafted constructions rather than as objective 'truths' about the world (Aull Davies, 1999; Burr, 1995; Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

Steier is an advocate of a constructionist approach in which researchers acknowledge their role in constructing the world of those that they constitute as the subjects of their inquiry (Steier, 1991). Self-reflexivity, for Steier, is fundamental to the research process and challenges a researcher to create ways of relating research stories in which they, as teller of the tale, and the constructing processes are not eliminated. Steier suggests that research should be viewed as a translation process in which a researcher attempts to build bridges of understanding between communities that speak a different language. Viewing research as 'translation' in this way, Steier argues, forces a de-privileging of the researcher's views and awareness that there are other perfectly legitimate conversations that fit, and indeed constitute, the world of its participants. Steier refers to 'participants' whom he engages with in his research as 'reciprocators' in an acknowledgement of the relational nature of a constructionist approach. He refers to the process of generating understanding of the world of his reciprocators as a co-constructive process in which they are actively involved.

To illustrate these points, Steier refers to research he worked on with members of a family therapy project at the University of Oslo, in which he examined how the co-construction of 'family' takes place in the practice of family therapy (Steier, 1991). One of the methods used involved the review of videotaped therapy sessions by members of

the project team. During these review sessions (which were also taped), team members had the opportunity to stop the videotape and question the therapist about why they took certain action or made particular statements. These questions served as 'take off points' for conversations about how certain elements of the family story were constituted by different members of the team as being significant. Within the context of these conversations, it was commonplace for an addressee to respond to a question by turning it around, by asking the addressor to explain what led them to stop the tape at a particular point and not earlier. This process was one in which *all* members of the team were accountable for the features of the therapy process that were deemed as unusual or worthy of exploration.

ETHNOGRAPHIC AND OBSERVATIONAL METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Although ethnography is not a common approach in psychological research, some of the classic psychology studies have involved ethnographic and other observational methods. An early example of the use of observational methods in social psychology is the classic Marienthal study of the social and psychological impacts of long-term male unemployment on an Austrian community during the 1930s. The ground-breaking work of Paul Lazarsfeld, Marie Jahoda, Hans Zeisel and their eleven colleagues involved a range of research methods, including semi-structured interviews and systematic observation (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel, 1972). This study emerged from a phenomenological strand in psychology and social science, operating from a realist perspective and a concern for social issues, especially the lives of subordinated and impoverished working class people.

Marienthal had been totally dependent on the textile industry, which collapsed in 1929. In late 1931 the research team

began to collect all available material relating to the conditions of life among the inhabitants of the village (Lazarsfeld, 1932). This involved interviews, systematic participant observational methods as well as the collection of quantitative data. This combination of methods was chosen for ethical as well as empirical reasons. The researchers felt that asking the working class population of Marienthal to produce 'psychological self-observations' would probably prove distressing. As Marie Jahoda and colleagues (1972: 1) put it some 40 years later, they aimed 'to find procedures which could combine the use of numerical data with immersion (*sich einleben*) into the situation ... to gain such close contact with the population of Marienthal that we could learn the smallest details of their daily life'.

The researchers at Marienthal also made a principled decision to become involved in the daily life of the community they were studying in an attempt to 'give something back', but also to improve the quality of their empirical work. For example, free medical consultations were provided each week by a female paediatrician and an obstetrician, and research field-notes were kept on consulting room conversations, in order to combine research benefits for the team with medical benefits for the community (Fryer, 1987). The research team felt that 'no researcher should act as "a mere reporter or outside observer"' (Jahoda et al., 1972: 5), and the team spent a total of 120 working days in Marienthal.

The researchers classified participants into a number of categories intended to reflect their psychological and social responses to the long-term unemployment of adult men in the community. In Marienthal, some 70% of households were assigned to the category of 'resignation': involving an absence of plans or hopes for the future, although they also maintained their households, cared for their children and reported a feeling of relative well-being. In addition, some 2% of households were categorized as 'in despair' and a further 3% as 'apathetic', or involving 'complete passivity and absence

of effort' (Fryer, 1987: 84). The remaining 23% of families were characterized by maintenance of the household, care of children, subjective well-being, plans for the future and continued attempts to find employment. The Marienthal researchers made a clear connection between the 'broken' attitude of families in despair and apathy, and the level of household income. In 1930s Austria, the unemployment relief laws meant that after a specified period, unemployment payments were replaced by emergency relief, which eventually ran out altogether. Some families in Marienthal therefore had no income whatsoever, and their experience of unemployment was particularly psychologically destructive as a consequence of this.

Some of the classic studies in the expanding arena of American social psychology following World War II involved observational methods. Festinger's participant observation study of a millenarian religious cult group, published as 'When Prophecy Fails' (Festinger, Riecken and Schachter, 1956), examined cult members' responses when their cherished belief that the world would end in a catastrophic flood on a specific date was disconfirmed. Festinger and his colleagues and a number of hired observers pretended to be converts and joined the group as participant observers, gathering data covertly before and after the date on which the world was prophesied to end (Bryman, 2004).

In this study Festinger and colleagues intended to test the hypothesis that it is possible for people to hold a belief *more* strongly after that belief has been disconfirmed, provided that certain conditions are met. Festinger and his colleagues did indeed confirm their hypothesis, and it might be argued that only an ethnographic approach could have provided evidence of this kind on people's responses to a challenge to their strongly held beliefs in such a 'naturalistic' setting. However, as we shall see later, Festinger's study involved covert observation, so the consent of participants was not obtained prior to the start of the project: indeed the 'genuine' cult members had no idea they were taking

part in a research study. This scarcely conforms to current ethical guidelines according to which researchers are expected to obtain participants' informed consent before conducting their investigations. This project did, however, provide important and influential evidence that counter-intuitively and under certain conditions, people can hold certain beliefs *more* strongly after they have been very obviously disconfirmed.

A later example of a classic psychology study involving a form of observational method is Rosenhan's 1973 'field stimulation' project, in which eight people attempted to gain access as patients to mental hospitals in the USA (Rosenhan, 1973). In such 'field stimulation' projects, the researcher intervenes directly in a 'natural' setting in order to observe what happens. Many of the classic US psychology studies of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s followed this format, frequently in an attempt to investigate socially and politically significant issues such as racial prejudice (e.g. Daniel, 1968; LaPiere, 1934).

Rosenhan's team of eight 'pseudo-patients', as they were known, approached twelve mental hospitals in total. Each said that they were hearing voices and all twelve were admitted to hospital, eleven out of the twelve with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. As soon as they had entered the hospitals, the twelve 'pseudo-patients' ceased exhibiting any 'symptoms' and the researchers then observed how long it took before these 'pseudo-patients' were discharged. The length of hospital stay varied from seven to 52 days, with a mean of 19 days, and the researchers observed a high percentage of psychiatrists (71%) and nurses (88%) ignoring the 'pseudo-patients' daily pleas regarding their sanity and requests for release.

'Field stimulation' projects differ from classic ethnographies in a number of respects. Firstly, participants in field stimulation studies are more likely to be unaware that they are being observed and studied. Secondly, field stimulation studies are usually more structured than ethnographic research projects, since the researchers are frequently

expected to follow a strict series of actions and behaviours as part of a structured manipulation of events. In addition, field stimulation studies are usually associated with a positivist approach, whereas ethnographic research tends to be linked to the 'naturalistic' or interpretative tradition.

In addition to the use of ethnographic and other observational methods in some classic psychology studies, there are also many examples of ethnographic studies in related disciplines that nevertheless address issues of relevance for psychology. Examples cited here include Paul Willis's text *'Learning to Labour'* (1977), Erving Goffman's *'Asylum'* (1961), and anthropologist Daniel Miller's research text *'Shopping, Place and Identity'* (Miller, Jackson, Thrift, Holbrook and Rowlands, 1998). Paul Willis's *'Learning to Labour'* is generally viewed as a classic ethnographic study in the related fields of sociology, education and cultural studies. It has had an international influence that remains strong some 25 years since its publication (Dolby and Dimitriadis, 2004). We would also argue that, despite its prominence in the fields of cultural studies and the sociology of education, psychologists also have something to learn from Willis's text.

'Learning to Labour' focused primarily on a group of young white working class men Willis referred to as part of a 'counter-school culture': they called themselves 'the lads' (Willis, 2000). Willis followed 'the lads' through their last 18 months in the 5th form of a working class state comprehensive school in the industrial English West Midlands during the mid-1970s. He interviewed boys in the school, as well as teachers, careers advisers and some parents, spending considerable periods of time 'hanging around' in the school's Youth Wing. Willis followed 'the lads' into employment, working alongside them for several weeks in predominantly low paid and low status manual factory jobs. His primary research interest was to try and understand why so many working class young men like these 'failed' in the state education system of the period.

What *'Learning to Labour'* focused on was the everyday lived culture of 'the lads': their opposition to the authority of teachers and their rejection of the conformist 'pro-school' route taken by those of their peers they referred to disparagingly as 'ear'oles' (Willis, 1977). The lads' assertively rough, brash masculine style, their celebration of their ability to 'have a laff' in even the most inauspicious circumstances, and their concerted opposition to academic work led them inexorably, Willis argued, into the sort of dead end, low paid manual jobs their fathers had done before them. What Willis later termed 'the tragic irony at the heart of their culture' led these young men to 'voluntarily' choose a life of hard manual labour (and later unemployment in most cases) that did them considerable physical, economic and psychological harm. Although Willis's analysis in *'Learning to Labour'* stressed the collective nature of the lads' counter-school culture, his work is equally relevant for social psychologists because he elucidates a process whereby people appear to act and think in ways that go against their own interests, in a way that appears to be irrational. The work of Willis and Festinger therefore has more in common than one might expect.

Willis's work has an additional connection with social psychology, since in 1979 the then Social Science Research Council (now the ESRC) funded a social psychologist (Christine Griffin, henceforth CG) to conduct a female version of *'Learning to Labour'*. CG was based, like Willis, at Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, and the outcome of the study was published as *'Typical Girls?'* (Griffin, 1985). The study employed a combination of informal semi-structured interviews and systematic non-participant observation. Griffin found no direct equivalent to 'the lads' anti-school culture leading young women into specific sections of the job market; however, she argued that young women faced parallel pressures to get a job and to 'get a man' as they negotiated the transition to adult (heterosexual) femininity (Griffin, 1986).

KEY ISSUES RELATED TO ETHNOGRAPHIC AND OBSERVATIONAL METHODS

Representation, engagement and 'bias'

O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994: 185) argue that 'perhaps more than any other method, participant observation requires that we reject the notion of researcher as a detached "objective" scientist who manipulates the subjects of the research by controlling the variables that affect their behaviour'. However, this does not mean that the validity of ethnographers' interpretations of their data is not a crucial issue. The 'realist' perspective would aim to present an accurate and truthful picture of the social world under investigation. By watching people over time in different situations, by talking to them and others about what you have seen and how you interpret it, it is possible to obtain more reliable and richer data (O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994). This would be the approach taken in the early version of Grounded Theory, in which Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that data should 'fit' the theory closely. That is, the researchers' concepts and categories of analysis should emerge from the data and not be 'imposed' upon it as a consequence of the researchers' theoretical perspective (or political views). In addition, Grounded Theory argues that researchers' interpretations of field data should be recognizable to the people taking part in the study.

O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) identified a substantial problem with this latter thesis when they discussed the social and structural relations of power and domination that pervade the social context in which all research takes place. Participants' perspectives on the social worlds they inhabit will necessarily be structured by 'macro' issues such as social class, racialization, gender and sexuality. The usual focus of ethnographers on the 'micro' level of social relations between individuals in social groups can lead them to neglect the significance of these wider issues of power and control. O'Connell

Davidson and Layder (1994) argue that both micro and macro aspects of any situation must be recognized and reflected in ethnographic research.

Paul Willis, a passionate advocate of the benefits of ethnographic research and editor of the academic journal *Ethnography*, treats the researcher's 'history, subjectivity and social positioning as a vital resource for the understanding of, and respect for, those under study' (Willis, 2000: 113). In his view, the direct, sustained, face-to-face interaction with participants that is central to ethnography can never hope to produce a picture of 'reality'. For Willis, ethnographic fieldwork is 'some kind of entry into debate, an attempt to grapple with a puzzle ... whose temper and pace leads you to want to encounter others who bear moving parts of the puzzle' (Willis, 2000: 113). Willis advocates a form of 'theoretical confession', in which the history, theoretical position and subjectivity of the researcher is stated as explicitly as possible in order to inform the reflexive aspect of ethnographic study. Above all, such a 'theoretical confession' enables researchers to notice and reflect on those moments when they felt surprised by events occurring 'in the field', informed always by theory. In this way, argues Willis, ethnography can avoid the tendency to descriptive empiricism that has characterized much ethnographic research.

There is another approach to ethnography that is frequently contrasted with the 'realist' perspective cited above: that is, the 'relativism' that characterizes post-modern and post-structuralist versions of ethnographic research (Marcus, 1994). The relativist perspective rejects the notion of the researcher as a detached, value-free and objective observer that is central to the positivist project. It also rejects the committed stance adopted by feminist and other politically engaged researchers who view their work as 'giving voice' to marginalized and oppressed groups¹. Relativism would eschew taking a stand of any kind in relation to groups of individuals, preferring to examine the ways in which claims to truth and knowledge are produced in the social world, including

in the research process itself. The relativist perspective has fuelled a fundamental critique of the tendency in some ethnographic research to speak on behalf of participants, such that researchers present their interpretations as authoritative accounts of 'how things really are'. From a relativist perspective, all research analyses and processes are socially constructed in particular discursive contexts (Griffin, 2000).

Interpretation and the analysis of observational data

The recording, interpretation and analysis of ethnographic data are complex processes that are seldom defined with clarity. Recording material 'in the field' poses particular problems for ethnographic researchers. It may be possible to record material in audio and/or video format, or to take detailed field-notes. However, all such activities are relatively intrusive, and it may also be impossible to record material in any of these ways. One alternative is to use mobile phone technology, a Dictaphone mini-disc recorder or a digital MP3 player/recorder to record 'on the spot' notes for later elaboration at the end of each research period. Research field-notes should focus on material relevant to the primary research questions of the study, and also allow scope for apparent 'diversions' around those themes. Depending on the topic under investigation, research field-notes can focus on key 'episodes', specific individuals or small groups, particular events, or a combination of all of these. It is important to remember that all methods/techniques for recording research information are necessarily selective: even video footage cannot ever record all the subtleties of human social encounters (Griffin, 2007).

Banister and colleagues point out that in most ethnographic studies, research field-notes are one of the most commonly-used techniques of data collection (alongside audio-taped interviews and video footage). Such field-notes tend to consist of 'relatively concrete descriptions of social processes and their contexts', which may be the main record

on which your analysis is based (Banister et al., 1994: 40). Central to the ethnographic method, and an adjunct to the issue of reflexivity mentioned later in this chapter, are the 'memos' or notes on the research process kept throughout the fieldwork period. Such notes might include points on how participants and/or gatekeepers view the researcher, analytic points to feed into the interpretation of the research material, and notes on feelings and reactions of the researcher at different points in the research process.

Such memos operate as field notes that take the form of reflections on the position of the researcher in the 'field': a form of reflexive journal if you like. An example of the generative potential of such reflexive notes can be found in CG's experiences in a study of young working class women moving from school to the job market during the early 1980s (Griffin, 1985). The 'Typical Girls?' project fell into two main stages, based in a range of Birmingham state secondary schools and workplaces. As the sole research worker, CG interviewed 180 5th and 6th form female school students individually or in small groups, including young middle- and working-class women, Asian, African Caribbean and white students (and some boys), as well as teachers and careers advisers. The second stage of the project was a longitudinal follow-up of 25 young white working-class women from the 5th form into their first two years in the job market. This involved informal interviews in coffee bars, pubs and in the young women's homes; with their families and friends; and ethnographic case studies in ten of their workplaces.

Each of the six schools participating in the study was visited at least three times, and the first visit usually involved an informal chat with the head teacher. The study was described as 'a project about girls leaving school and starting work', and CG never mentioned feminism, equal opportunities or anything that might be deemed 'political'. It soon became clear that the project was viewed as unusual and that CG was frequently assumed to be a feminist simply as a woman researcher interested in young

women's lives (Griffin, 1986). On the first visit to one co-educational comprehensive school, the headmaster stated that 'this equal opportunities thing is a waste of time', and that CG was wasting her time talking to 5th form girls at the school, because 'they will mainly end up working on the streets like their mothers'. In contrast, the headmistress of a large girls' comprehensive school viewed the study in far more favourable terms. She recounted her experiences of the barriers to women's promotion in teaching, and stated that 'girls have such a low self-image, and so do women teachers, I'm all in favour of your project'.

Despite their very different views, both of these head teachers made similar assumptions about the 'political' nature of the study, and it became clear that this was shared by some of the young women involved in the project. When one young woman ('Jeanette') was visited in her job as an office junior in a small printing shop, she introduced CG by striding into the middle of the floor, raising a clenched fist and shouting: 'This is Chris, she's doing a project on me – women's lib'. Feminism had never been discussed in any explicit way prior to this point, and had CG ever entertained any misguided hopes of passing as an apolitical, inconspicuous observer, they dissolved with every shake of Jeanette's clenched fist. Rather than treating these incidents as problems demonstrating that CG's presence as a researcher had 'contaminated the field', we prefer to view these events as reflecting important aspects of the way in which young women such as Jeanette are constructed and treated in the education system and the job market (Griffin, 1989).

Ethics, access, deception and gaining informed consent

Discussions about ethical issues in social research tend to revolve around a number of specific areas (Bryman, 2004; Diener and Crandall, 1978):

- Whether there is harm to participants
- Whether there is a lack of informed consent
- Whether there is an invasion of privacy
- Whether deception is involved.

We can consider the implications of each of these areas in relation to the study by Festinger and colleagues of a religious cult described earlier in this chapter (Festinger et al., 1956). The Festinger study involved covert observation, so 'genuine' cult members were unaware they were participating in a research project until after the field work phase was completed. They therefore did not give their consent (informed or otherwise) to participate in the study, and nor were they offered the opportunity to do so. It is also possible to argue that because eight researchers joined the cult group at a crucial period immediately prior to the moment at which the world was supposed to end, this event in itself might have fuelled the strongly held beliefs of cult members even further, doing them psychological harm and affecting the results of the study to some extent (Bryman, 2004). Some researchers involved in covert ethnographic studies of this kind have justified their actions by arguing that it would not be possible to conduct research on such issues if informed consent was required. This is what Bryman (2004) refers to as 'the end justifies the means' argument.

Informed consent, deception and invasion of privacy are all hotly debated issues in psychological research, and these issues are especially acute in relation to ethnography. The latter can involve covert observation, which raises obvious dilemmas regarding the lack of informed consent and potential deception, but even overt ethnography is not immune from such difficulties. Assuming a covert role in ethnographic research means that most or all participants are unaware that the researcher is conducting an investigation. A totally covert role would mean that the researcher was completely 'under cover', and avoids the need to negotiate access to the research site in anything other than the researcher's 'under cover' role. In a totally overt role, *all* the people the researcher comes into contact with would be aware that she/he

was conducting a research study. In most ethnographic studies the researcher is in a relatively overt role with key participants, but may come into contact with many people who of necessity remain unaware of her/his activities. So the distinction between overt and covert observation regarding the question of consent is seldom clear-cut. However, this does not mean that ethnographic researchers pay little attention to ethical issues involving consent, deception, privacy and harm – on the contrary.

The advantages of covert ethnography are that it minimizes problems associated with negotiating access and participants are unlikely to adjust their behaviour to the presence of a researcher – although they may still adjust their behaviour to the presence of the person who is conducting the research without realizing they are involved in an investigation (the problem of reactivity). Difficulties of covert ethnography include the problem of how to take research field-notes (repeated visits to a toilet to make concise field-notes for fuller transcription later, or the use of hidden body-microphones have been classic solutions to this problem); the inability to use other methods; and of course, the ethical problems associated with covert observational research.

‘Closed’ settings involve groups or organizations that may be relatively formal and/or have entrance restrictions. Negotiating access is likely to be difficult. ‘Open’ or public settings usually make access easier, but they are not necessarily without problems. Many ethnographers emulate the practice of Whyte in his classic study ‘Street Corner Society’ (1955) in his approach to negotiating access to the urban working-class male gangs in Boston’s North End. Whyte developed a relationship with ‘Doc’, who acted as a sponsor, gate-keeper and key informant. In the process of gaining access to participants or the ‘field’, ethnographic researchers must be prepared to meet potential participants on the latter’s terms: after all, they are on participants’ territory. Later in this chapter, we discuss Andrew Bengry-Howell’s experiences when

negotiating access with young male car modifiers in relation to various tests of his credibility.

POTENTIALITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Ethnography has a number of advantages and limitations, and in some cases its advantages can also operate as limitations. There is no one design for an ethnographic study. Its flexibility and relatively open structure can enable researchers to generate original insights and innovative methods. However, this very flexible approach can be difficult to handle. Ethnographic research takes time and is therefore relatively expensive compared to other research methods. The findings from ethnographic studies may not be readily encapsulated into a series of neat bullet points. However, the richness, diversity and complexity of human cultural life from the perspective of ‘insiders’ is likely to be reflected in good ethnographic research, and this can generate invaluable insights and contributions to knowledge that would not emerge using any other research method (see Box 2.1 for a brief practical guide to doing ethnographic research).

Ethnography is particularly valuable in situations in which the phenomenon under investigation is novel, different or unknown; when researchers are interested in a specific culture or social process; especially in complex behavioural settings including organizations or institutions. Ethnography can be an excellent first stage in a longer research process, providing a means of gaining an initial insight into a culture or social process, or it can stand as a distinctive research method in its own right (Punch, 1998).

Other advantages of ethnographic and observational methods include the capacity to include an examination of collective cultural practices and a fuller sense of the complex and diverse social context of people’s lives in the analysis. An illustrative example here is Valerie Hey’s ethnographic study of girls’ friendship groups in schools, which

BOX 2.1 Doing Ethnographic Research: A Brief Practical Guide

(informed by Fetterman, 1998)

- 1 Find the time and the money to do an ethnographic study.
- 2 Are your research question(s) suited to the use of ethnographic methods? Does ethnography have the potential to generate insights that would be unobtainable by other means? You should also decide on your theoretical and epistemological perspectives and analytic approach at this stage.
- 3 Consider the ethical issues raised by this study, especially questions of informed consent, covert and overt observation, and power relations throughout the research process. Develop your ethical strategy, including contract with participants.
- 4 Plan your research design based on the period of time available for field-work, the nature of the research topic and the phenomenon under investigation. Plan your strategies for entry to and exit from 'the field', as well as what methods you will use during the field-work period.
- 5 Select your field-work site, potential participants, gate-keepers (if appropriate), who and what *not* to include in the study. The most common strategy is the 'big net' approach, mixing with lots of people then beginning to narrow your focus down to specific situations and individuals. Informality, acting on hunches, and using your intuition are all common features of ethnographic research, though more formal and structured designs are also used.
- 6 Entering 'the field': How will you describe your study? What will you wear? Develop a safety strategy that might involve working in pairs or phoning a colleague when you enter and leave 'the field'. The best method is usually to gain access via an intermediary, and another alternative is to 'hang around' until you gain the trust of key members of the community you are studying. Note who might avoid you as a result of your contact with gate-keepers, and try to include them in your study.
- 7 Common techniques used in ethnographic research:
 - (a) Participant observation (PO) or 'immersion in the field': Ideally should last at least 6–12 months, otherwise you are using ethnographic techniques, and not doing a true ethnography. Decide how to record your research field-notes (always date them).
 - (b) Interviewing: the ethnographer's most important technique: sometimes described as a 'conversation with a purpose'. Interviews can be informal or more structured: develop an interview schedule if appropriate. Digital or audiotape recording is preferred, but may not be possible, so you may have to rely on field-notes at times. Decide on a strategy if participants ask you questions about the study or about yourself. How transparent do you want to be, and what is appropriate for the project? Make a Research Methods file reflecting on people's reactions to you and your reactions to them throughout the research encounter. Make a Theory/Analysis file recording any ideas arising from the field-work that link to areas of theory or relevant research literatures.
 - (c) Questionnaires and diaries might also be used. Plan the formats of questionnaires and diaries in advance and decide on instructions to participants, consider how and where these might be completed.
 - (d) Unobtrusive measures: be aware of lack of informed consent involved in this aspect of ethnographic research. Unobtrusive measures might include noting information about 'outcroppings' such as what people wear, the appearance of an area or layout of a building; collecting written or visual reports or records; 'proxemics', or noting how close people stand to one another (and to you) when interacting; other aspects of non-verbal behaviour, such as the organization of seating in a room and how this might affect the pattern of social interaction; and collecting folk-tales, or pervasive myths and stories that circulate in a given culture or social group.
- 8 Exiting 'the field': develop a strategy for leaving the field, deciding how you will end relationships with research participants, and what your obligations are to them.
- 9 Analysis: transcribe all field-notes and interviews as close to verbatim as possible. Organize, collate and anonymize your data. Remember that this process commences at the start of the project. Familiarize yourself with the data and look for negative cases as you develop your analysis. Be systematic and rigorous in your analysis.
- 10 Writing up and other forms of dissemination: decide on your audience(s) and the format for dissemination. Decide on your standpoint(s), narrative form and focus for your dissemination. What do you want to say and to whom, and why? Decide how far and whether you want to write yourself in to the dissemination of the outcomes of the study. Avoid revealing any 'secrets' you might have discovered in the course of field-work unless you have a good reason to do so. Ethnography is sometimes described as a process of 'making the strange familiar and the familiar strange'. Have you done this?

highlights the important role played by passing notes in class (Griffin, 2000; Hey, 1997). Hey's feminist ethnographic study of girls' friendship groups in two urban secondary schools during the 1980s involved short visits to classes in one of the schools; participant observation in one class over three terms; informal interviews with teachers and girls from a range of social class and ethnic groups; and a period spent 'shadowing' a friendship group.

Part-way through the project, Hey began to take note of the notes the girls passed between themselves while at school, and she collected over 70 notes as a form of cultural artefact. Text messaging on mobile phones has largely replaced these notes, although the principle remains the same. Hey discusses the dilemmas she experienced in making these notes publicly available as part of her research data, and also the social and cultural importance of these texts to the operation of girls' friendship groups. As she put it: 'if I had not also been attending to the flux of girls' friendships through observations and interviews I would have had little purchase upon the [notes'] actual sequence, let alone their importance [as] fragmentary moments in the making of schoolgirl selves' (Hey, 1997: 51). As Griffin (2000: 20) has argued elsewhere,

If Hey had only conducted an analysis of the notes as written texts, she would have had a more limited appreciation of their role as *material* manifestations of girls' complex and intense interpersonal relationships. If she had only carried out interviews with girls, even in a longitudinal study, she would not have been able to appreciate the hidden and secretive nature of the girls' friendship groups, which were designed to keep all adults and young males on the outside.

Limitations of ethnographic and observational research include the considerable time involved in setting up and carrying out field work and interpreting complex datasets; and the specialist training required for ethnographic and observational methods, which is seldom available in Psychology degree programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. In addition, the collection and

interpretation of observational data are complex and specialized activities.

EXAMPLES FROM OUR OWN RESEARCH

In this section, we discuss Andrew Bengry-Howell's (henceforth ABH) PhD research based on an ethnographic study with young working-class men who modify their cars. This involved an extended period of ethnographic non-participant observation and interviews with approximately 30 young men engaged in car modification projects (Bengry-Howell, 2005). This section will explore how these data were collected and analysed, and the particular advantage offered by ethnographic methods in enabling ABH to contact a group of participants that had already proved resistant to involvement in the research process via semi-structured interviews alone. The fieldwork for this project was conducted during the summer of 2002 on car parks outside of McDonalds, Halfords and other commercial retail outlets situated in out-of-town retail parks and shopping centres in the West Midlands and North Wales. The research participants were young male car owners aged between 17 and 25, all of whom were employed and living with their parents.

'Car modifiers' and 'cruisers' are highly visible in terms of their highly stylized cars with loud stereo systems and the speed at which many drive. However, when it comes to engaging them in a research project, they can be somewhat more elusive. ABH began this project with minimal knowledge of or interest in car modification, but was fascinated by the meaning of this car-based cultural form to car modifiers. He began his fieldwork by attempting to recruit research participants from a group of young men who congregated in their modified cars twice a week on a McDonalds' forecourt in a West Midlands city. Although most of these young men seemed uninterested in participating in his project, ABH made arrangements to meet

a small number of them at a different location to conduct interviews. They went through the motions of suggesting times and locations to meet, but on the day of the interviews they all failed to turn up.

In order to have any success in accessing this particular group, ABH decided to travel to the car parks these young men frequented, and decided to employ ethnographic methods to do this. He developed and circulated a recruitment flyer, and through a slow process of snowballing, gradually began to build a network of potential research participants. In the early stages of the project, ABH arranged to meet a group of car modifiers through a contact known as 'Jonno', who had seen the flyer and expressed an interest in the project. The meeting had been arranged over the telephone and when ABH actually came to meet the group, the first person he spoke to was uncommunicative and aloof and became slightly hostile when ABH asked for Jonno by name. Eventually ABH managed to reassure this somewhat obstructive gate-keeper that he had pre-arranged the meeting with Jonno, and was directed to where Jonno and a couple of his friends were standing. As ABH went over to speak to Jonno, who obligingly gave his consent for ABH to tape record the conversation, they were soon joined by a larger group of young men who came over to investigate what was going on:

Kenny: [Turning to ABH] So what the fuck yer doin ere?

ABH: I'm doing a project on car modifiers and the cruising scene (2) I suppose I am trying to get to understand what it's all about from the point of view of people that are into it.

Kenny: The authorities don't appreciate that we've got no where else to fucking go apart from car parks and that, so people ought to do somet about it ant they (3) it's like we hang round in a car park and it looks bad for the stores (1) that's the only reason

Mark: Don't take any pictures of his fucking car (1) [pointing to a car across the car park that

seems to belong to a lad that is standing next to him] take a picture of everyone's car cept for his

Kenny: So who are you doing this project for (1) are you from the council or something

ABH: No, it's part of a course that I am doing at Birmingham University, I suppose I'm just interested in how the scene has developed and what being part of the scene and modifying your car means for people [...]

As the meeting with the car-modifiers progressed, ABH's status as an outsider was further reinforced when one of the group asked him if 'that old knackered Renault parked in the car park round the corner' was his, and it became obvious that he did not even possess a modified car. At this point Jonno asked if ABH wanted to go for a ride in his car. During a previous interview Jonno had continuously lauded his car's capabilities and the way it handled at speed. In now asking if ABH wanted to *experience* what he had been talking about, Jonno seemed to be challenging ABH to prove to him, and the others in the group, that he was serious about his claim to want to gain an insight into the young car modifier's world. After some deliberation, ABH thanked Jonno for the offer, and got into the passenger seat of his car.

Closing the car door, the first thing ABH noticed was the glow from the control panel on Jonno's car stereo system, which was one large visual display screen. In the centre of the screen, an animated rally car raced away along a digital racetrack, but then the image fragmented into a whirl of brightly coloured patterns, which danced around for a few seconds before re-converging into an image of a spinning car steering wheel. At this point Jonno leant forward and fiddled with a couple of virtual buttons on the stereo and instantly a heavy surge of bass reverberated through the car. This system was connected to a high-powered sub (i.e. a loudspeaker) that was mounted in the car's luggage area. The music produced an intense sensory effect on

ABH's body. His muscles tightened, he felt an immense pressure in his chest, and the experience transcended anything he had previously associated with the cultural practice of listening to, and appreciating, amplified music.

Jonno slowly drove his lowered car across the car park and carefully eased it over a series of raised speed ramps. Once safely out of the retail park, he drove up towards a roundabout that provided direct access onto the motorway, at all times keeping to the designated speed limit. Once on the slip road, Jonno started to accelerate and rapidly changed gear as he pulled onto the left hand lane of the motorway. Without any obvious signs of slowing he indicated right and cut straight between two cars in the middle lane into the 'fast lane' where he accelerated even further. As the car's speed increased it passed everything that was driving in the two lanes to the left and at that point Jonno announced proudly that the car was travelling at 120 miles an hour.

Within seconds the car reached the next motorway junction, at which point Jonno indicated to turn off, went all the way around the roundabout and then turned onto the motorway, this time heading in the opposite direction. Jonno made straight for the 'fast' lane in the way he had done earlier and accelerated rapidly again. As the car approached the junction where he had originally joined the motorway, Jonno indicated, turned onto the slip road and hurtled towards the approaching bend. As the car hit the bend, it tilted over to one side and a loud knocking noise came from somewhere behind the passenger seat.

Jonno: Did you hear that back wheel then?

ABH: Yes [nervously] (.) what was that then?

Jonno: It was the wheel scraping the arch (oh right) cos I've had it [the car] lowered

ABH: Yeah, cos of the angle of the car round the bend

Jonno: Yeah

ABH: So, do you think that modifying your car has made you drive differently?

Jonno: Nah you know I don't drive like this all the time (No) It's just for you (.) I just like taking people out to show them basically what it does

As ABH reflected on his decision to accept Jonno's invitation to have a ride in his car, he questioned whether his enthusiastic embracing of an in-depth ethnographic approach had taken him further into the field than anticipated. ABH had willingly put his life at risk in pursuance of research goals, by getting into a car that belonged to a person he vaguely knew who had admitted during interview that he had a penchant for driving at high speeds. On the other hand, the opportunity to actually sit alongside Jonno in his car, whilst he demonstrated what his car could do, had enabled ABH to directly experience the way in which the cultural practice of driving at high speeds operated within the context of the car modifier's world. Furthermore, if he had turned down Jonno's offer, ABH could well have lost all credibility with that particular group of potential research participants, and that would have had a detrimental effect on the research project and impeded future opportunities to obtain data.

Whilst ABH took obvious risks by getting into the passenger seat of Jonno's car, he felt that the experience had been extremely important to the research in that it had provided a compelling example of non-discursive cultural practices being utilized in an active process of identity construction. For Jonno, the meaning of high-speed driving, was partly embodied in the intense subjective experience of *being* able to literally extend his self through his motorcar and move at 120 mph, it was also embodied interpersonally in the figurative opportunity to *show* others what he and his car could do. Had ABH simply talked to Jonno about this in interview, his analysis would have missed the sensuous meaning embodied in the *doing* of certain cultural practices, a meaning that is

culturally produced outside of the language paradigm.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC AND OBSERVATIONAL METHODS IN QUALITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH

The Marienthal study and the work of Festinger, Rosenhan and colleagues cited earlier in this chapter are examples of social psychology researchers trying to investigate 'social problems in the field' (Fryer, 1987). Following the 'critical turn' in social research during the 1980s, researchers raised questions about the wisdom or the possibility of interpreting people's social practices or psychological states from information gathered via research interviews, ethnography and other similar methods (Griffin, 2000). Severe funding cuts in the social sciences meant that qualitative social research, including ethnography, was in decline during the mid-1980s, just as the 'new' critical and discursive psychologies were emerging in Britain and elsewhere. Moreover, the arguments of post-modernism and post-structuralism combined with feminism to mobilize these 'new' critical voices in and about psychology also presented a profound critique of the key assumptions and practices of ethnographic research. These criticisms challenged the tendency towards naive realism in ethnographic research, the uncritical imposition of the researchers' authorial analyses over the voices of its respondents, and the relatively simplistic opposition between self and society on which most such research relied at that time. Combined with the growth of narrowly experimental cognitivism in psychology, this meant that the sort of applied studies 'in the field' employing ethnographic and other more 'engaged' forms of research methods as exemplified by the Marienthal project have become increasingly uncommon in psychological research.

Despite a long and illustrious tradition of ethnographic and observational research in psychology, the dominance of positivist epistemology, of experimental and quantitative methods, and the lack of specialized knowledge and experience of ethnographic and observational methods all combine to limit the development of this type of research in qualitative psychology. However, ethnographic and observational methods thrive on the borders between psychology and other disciplines, such as sociology, cultural studies, geography, education and anthropology. One particularly interesting development is the growing use of visual research methods such as photo-elicitation techniques in combination with observational methods (see Marshall and Woollett, 2000; Croghan, Griffin, Hunter and Phoenix, in press; Chapter 17 in this volume).

Despite the relative lack of training available in the use of ethnographic and qualitative observational methods at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in psychology, there are signs that ethnography is becoming more common in qualitative psychology research. The increasing interdisciplinarity of many social science research projects and the tendency to use innovative combinations of methods has contributed to this tendency. One example in the British context is the ESRC's funding of a major research programme on Identities and Social Action, directed by a leading qualitative social psychologist (Margaret Wetherell), including a number of projects that involve social psychologists (e.g. Christine Griffin, Ann Phoenix, Wendy Hollway) and employ ethnographic methods alongside interviews and other qualitative methods (see www.identities.org.uk)². We anticipate that in future the use of ethnography and other systematic observational methods will expand steadily in qualitative psychology research, especially as interest grows in linking social psychological processes to cultural practices set in economic and political context.

NOTES

1 It is worth noting here that some feminist researchers have also studied groups usually defined as 'oppressors', such as Scully's investigation of convicted rapists and O'Connell Davidson's research on men involved in sex tourism in Thailand (O'Connell Davidson, 1998; Scully, 1990).

2 CG is principal investigator and ABH is one of the research assistants on a project that is part of the ESRC's Identities and Social Action programme. The study is entitled 'Branded consumption and social identification: Young people and alcohol', and involves researchers in psychology at the University of Bath and at the University of Birmingham Business School. It runs from April 2005 to September 2007 and investigates the ways that alcohol advertising might shape young people's identities, the meanings of drinking in young adults' everyday lives, and the significance of key cultural practices around drinking for young adults' social identities. This will involve informal group discussions with young adults aged 18 to 25, and a series of ethnographic case studies of young people's drinking practices.

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Action Research

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INTRODUCTION

Action research (AR) is an orientation to inquiry rather than a particular method. In its simplest form it attempts to combine understanding, or development of theory, with action and change through a participative process, whilst remaining grounded in experience. Reason and Bradbury (2001: 1) offer a working definition that draws on different action research practices:

AR is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worth-while human purposes, grounded in a participatory world view which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

Action research is at one and the same time the investigation of action, the implementation of investigation through action and the transformation of research into action. Along with feminist research, it is a process that links psychology with social change issues (Brydon-Miller, 1997). As Parker (2005) notes,

action research has the potential to devise research and methods that enable positive political outcomes for those who participate. It is, then, a value-based practice, underpinned by a commitment to positive social change. The purposes of action research are summarized by Reason and Bradbury (2001: 2) as:

- to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives;
- to contribute, through this knowledge, to increased well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of individuals and communities; and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet; and
- to combine practical outcomes with new understanding ‘since action without theory is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless’.

AR is a deeply collaborative process of inquiry, operating simultaneously at individual, interpersonal, group, organizational, community (and indeed societal) levels. Thus, action research involves:

- a focus on practical (and political) issues;
- reflection on one’s own practices and the involvement of others in the research;

- collaboration between researcher and participants;
- a dynamic process of spiralling back and forth among reflection, data collection and action;
- development of a plan of action to respond to a practical issue and/or create change; and
- careful, planned sharing of findings with all relevant stakeholders.

Action research extends well beyond psychology, and whilst we will be alluding to different kinds of action research, we will focus our discussions on its use in psychological work, and in relation to psychological issues.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are a number of converging routes to contemporary action research in psychology.

Reason and Bradbury (2001: 3) remind us that action research has its roots in pre-scientific, indigenous approaches to knowledge and invention. However, in psychology, conventional histories of action research identify its social psychological and clinical origins, all of which in one way or another derive from action theories (Boog, 2003).

In the USA, in the 1940s, prominent social psychologists along with other social scientists, concerned with enhancing inter-group relations and reducing prejudice, developed processes of work in which they sought to understand a social problem by changing it and studying the effect (Lewin, 1946). Through their work in the Research Center for Group Dynamics and the Commission on Community Interventions, they moved out from universities into communities: into the very places where people lived and where conflicts and tensions develop (Cherry, 1998). Elden and Chisholm (1993) note that two other currents emerged at the same time in the USA – the first was a concern to understand and improve American Indian affairs through action-oriented knowledge (Collier, 1945) and the second was to adopt a similar approach in education (Corey, 1953).

In the UK, psychologists, social anthropologists and psychiatrists (mostly with a

psychoanalytic orientation) developed a parallel action research orientation in the then Tavistock Clinic, to become the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations (Rapoport, 1970; Trist and Murray, 1990). There, work developed to address the practical, post war problems of personnel selection, treatment and rehabilitation of wartime neurosis, and casualties and returning prisoners of war. In a related development, Revans (1971, 1982) initially at the National Coal Board, developed an approach to action learning for organizational development, focused on action learning sets made up of diverse participants.

Whilst both in the USA and UK action research developed in response to important social problems, as Elden and Chisholm note, action research soon began to be applied to intra-organizational and work life problems. Furthermore, a schism arose between applied and basic research. Whilst there had, initially, been considerable enthusiasm for community based action research, by the early 1950s,

increasingly the social psychological mainstream was disconnecting research and graduate training from the immediacy of solving social problems [between 1950 and 1970 social psychology] practitioners would devote their energies to a practice bounded by the parameters of laboratory experimentation, based primarily on individual behaviour, and geared towards managerial concerns. Removed from the intergroup context, the study of discrimination would quickly reduce to attitude and personality measurement.

(Cherry, 1998: 14)

Sanford (1981: 176) links this shift in the USA to the behaviour of funding organizations, suggesting that:

Contrary to the impression I had in the 1940s, [AR] never really got off the ground. By the time the Federal funding agencies were set up after WW2, action research was already condemned to a sort of orphan's role in social science, for the separation of science and practice was institutionalised by then, and has been to the Federal bureaucracies ever since. This truth was obscured for a time by the fact that old timers in action research were still able to get their projects funded. Younger researchers, soon discovered, however, that action research proposals *per se* received a cool reception

from the funding agencies, and were, indeed likely to win for their author the reputation of being 'confused'.

Whilst action research had declined in Anglo-American social psychology during the 1950s to 1970s, the crisis in social psychology of the 1970s (Strickland, Aboud and Gergen, 1976) and the advent of *new paradigm* research, with an anti-positivist call and non-reductionist emphasis (Gergen, 1982; Reason and Rowan, 1981) opened the way for its re-emergence.

A different strand of development in action research lay in the application of action science (Argyris and Schon, 1989; Chapter 27) in organizational work – especially in the application to practices of social democracy and organizational learning. A strong Scandinavian tradition emerged, linked to the Norwegian Industrial Democracy Project (see Karlsén, 1991). In Scandinavian work life, participatory action research had, as its core, 'political values concerning increased democracy, political equality and social justice' (Elden and Levin, 1991: 128). Elsewhere in Scandinavia a radical *practice research* developed from German critical psychology, with its roots in the political left. It shared with action research a concern to understand the relations of theory and practice (Nissen, 2000).

Histories of action research in psychology generally reproduce the USA–UK axis of development. However, in Latin America, action research has been in existence for as long (Montero, 2000). In 1946 a book on action research methodology was published in Brazil (Thiollent, 1947). Montero suggests that early forms of action research borrowed heavily from the socio-technical orientation of Lewin, but gradually evolved into a participatory practice, in part through other influences. She emphasizes the writings of Marx and Engels and of Gramsci; the popular mobilizations of the 1960s; liberation theology during the 1970s and philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1988) in the 1980s. Particularly important to Latin American social psychological action research was

the critical pedagogy of Freire (1972). Freire encouraged the viewing of research participants as active members of inquiries concerning themselves and their environment, as well as the role of the dialogic method for exploring ideas participatively, in order to arrive at new understanding. Montero also recognizes the crucial influence of cultural anthropologists and critical sociologists (Fals-Borda, 1979, 1988; Swantz, 1978; Swantz, Ndedya and Masaiganah, 2001) to the participatory turn in action research. The work of Fals-Borda and colleagues has been particularly influential in the Latin American developments of community social psychology (Sánchez and Wiesenfeld, 1991).

Psychotherapy and existential learning offer another route to the development of action research. Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that T-group training and encounter groups were characterized by mutual inquiry into the here and now processes of group development. Rowan (2001) and Taylor (1997) both argue that mutual enquiry and change underpin some forms of psychotherapy, self-help groups, and co-counselling, and can be viewed as action research.

Whilst social psychological applications of action research to real life social problems retreated, action research became and has remained an acceptable research strategy in the context of organizational behaviour and education. Its use is increasing in information systems and health contexts. It is a central strategy for community psychology (Kelly and van der Riet, 2001; Chapter 29) and critical psychology (Parker, 2005). It is probably the case that far more action research has been going on in psychology than is formally defined, particularly as both evaluation research and service development.

THE PROCESS OF ACTION RESEARCH

As an iterative process, different parts of the action research process can be identified. Whilst different researchers describe the

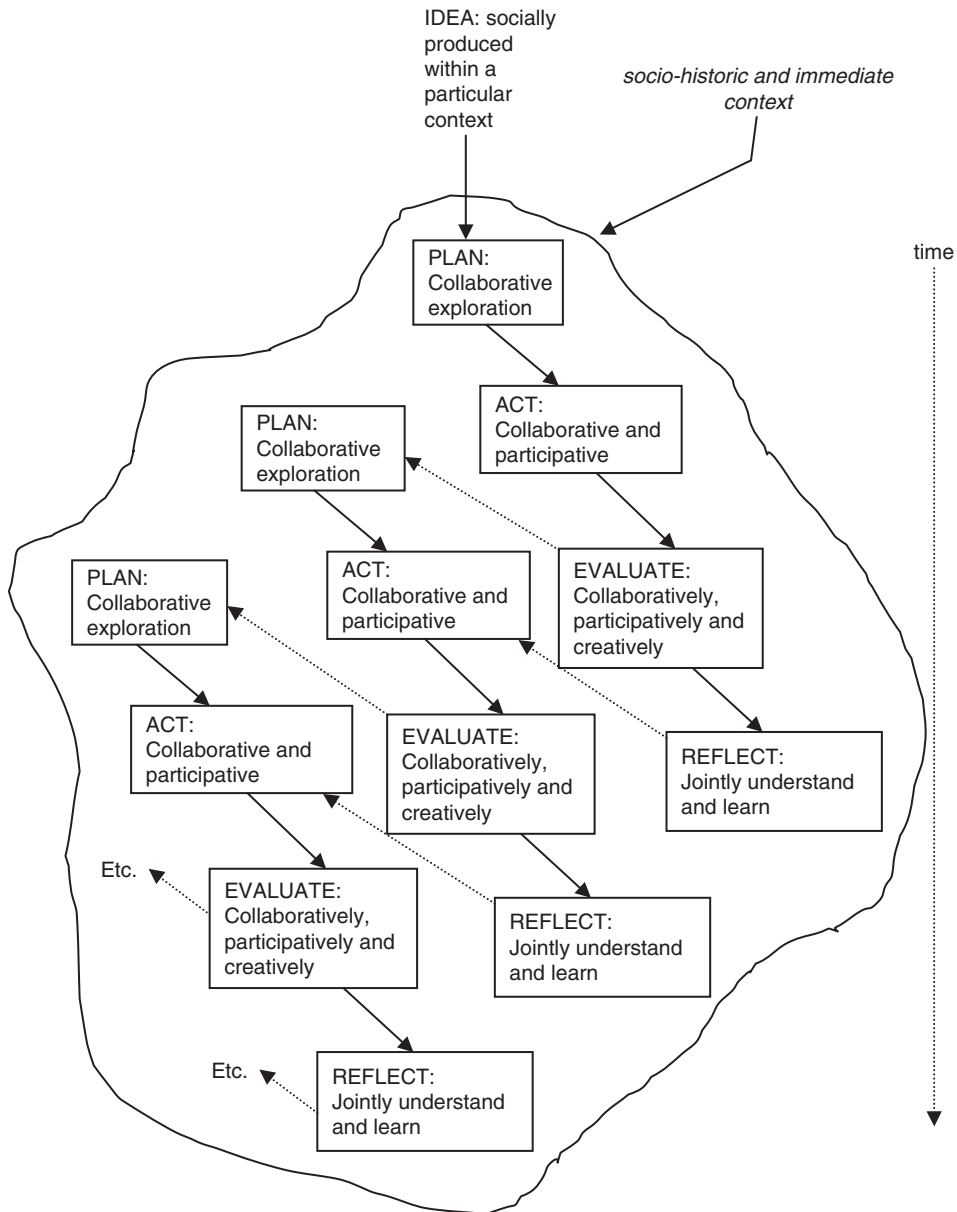


Figure 3.1 A model of action research taking place over time within a particular context

process differently, all involve, in one way or another, the following in a cyclical process taking place within a particular context and system infrastructure (Figure 3.1):

- idea: socially produced within a particular context and with a shared vision of the goal(s) of positive social change. May include visioning, values exploration, conception or initiation, problem identification and analysis, exploration and fact finding;
- plan: devised collaboratively and participatively;
- act: carry out actions collaboratively and involving others;
- evaluate: be collaborative and participative and make creative use of methods;
- reflect: jointly learn and understand and further plan, do, evaluate and so on.

The process may continue to move on, return to an earlier step or be diverted to a different cycle of action. Once a cycle is complete, it may lead to another full or partial cycle. In practice, action researchers may begin to be involved at any of the stages. Thus in our own work we sometimes begin our involvement through evaluation (as in evaluation research); at the fact finding, exploratory stage (as in feasibility studies or needs analyses); at the conception (as in project development studies); or at the reflection stage (as in accompaniment research).

VARIETIES OF ACTION RESEARCH

Action research, since the work of Lewin, has branched out and spread in different directions. Grundy (1982) distinguishes three broad types of action research: technical¹, practical and emancipatory. Practical and emancipatory action research lend themselves particularly well to qualitative methods. It is the topic, issue or question to be addressed that should lead to the initial choice of the approach, even if as the work proceeds the emphasis changes in response to changing conditions. So what are the kinds of issues to which action research is suited?

Practical action research

In practical action research, practitioners and researchers come together to identify potential problems, their underlying causes and possible change projects. Mutual understanding is sought, and the goal is understanding practice and solving immediate problems. It adopts a multiple perspective, flexible approach to change. It is this kind of action research that is common in the field of education and in both practitioner and human service development arenas (Burton, 2000; McKernan, 1991). Cohen and Manion (1994: 192) summarize practical action research thus:

[it is] essentially an on the spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an

immediate situation ... unlike other methods no attempt is made to identify one particular factor and study it in isolation, divorced from the context giving it meaning.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest three conditions which are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the implementation of critical, practical action research:

- 1 The project takes as its subject-matter a social practice, regarding it as a form of strategic action susceptible to improvement.
- 2 The project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated.
- 3 The project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice, and maintaining collaborative control of the process.

Example:

One of our PhD students (Helen Sanderson) was researching the process of introducing a new method of assessing need to a learning disability service, which had reviewed its planning procedures (existing social practice) for support to individual people (problem identification). All those staff and family members concerned with the experience of a man and a woman, both with severe and multiple impairments, agreed to introduce a person-centred planning process with both people, in order to improve their experiences (improvement). Workshops were held with relevant staff so that they had the skills to do this (planning and action). The process of introducing the new way of working was monitored carefully and assessed in terms of the difference made to the focal people's lives (evaluation). Little difference was made initially, and on reflection, it was thought that the overall service culture created barriers to effective change (reflection). After discussion within the service and the research team, theoretical understanding of the organizational barriers to change was achieved (theory development). Specific aspects of service culture restricting innovation were identified

(problem identification) and a programme of organizational change initiated (action) and evaluated, leading to the introduction of person centred planning more widely across the service and creating change for those disabled people affected (widening participation in the project), as well as new understanding about how change can be achieved in a complex public sector organization (improvement through self-critical implementation). This experience led, over a further five years, to the development of collaborative, person centred planning processes that have become a model of good practice, and have influenced national policy (continual cycles of planning, action and evaluation) (Ritchie, Sanderson, Kilbane and Routledge, 2004; Sanderson, 2000).

Some of the later action cycles could more accurately be considered as action learning or action alone. In the stages described above, it was the collaborative, organized collection of data and new understanding arising through self-critical implementation of change that made it action research.

Emancipatory action research

Emancipatory action research promotes a 'critical consciousness which exhibits itself in political as well as practical action to promote change' (Grundy, 1987: 154). The goal is to assist participants in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising their collective consciousness. Critical intent determines both the development of a theoretical perspective and guides action and interaction within the project. Here the challenge is not so much a collaboratively defined practical problem as the collaborative exploration of an existing social problem in order to achieve social transformation.

Example:

Through work with and involvement in radical psychiatry networks (such as those supported by *Asylum* magazine in the UK and further afield) the isolation of and challenges experienced by people with paranoia had

been identified and a paranoia network launched in November 2003. Isolation was identified as a major problem (problem identification). A conference was held in Manchester, UK, the following summer, involving those with experience of, and interest in paranoia and how disabling practices and institutions, as well as the 'experts' on people's lives, could be challenged (action). During the conference, participants were able to discuss and explore common experiences, share resources and identify future collective action and networks (further action; raised collective consciousness) (Harper, 2004; Zavos, 2005). New understandings about the experience of paranoia in a disabling society were reached. In addition, new ideas about methodology were produced: not about the epistemological or empirical aspects of methods, but more about methodology – how we think about the production of knowledge (Parker, 2005). For example, participants challenged the role of interviewing people who are suspicious of professionals asking them questions about themselves, and so on.

Thus we can see that emancipatory action research is capable of revealing deep understanding about the process of inquiry and reporting findings, as well as about the findings themselves. It thus goes beyond action, beyond theory, to methodology, inviting us to consider how we know what we know and how has that knowledge been produced.

Emancipatory action research is clearly political. It is concerned with power and, whilst we would not want to make too grandiose a claim for the process being empowering, at the very least there should be some political gains for those participating. Whilst all action research is participative, a particular form of participatory action research (PAR) was developed through work with oppressed peoples in Latin America and elsewhere. PAR has been adopted by Latin American community social psychology (Montero and Varas Díaz, 2007; Sánchez and Weisenfeld, 1991 and those working within the approach of liberation psychology

(Burton, 2004). It fits within the emancipatory domain insofar as it has a concern with:

- development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants;
- improvement of the lives and empowerment of those involved in the research process; and
- transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships.

Montero (2000: 134) suggests participatory action research is a methodological process and strategy actively incorporating those people and groups affected by a problem, in such a way that they become co-researchers through their action in the different phases and moments of the research carried out to solve them. Their participation:

- places the locus of power and of control within their groups;
- mobilizes their resources; and
- leads them to acquire new resources

in order to:

- transform their living conditions;
- transform their immediate environment; and
- transform the power relations established with other groups or institutions in their society.

In practice, there may be many different reasons why people do not want to participate in an action research process, and, indeed, participatory processes do not always ensure the political interests of the least powerful are met (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Not all participatory processes are, however, action research, and the more the research process is grounded in the experiences and desires of those participating, the more relevant it is likely to be to people's lives. This means, though, that the stage of action research in which the interests of the researchers and participants are explored and joint visions for change established along with mutual trust and understanding, may be a lengthy one.

We can see then that the investigatory issues differ between practical action research and emancipatory or participatory action research. Practical action research is

best suited to problem solving in organizations through working largely with organizational decision makers. Emancipatory or participatory action research is best suited to understanding and changing communities and societies through a commitment to working with grassroots groups to promote fundamental social transformations (Brown, 1993; Brown and Tandon, 1983; Rahman, 1985). Practical action research aims to produce social reform and emancipatory action research to produce social transformation. Both assume the nature of reality to be multiple and socially constructed, and for human agency to be inextricably linked to social structures. Whereas practical action research is more concerned with organizational structures, emancipatory action research seeks to explore the roles played by social, economic and political structures. The research 'problem' is more often negotiated by the researcher in practical action research, but emerges from the participants in emancipatory action research. In both forms, the 'problem' arises in a particular situation, and action and research are merged. The process of practical action research leads to enhanced practitioner capability as practitioners become researchers; emancipatory action research leads to participants' emancipation through their involvement in research and to changes in social structures.

Whilst the two traditions can be separated in this way as 'ideal types', action research is fluid and dynamic, and there are examples of them merging (e.g. Kagan and Burton, 2000; Nissen, 2000; Siddiquee and Kagan, 2006). Whether as separate or merged practices, they have a number of features in common, including:

- Value based, future oriented practice
- Cross disciplinary
- Cyclical process
- Combines methods of data collection
- Learning through dialogue and sharing
- Combines theory and action
- Context bound
- Concerned with change and sustainable over time.

Each of these features of action research gives rise to a number of issues in practice.

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

The main issues associated with the process of action research will be considered as we discuss the core features outlined above.

Purposes and value choice

Action research is future oriented and is built on a shared understanding, between those involved, of what *could* be, not what is. This means that at the conception stage, action researchers will often facilitate a process whereby the different participants or stakeholders envision the possibilities for the future. Before any action can be planned, the future orientation must be agreed. This does not necessarily mean that specific end points have to be identified, but rather the general direction for change is clarified. This may take some time and can lead to some frustrations that no additional action is being taken (although, if we adopt a position of researching action, we can describe the very process of negotiation and understanding of the future as an action to be researched). Through this process, the different perspectives and orientations of different stakeholders are brought to the surface and made explicit, along with different value positions which will have to be negotiated. Right from the outset, then, in action research, it is understood that multiple, socially constructed perspectives exist and are to be worked with. Elden and Chisholm (1993: 135) go further and suggest that the very process of visioning followed by action,

enables participants to envisage a possible future they previously had not considered and then set into action to achieve it. This could be seen as the intentional use of a systematic proven method in the social construction of reality.

The task here is not to expect full agreement about or capitulation to a particular perspective, but rather to explore, through

dialogue, the complexity of the relationships between participants. Right from the outset, too, power issues come to the fore and it is necessary to be aware of how the power interests of particular participants are being played out, and to work in ways that enable all participants to understand – and possibly change – this. The future orientation of a project also gives a framework to the evaluation and reflection stages of action research, as participants can use this as a guide to assessing whether or not change has taken place in the required direction.

It is in the conception and planning stages that participants can articulate their vision for change that has a positive social value (Elden and Chisholm, 1993), such as for a healthy community, a socially responsible organization, reduced energy consumption, services that put user interests at the core, and so on.

Techniques that might be used at initial stages of projects could include: needs analysis; dialectical inquiry; visioning; strategic assumptions testing; appreciative inquiry. Some of these same methods can be used in evaluations and reflections (Flood, 2001; Flood and Jackson, 1991; Taket and White, 2000).

Example:

Our research team, along with colleagues from Hull University, UK, was commissioned by a 'Health Action Zone' to undertake a project concerned with capacity building for evaluation amongst community groups. Thus some initial problem identification had taken place. However, before we could initiate further action, we had to take a step back and explore with some community groups their ideas of what would be possible as well as their current skills and experience of evaluation. So we introduced a stage of consulting with 55 community groups about their current situation and possible future (Boyd et al., 2001). Only then were we in a position to plan, collaboratively with members of a broad-based steering group, specific interventions for change. This initial process contributed to each community group's own

understanding of their skills and future possibilities, so was, in itself, part of a change process, as it contributed to increasing the 'systems' purposeful adaptive capacity, ability to innovate, or self-design competence' (Elden and Chisholm, 1993: 127).

Cross disciplinary and participative

Action research has, at its foundation, problems or issues identified by participants within a system, whether this is a bounded system like a classroom, or a work organization, or an extensive system like a region or society. This is in contrast to forms of research in which inquiry arises out of a single discipline or practice interest, or is closely linked to a previous discovery. Thus action research is a cross-discipline practice, drawing on different kinds of knowledge and world views. Because it is a collaborative activity, 'expert' knowledge of researchers is combined with 'tacit' or popular knowledge of other participants. In practical action research this combined knowledge leads to more effective and durable change. In emancipatory action research, this combined knowledge is the very basis of action and the two are inseparable. The integration of different world views and understandings means that attempts are made to work with and understand diversity and difference, whether this is in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, culture, class and so on. The ways in which social position influences people's participation must be understood and all attempts made to ensure that pre-existing power relations between and within groups do not determine and distort the activity. Not only does power influence the overall action research process, it also plays out in similar ways within research teams (Burman, 2004).

Example:

We were commissioned to explore the impact of participatory arts projects undertaken in Manchester, UK, on the health and wellbeing of participants (planning and action stages had been completed). The problem that

had been identified prior to the commission was the need to provide an evidence base for funders. From the start we had wanted to work in collaboration with those participating in the projects, in part so that they were able to gain skills and esteem through their active involvement. However, the artists involved were concerned about how this might distort their (the artists' and participants') relationships. Thus those participating in the projects were prevented, by the artists' genuine concern for their wellbeing, from contributing to the planning and design of the evaluation, and also of taking part in collecting and analysing data. However, we were still able to work collaboratively with artists. Considerable tensions emerged between the different discourses, underpinned by different knowledge and value systems of the artists and the researchers. Furthermore, schisms emerged in the research team, due to pre-existing relations and depth of experience. We employed both discussion and other team building techniques, particularly those based on appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, 1999) to develop trust and a common understanding from which we could progress the work (Kagan and Kilroy, 2005; Sixsmith and Kagan, 2005).

Cyclical process

Action research is cyclical. It is not always possible to know the end point from the start as each cycle is partly determined by the previous one. In terms of social change there is no end to the number of cycles that might be possible. However, any particular action research project may involve one particular stage, a part cycle, or any number of full cycles. Research can start at any stage, and it is rare for action research to begin at conception and proceed to reflection and learning in an orderly manner. Each stage may precipitate a return to an earlier stage and 'spin off' actions might emerge in the course of implementation of some other action. Thus action research is a truly iterative process which cannot be described in advance or fully controlled. As the research proceeds,

different people may become involved and different activities introduced. Furthermore, the time needed for each stage cannot be predicted in advance. Unintended impacts of the work will almost certainly arise and decisions made about whether the project moves in a different direction.

Example:

A community-based clinical psychology programme, in Liverpool, UK, was charged with improving the mental health of an inner city, multicultural community. After developing and introducing a number of initiatives, in conjunction with other projects and different parts of the community, it became clear that there was a major problem between fathers and sons in one part of the community (problem identification from reflection and learning from previous stages). Thus a project specifically designed to enhance communications between fathers and sons was initiated in a participative manner. This had not been on the work schedule for the project but had emerged as a priority over time (Fatimilehin and Coleman, 1998).

All of this means that it can be difficult to approach action research in a conventional way. Research protocols may be able to identify who might be involved in doing what, at an initial stage, but may then be unable to outline explicitly what will then happen to and with whom, for how long and to what ends. From a university or professional base, this kind of protocol can be difficult for funders, or ethics panels, to understand and support. For these reasons, much action research takes place unfunded or by generating its own funds. Alternatively, resources and permissions to undertake action research go on under a different guise: as project or practice development; as evaluation research; or as consultancy. Yet none of these alternative practises necessarily meet the requirements for action research as defined at the start of the chapter. If they do combine development of theory with action and change through a participative and reflective process, then they may be considered to be action

research: there is no intrinsic reason why project development, evaluation or consultancy cannot be done through action research, but they need not be.

It follows from this, then, that not all action research finds its way into scientific journals, although there will be a commitment to disseminate knowledge as widely as possible to those who will benefit from the insights and experiences gained – facilitated recently by the internet. For those from universities or the professions, whose career advancement is based on numbers of publications in peer reviewed journals or successful procurement of external grants, engagement in action research can be risky. Indeed this amounts to a systematic institutional bias against action research.

Combination of methods of data collection

Whilst action research will typically imply a broad social constructionist approach, it is not wedded to any particular orthodoxy of data collection (Burton and Kagan, 1998). Pragmatic concerns, linked to the problem in hand, determine the most appropriate means of gathering information. Creswell (2002) suggests data collection as one of the three 'E's': Experiencing (wherein the researchers – as participants – draw on their own involvement); Enquiring (wherein the researcher participants collect new information in different ways); and Examining (wherein the researcher participants use and make records). Table 3.1 identifies some of the data collection methods that have been used in action research projects under the three 'E's'.

The more the action research process tends towards emancipatory action research, the more involved all participants are, as co-researchers, in the collection and analysis of data as well as in the development of theory and a strategy for dissemination. Even when the action research project has proceeded through agreement as to purpose and means of gathering data, when it comes to data analysis, theory development and dissemination,

Table 3.1 Data collection: Experiencing, enquiring and examining

<i>Experiencing</i>	<i>Enquiring</i>	<i>Examining</i>
• Participation • Performance and other creative arts including photography, writing, folk customs • Story-telling • Self-reflection • Intentional conversations • Dialogue and discussion	• Interviews: unstructured and informal; semi-structured; structured and formal; e-mail or internet • Focus groups • Whole system events • Questionnaires • Guided conversations	• Archives • Texts, images, maps • Photographs • Audio and videotapes (CDs and DVDs) • Artefacts • Narratives • Field notes of observations, feelings, reflections

participants' different standpoints will influence their interpretations, and the process involves, again, another period of negotiation to mutual understanding.

Example:

In our work evaluating participatory arts in Manchester, UK, with a view to project improvement, the kinds of data collection involved included: semi-structured interviews with artists, participants, managers of arts and linked projects and commissioners (face to face and e-mail); reflexive diaries kept by researchers and artists (structured and unstructured); participant observation by and field notes of researchers; focus group discussions; feedback questionnaires; private written accounts of participants and artists; graffiti board comments; creative techniques, including social role atoms, creative writing and poetry, photographs along with commentaries, artistic products; and attendance registers. Artists and researchers worked together in a workshop to make sense of the different types of information gathered, and to agree how it should be presented. Whilst researchers drafted the first report, artists were able to refine, change and modify its contents until all were satisfied it best captured the analysis.

Theory development emerged through these workshops, too, as well as through discussion of findings with researchers from another, linked project. Further negotiation took place over the format in which the report was to be presented for dissemination to an audience used to receiving arts products.

A compromise was reached resulting in a more aesthetically considered report than is usual as a research report (Sixsmith and Kagan, 2005).

Learning through dialogue and sharing

The learning that takes place for all participants is central to action research and comes from a commitment to continual reflection and self-reflection. Action research offers opportunities for meta-learning, that is, participants learning how to learn to develop their own, more effective practical theories. As Elden and Chisholm (1993: 138) say, 'Becoming a better practical theorist is a key to empowerment'.

Good action research makes the learning explicit, at individual, group and organizational or community levels, and looks to consolidate learning as a key component of ensuring that any change achieved is sustainable in the longer term. Just as dialogue between stakeholders was important at the early stages of the process, so it is, too, at the stage of learning. It is through dialogue and shared action and understanding that the learning takes place.

A commitment to learning is also a commitment to making findings, about both outcomes and processes of change, as widely available as possible. All participants have a role (the more so, the more emancipatory the action research) in making sense of and diffusing knowledge. Thus dissemination of information is not confined to formal academic and professional outlets.

Different formats, including workshops, celebrations, videos and so on are also legitimate forms of dissemination.

Example:

We have been working with a small group of community activists in different parts of Manchester, UK, over a number of years on a project which seeks to understand the impact of being an activist seeking to improve the lived experiences of those living in areas of deprivation at individual group, community and systems levels. We work with the activists to identify the particular question to be asked and then how to go about collecting and analysing information. Methods of collecting data have included observation, interviews, the collection of accounts, detailed personal diaries and content analysis of the press. We have reflected upon the processes of working, and have jointly developed theoretical understanding as well as new ways of understanding the participative methodology we have developed. We have jointly – or as either academics or as activists – disseminated information at conferences for professionals and academics, as well as published material in professional journals and pamphlets written in lay language for wider consumption. We have distilled key issues in letters to the press or professional magazines, or to politicians and policy makers. In addition we have produced detailed reports and videos, edited and prepared by the activists themselves. All the written reports are available on the internet. Thus information is available in different forms and targeted at different levels of learning (Edge, Kagan and Stewart, 2004; www.compsy.org.uk; Kagan, 2006a; Kagan et al., 2005; Raschini, Stewart and Kagan, 2005).

In action research, information diffusion will often extend beyond the academic and professional arenas: it is not restricted to the development of theory that is then left for others to take up in a practical sense. Instead, opportunities for policy and strategy development become part of the planning and learning from action research, and need to be exploited, as well as the development

of wider alliances for change beyond those formed through the specific action research project. The use of the internet and other networks for sharing of information amongst like minded people are perhaps more important than academic publishing, which is in any case inaccessible to most people outside the universities. A further disadvantage of academic publishing is that few journals are interested in the types of detail about process that is central to learning from action research.

For the wider action research community, it is particularly useful to have available accounts of different participants' views of the same action research process. Adams and McCullough (2003) and Boyd, Brown and Midgley (2003), for example, comment on the same project with street children from academic and streetwork perspectives, reminding us that even with carefully planned, negotiated and participative work, perceived power and control over the process varies.

Combination of theory and action

One of the things that make action research different from consultancy and audit for practice improvement is the link between action and theory. Not only does theory contribute to the understanding of the problem in the first place, it also emerges and develops as the action research process continues. Theory applies not only to the focus of the action research, but also to the process of working. Thus serious theoretical development, ideally undertaken collaboratively, enhances understanding about social phenomena and change processes. Action research therefore attempts both to change the world and to increase understanding of how such change can be brought about (Kagan and Burton, 2000).

Example:

A project was developed in North West England, in collaboration with local agencies to identify the support needs of black and minority ethnic women escaping domestic

violence in a large inner city area, including the highlighting of 'what works', service gaps and developing proposals for addressing barriers. It also piloted strategic interventions to support women to make successful transitions into productive and independent lives. Theoretical work on 'race', 'class' and gender informed the study (combining theory with action) in a way in which those intersecting axes of oppression could be re-conceptualized without reducing one to the other. New theoretical propositions emerged from the project (combining action and theory), in addition to changes to practice and service delivery and contributions to local and national policy (Burman, Smailes and Chantler, 2004; Chew-Graham, Bashir, Chantler, Burman and Batsleer, 2002).

Context bound

Action research is a situated practice. That is, problems emerge from, and action research takes place within particular historical and social contexts, and usually within particular institutional or organizational contexts. It is necessary to understand these multi-layered contexts in order to define the relevant stakeholders and participants in the process as well as to explore the extent to which learning from one action learning project is applicable to other problems and situations. The very problems that are at the heart of a specific action research project are grounded in the context of the participants. This can lead to dilemmas in deciding who it is that defines a project or who collaborates in the definition of a problem. These dilemmas are essentially, boundary judgements. They define not just who it is that is involved at all stages of the work (and who is not), but also what the scope of the problem under consideration is and the timescale to be applied to the change project. The process of 'boundary critique' (Kagan, Caton and Amin, 2004; Midgley, Munlo and Brown, 1998), that is, the questioning of the boundaries between the problem and its context, and between the project and the wider programme of intervention or policy context, can be applied at

all stages, and indeed, forms a crucial part of reflexive practice. Decisions made about the different boundaries involved can be participatory, and nearly always will reveal the values underpinning different participants' connections with the problem in hand, and their differing positions and power in the system of social relations. As Parker (2005: 130) reminds us, action research is not just about action: 'There is always a structured set of relations between researcher and researched; between researcher and those they report to', and it is important to recognize this and constantly review how these relations impact upon the change project.

In addition to being important for making decisions about what project is to be implemented by whom in what ways, context can be constraining and/or enabling of the action research process. Indeed, if action has not been possible, or change not achieved, or unintended change experienced, it may be to context that we need to look to understand why this is. At the same time the degree to which change is created tells us more about that context. Kagan and Burton (2000: 73) suggest prefigurative action research as a practice that puts the societal context at the heart of action research implementation and learning, making a bridge between the practicalities of one project or study and the broader aims of principled social change. They say:

Prefigurative action research [is] a term which emphasises the relationship between action research and the creation of alternatives to the existing social order. This combined process of social reform and investigation enables learning about both the freedom of movement to create progressive social forms and about the constraints the present order imposes.

(Kagan and Burton, 2000: 73)

Example:

Work done with families of disabled people in rural areas of Bengal highlighted different ways of families supporting each other and linking with other agencies. Building on this experience a project was developed to explore how best to support families in slum areas of Kolkata. Colleagues from

Manchester Metropolitan University worked alongside colleagues from Cardiff University and the Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy to design and implement a project working in three quite different kinds of slum areas and with three different kinds of non-governmental sector community partners. Prefigurative action research was used as a framework for understanding and exploring the conditions under which it was possible or not to implement changes in how health projects worked with families with disabled children in the different context of their work. This framework enabled a historical, social and organizational context to be mapped and understood as a facilitator or barrier to change (Goldbart and Mukerjee, 2001; Kagan and Scott-Roberts, 2002; Sen and Goldbart, 2005).

Context is complex and as action research proceeds over time, insight into this complexity grows whilst at the same time increased complexity has to be built into the action research process. These changes over time are difficult to anticipate, and decisions have to be made about whether or not to continue to work with the ever more complex system, or re-define a project as part of the system. What a detailed understanding of the context does imply, is that attention to, and understanding of, the process of action research is as important as the outcomes. Indeed, if outcomes are difficult to achieve within a specified timescale, it might only be learning about the process – and the context – that is possible.

Concern with change and sustainability over time

Action research is always concerned with change. As we have seen this can range from changes in practice to organizational change to societal change. It differs from other types of research into change insofar as it places equal value on participants' and researchers' experiences. Researchers can be outsiders to the process of change, or insiders, and each brings different dilemmas. For insider

action research, there are ethical issues and the potential for role conflict (Coghlan and Brannick, 2001; Holian, 1999). For outsider action research there is the need to develop rapport with insider participants and clarify the extent of researcher-participation in the process as well as commitment over time.

As the change project proceeds, changes will almost certainly take place in the type of data required (and the means of collecting them). Data need to be collected about both intended and unintended change, and researchers need to be observant about any unintended consequences that arise. Unintended consequences may take the form of additional problems to be addressed through spin-off cycles of action research; resistance to change; or emerging conflicts between researcher participants (over perspectives, interests and priorities). These then have to be negotiated and understood by all those involved.

There is a danger that any change produced will be dependent on those participants involved at the time, and strategies will be needed to ensure that organizations, groups or communities are able to sustain progressive change once it is achieved. Strategies for sustainability are closely linked to decisions about participation. In the more emancipatory action research, the community begins by defining the problem and is well placed to sustain change, with the researcher taking a more facilitatory role throughout. In more practical action research, it is likely that the change process is more dependent on the researchers' activities and sustainability is under greater threat.

Example:

A method was devised to routinely monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Manchester (UK) Learning Disability Service, a community service to people who are learning disabled. A government grant was obtained to evaluate a system-wide implementation. While the method was found to be broadly useful in enabling staff and the organization to understand what outcomes for people were being produced, the project met considerable

resistance from staff who felt uninvolved in the design and implementation and who thought that the method neglected significant aspects of their work. As a result, and despite good organizational ownership, the innovation was not sustained beyond the evaluation phase (Chapman, Burton, Hunt and Reeves, 2006).

Sustainability here was threatened through the resistance of staff. Gaining their participation early on, as collaborators in the action research process, may have led to a more acceptable implementation process; or a realization that teambuilding was needed; or a silencing of the resistance (see Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

STEPS TO UNDERTAKING RESEARCH

We have seen through the above discussion that to carry out action research requires a degree of flexibility and extensive critical reflection. Skilled action research includes a number of steps, which are not meant to be implemented rigidly (Table 3.2). Instead, each step requires choices from amongst a number of different possibilities: what works in one setting may not in another.

But maybe action research is not a skill after all. Whilst not everyone would agree, we argue, along with others, that as a value-based practice, action research may be better considered to be a way of life, or as Reason and Bradbury (2001: xxiv) suggest: '[Action research is the] full integration of knowledge and action in inquiry as a practice of living'. Considered in this way, we do not fall into the trap of sanitizing action research and objectifying the process.

MAIN ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH 'THE METHOD'

Firstly, as already noted at several points, action research is a process and not a method as such. A variety of methods can feed this process. The core of action research is a process of change and reflection with

collaborative self reflection at the core. This means that selection of action research as an approach is the beginning of methodological dilemmas and not the end of them! For this reason action researchers need to have a broad competence in research methods from both traditional and non-traditional paradigms, recognizing where they can be useful and where limited, but at all times in relation to the overall goals of principled social change within and beyond the action project. Methodological competence is perhaps more important here than anywhere – we have to offer our participant colleagues the best information and knowledge that can be obtained to illuminate their struggles and actions. Furthermore we have to be open to new ideas – to the creative invention of method.

Models of action research vary with their purpose, for transformation or for reform, and these goals broadly map onto emancipatory or participatory, and practical action research. Nevertheless, all action research projects are compromised: there is no such thing as a purely participative project – there are always limits to the participation possible, there are always power relations that silence some voices, at least relatively. This is not a counsel of despair, but one to use the tools of action research to make such situations less compromised, maximizing shared enlightenment as the process proceeds.

Different models of action research involve, to greater or lesser degrees, the steps of planning, implementing, reflecting, evaluating and more planning, etc. But the linear (or even cyclical) model implied here is an abstraction. Just as the Japanese agronomist Masanobu Fukuoka devised a system of 'simultaneous crop succession', so the action researcher will often be simultaneously planning, implementing, reflecting, evaluating and more besides.

End points will not always be identifiable from the outset, although general direction probably should be. Indeed, in many cases the definition of the 'project' within a broader social process will be somewhat arbitrary.

Reflection and learning is an integral part of the process. As Argyris (1976) noted,

Table 3.2 Steps involved in action research

The different stages of action research are, in part, the steps for implementing action research. However, it is useful to identify other steps to implementation, bearing in mind that action research is a process not a method as such.

1. Work alongside and get to know people for whom positive change would make a difference to their lives in the direction of greater social justice (this could be researcher initiated or through a response to an advance to a researcher).
2. Gain a shared understanding of what a desired future might look like through undertaking some kind of visioning exercise whilst being clear about what is missed through some people not taking part.
3. Together identify a change issue that might make progress towards a desired future along with a mutual understanding of the context in which this change is taking place.
4. Identify positive and negative stakeholders (those who stand to gain and to lose) in the change issue.
5. Decide which stakeholders are to be involved in what ways and consider the consequences of excluding those not to be involved.
6. Collect background information so that a full understanding of the change issue is gained from the outset, refining the change issue as necessary.
7. Agree what action is to be undertaken and what information is to be collected from whom, how, when and by whom, negotiating and agreeing the forms in which the data are to be collected and stored. Invent new methods as appropriate.
8. Throughout, work together to make sense of and analyse data with reference to explicit theoretical frameworks.
9. In advance anticipate how the chances of sustainability of any change will maximized and build some strategies for sustainability into the plan.
10. Negotiate and agree what indicators of change will be important in terms of evaluation and ensure that records are kept and information collected that will enable the change to be evaluated.
11. Implement action and the collection of data, reviewing on a regular basis and revise plan accordingly.
12. Collect, share and collectively make sense of information about the process of change and its impact as well as the relevant context in which the change is implemented.
13. Reflect upon the extent to which change was achieved and the processes by which it was achieved and plan subsequent action.
14. Develop or modify an existing theory of change and its impact, as well as new understanding of processes of change.
15. If the anticipated progress had not been achieved, undergo deep reflection about why this is with reference to the context and what has been learned about the constraints that exist on the change issue.
16. Devise strategies for organizational or community learning from the action research process and review the operation of power, structured relations and context of the change process.
17. Agree division of labour and contents for report writing or other form of summary of the project as well as plans for dissemination that maximize the influence of the project and the learning that comes from it.
18. Produce project summary and disseminate information from the project.
19. Plan next project taking account of the learning from this one (this may involve, following reflection and analysis, abandoning this process of change in this context at this point in time).

such learning takes place through iterations on several levels. It will cover learning from within the change project as well as learning about the nature of change, about the broader aims themselves, and about the context (Kagan and Burton, 2000). It is not possible to predict what will be learned, by whom, and what the effect will be, and indeed there are likely to be a variety of spin-offs from any action research project, as well as unintended consequences, good and bad, that should be looked out for.

Dilemmas

Funding may be difficult to secure: most funders want a bounded project and

action research cannot always deliver this. Sustainability of change needs to be considered. Commissioners of research will rarely support open-ended projects, so an important consideration is the decision that is made over the start and end of a change process. Indeed the reputation problem identified by Sanford (1981) is still with us: action research grant proposals can risk appearing 'too vague to fund'. Conference organizers and academic publishers will often not consider projects without complete data collection and analysis. There are tensions here in terms of building a body of knowledge although there are some specialist publishers (such as the journals *Action Research*; *Community, Work and*

Family; Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology; and Qualitative Health Research) that are interested in process issues.

Time taken for meaningful change to be achieved is critical and often only becomes clear as the process proceeds. Time taken building relationships is closely linked to the ethics of action research and responsibilities to collaborators, participants or to improving the issues under investigation. This contrasts with the positivist ideal of impartiality based on independence and distance of the researcher. There is also at times a conflict between 'moving onto the next project' and career advancement, and the discharge of ongoing responsibility to those with whom the action research relationship has been established. It is important to have realistic goals, especially in relation to time (Rapoport, 1970). Latin American participative action research has a specific concept, *inserción* (insertion), to describe the organic, committed way the researcher joins the host community. This is not the same thing as abandoning expertise and over-privileging the 'people's knowledge'. The more participative the action research, the more that stakeholder interests, involvement, resistance and boundary decisions all have to be clarified, at entry, during the work, and at exit.

Critical appraisal of action research

So what can be said about the usefulness of action research for a socially relevant, qualitative psychology? There is no one form of action research, but rather a family of approaches, and action research is not a method but rather an ontological and epistemological orientation (with a standpoint on both the nature of the social world, and on how it can be apprehended). It follows then, that a critical appraisal would have to capture both the diversity of action research and its status as a meta-methodology.

The above review would suggest that at least the practical and emancipatory

approaches to action research are most appropriate when:

- 1 Problem definition is relatively open;
- 2 Participation is pluralistic, and in particular, includes those with most to lose or gain;
- 3 The aim is to create and understand social reform or transformation;
- 4 The project is understood and can be conceptualized in relation to a broader programme of social transformation;
- 5 Methods can be selected from the broad range available to social scientists, capable of adaptation and modification, but that these will be transparent and understandable to participants and capable of revealing the unexpected;
- 6 There is ownership of the change project by those affected and those involved;
- 7 The researcher(s) are not overly compromised by their institutional base, the funding and the intentions of any sponsors, although these will always play a part.

Action research is probably of less use in elucidating individual psychological processes or in describing characteristics of groups or populations, although action research projects might reasonably include emancipatory versions of such aims (for example, in the self-definition and re-appropriation of difference by groups such as mental health system survivors, or those with unconventional identities – processes of conscientization).

Action research may also be of limited utility in studies conceived within tight timescales and with predetermined aims, such as evaluations of standardized treatments or some needs analyses. However, again, action research could suggest an alternative way of approaching such questions, as when therapy participants reflect on the process from their own perspectives and experience, or when a community group carries out its own community audit.

Action research is no more immune from ethical scrutiny than other research strategies (Khanlou and Peter, 2004). Its emphasis on change means that the question of (potentially unreasonably raised) expectations is at the forefront in project initiation, while the

dilemmas of project and participant and/or non-participant boundaries have already been highlighted. The authentic nature of the research relationships may be a better guide to the ethical standards of the research, when, as is often the case, precise methods and definitions of participants cannot be identified at the start. Real participation can mean that the dissemination and use of the project findings may not be in the gift of the researcher, nor in the perceived interest of the other participants, who may understandably object to the exploitation of collective knowledge products for academic purposes. Similarly, authorship may reasonably include many of those who were involved in the work and not just those who have formal researcher roles.

Furthermore, the ending of episodes of action research raises the question of sustainability of the innovation that is the focus of the action side of the process, as well as for the continued process of discovery. This is a sharper issue for action research than for more traditionally bounded work where the researcher can seem like a tourist, visiting people's lives.

It should be clear that there is no one best way of conducting action research, and that there is plenty of scope for the creative use of different methods. Furthermore, each action research situation is different and there are dangers in following a concrete model when the particularities are different (Burton and Kagan, 2005; Freire and Faundez, 1989). Nevertheless, in general, good action research is where:

- A clearly identified change issue is identified with clarity about its relevance and origins thus suggesting practical or emancipatory action research.
- Phases of the project are clearly outlined.
- Clear processes for resolving and clarifying different stakeholder interests.
- Stakeholders are identified and there is clarity about processes of participation (or not) of stakeholders.
- Those who are affected by the change are involved.
- The relationship between researcher and participants is described to give a sense of authenticity and clarity in relation to power within the process.

- The processes of planning are clear and comprehensive.
- Decision making on choice of data collection tools is transparent and includes awareness of their strengths and limitations.
- The mechanisms of collaborative data analysis are clearly stated along with information about how differences are resolved.
- Analysis of data extends beyond common sense interpretations and is theoretically grounded.
- Consideration is given to local context while implementing change.
- There is explicit reference to new understanding about the impact of change or the processes of trying to achieve it.
- Report writing and dissemination processes are clear, and include how the resolution of different interests are achieved (if necessary, opportunities are made for several alternative reports to be written).
- The extent to which the findings about outcomes and processes are transferable is discussed.

THE FUTURE OF ACTION RESEARCH WITHIN PSYCHOLOGY

Interest in action research has grown in psychology over recent years, particularly as the two traditions discussed here, of practical and participatory action research, find resonances, in their amalgamation with the interests of critical psychology (see Bostock and Freeman, 2003; Fryer and Fagan, 2003; Parker, 2005; Parker and Goodley, 2000). A number of other trends bode well for the development and expansion of action research within psychology.

Community psychology is growing, worldwide, as a practice that reflects both the critical edge of psychology and a concern with addressing change at structural levels (Nelson and Prilleletensky, 2005; Chapter 29, this volume). In professional psychology arenas, there is a growing interest in the involvement of those using services into explorations of the appropriateness and effectiveness of services. Again, in the professional arena, whereas tight discipline boundaries were valued in the past, there are moves to create more permeable disciplines, and good interdisciplinary and multi-agency methods of

working, exploiting the synergies of overlapping concerns and expertise. This opens the way for professional psychological practice and concomitant research to merge with traditions that have more experience of action research, particularly, for example, community development, health promotion and the management of change.

Action research is growing in health areas, as understanding of health itself has become diversified and includes new and different practices (see for example the arts for health movement), and calls are made for psychologists to become more involved in public health (Abraham and Michie, 2005).

One challenge will be to work in ways that encourage the more emancipatory and participatory forms of action research to keep a hold, and to resist a pull back into practical and technical action research. The context of psychological work in the West makes this latter scenario likely. The influence of neo-liberal policies places a value on 'short term' fixes to complex psychological and human problems.

In the UK the British Psychological Society exerts an unprecedented control over the psychology training curriculum, not just at professional, but also at undergraduate levels. A shift in the thinking to include societal issues and participative research strategies in the prescribed curricula will be required if action research is to take its place as an essential skill (Kagan, 2006b). The renewed calls for an integrated applied psychology training curriculum may assist this process (Kinderman, 2005).

If action research is to be considered a skill, it is useful to refer to three broad pathways that have been identified by Reason and Torbert (2001), and which cut across all the issues discussed above:

First person pathway – the ability to research and foster an inquiring approach within his or her own life.

Second person pathway – the ability to inquire, face to face with others, about issues of mutual concern (e.g. in the service of improving our professional and person practice). Starts with interpersonal dialogue and includes development of communities of inquiry and learning organizations.

Third person pathway – aims to extend these relatively small scale projects so that they can be considered 'political events', not just scientific happenings. Third person strategies create a wider community of inquiry, involving people who cannot be known to each other – there is an impersonal quality (writing, and reporting outcomes of processes of inquiry can form third person action research).

Most compelling action research involves all three.

NOTES

1 Technical action research involves the researcher identifying a problem and an intervention, which is then tested. The goal of this kind of action research is the promotion of efficient and effective practice. The collaboration between researcher and practitioner is largely technical and facilitatory. Whilst this type of action research continues in psychology, it tends not to lend itself to a qualitative paradigm, and will not be discussed further here.

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RESOURCES

- Journals include: *Action Research; Systemic Practice and Action Research; Educational Action Research; Evaluation; Journal Social Issues; Human Relations; Community Work and Family; Annual Review of Critical Psychology; Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*.
- Action research resources (including Action Research International, an online journal): <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.htm>.
- ALARPM (Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management): www.alarpm.org.au.
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Conversation Analysis

Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger

Conversation analysis – the study of talk-in-interaction – is a theoretically and methodologically distinctive approach to understanding social life. It is an interdisciplinary approach spanning, in particular, the disciplines of psychology, sociology, linguistics and communication studies. The methodology of conversation analysis – involving detailed empirical studies of specific, observable, interactional phenomena – rests on three fundamental theoretical assumptions: (i) that talk is a form of action; (ii) that action is structurally organized; and (iii) that talk creates and maintains intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984a; Peräkylä, 2004).

The first assumption of conversation analysis (henceforth CA) is that talk is understood, first and foremost, as a form of *action*: the focus is on what people *do* with talk, rather than just on what they say. Conversation analysts study ordinary, everyday conversational actions, such as complaining (Drew and Holt, 1988), complimenting (Pomerantz, 1978) or telling news (Maynard, 1997); and also actions that constitute particular institutional contexts, such as advice-giving in healthcare interactions (Heritage and Sefi, 1992) or cross-examination in court (Drew,

1992). Conversation analysts also study the fundamental structures of talk-in-interaction upon which all actions depend, such as turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), and the organization of actions into sequences (Schegloff, 2007).

CA's second assumption – that action is structurally organized – underpins this latter kind of work, which establishes technical specifications of the rules and practices that structure talk-in-interaction, and considers how these constrain and enable particular actions. These technical specifications constitute a cumulative, empirically-derived body of knowledge, which describes the basic characteristics of talk-in-interaction.

CA's final assumption – that talk creates and maintains intersubjectivity – locates it firmly within the domain of psychology. For conversation analysts, however, intersubjectivity is not an intra-psychic phenomenon: rather, it depends upon displayed understandings of prior talk. Through producing a turn hearable as an answer, for example, a speaker shows that she has heard the prior turn as a question; or through producing (appropriately timed) laughter, a speaker claims to have recognized – and

appreciated – the punchline of a joke. Similarly, institutional contexts – classrooms, consulting rooms, courts – are (in part) ‘talked into being’ (Heritage, 1984a) by the details of participants’ actions: the way in which they give and receive information, ask and answer questions, present arguments, and so on (see Drew (2003) for a comparison of four different institutional contexts).

Conversation analysis was first developed in the USA in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Harvey Sacks, in collaboration with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Tragically, Sacks was killed in a car crash in 1975, leaving much of the subsequent development of the approach to his collaborators, colleagues and students. His foundational legacy, however, remains – largely in the form of lectures to his undergraduate students at the University of California, transcribed from the original tapes by Jefferson, and published with an extensive introduction by Schegloff (Sacks, 1995).

The intellectual roots of CA lie in the sociological tradition of ethnomethodology, an approach primarily concerned with social members’ ways of making sense of the everyday social world (Garfinkel, 1967). Like other broadly constructionist and interpretive theoretical frameworks, ethnomethodology offers a model of people as agents, and of a social order grounded in contingent, ongoing interpretive work – an interest in how people *do* social order, rather than in how they are animated by it. For Sacks, talk-in-interaction was simply one site of human interaction that could be studied for what it revealed about the production of social order: talk (as such) was not given any *principled* primacy (Heritage, 1984a). What was crucial, however, was the availability of tape-recorded conversations, allowing for repeated inspection, and subsequent transcription, of the data. Jefferson and – particularly – Schegloff have remained key figures within CA, where their work centrally defines the field. For more on the early history of CA, see Psathas (1979), Turner (1974); for classic papers by the ‘first generation’ of conversation analysts, see Lerner (2004).

The sections which follow: (i) outline the scope of CA research, looking, in particular, at how it has been used to address psychological research questions; (ii) contextualize CA, identifying the main issues and key debates associated with it, and examining the relationship between CA and other qualitative approaches; (iii) illustrate what is involved in doing a CA project, drawing specifically on our own recent research; and, finally, (iv) offer a critical appraisal of the potential of CA, together with the challenges facing it in the future, particularly in relation to psychology.

THE SCOPE OF CONVERSATION ANALYTIC RESEARCH

One distinctive feature of CA research is the kind of data used. Whether studying ordinary, everyday conversation, institutional talk, or the fundamental structures underpinning both, CA uses naturalistic data: that is, talk which is not researcher-generated, and which is (generally) collected without the researcher present, usually by the participants themselves¹. This talk is audio- or video-recorded. Although early studies of face-to-face interactions are often based on audio alone, in contemporary CA video-recording of such interactions is regarded as essential.

In any CA project, analysis begins with transcription of the recorded data, preserving fine-grained details such as in-breaths, sound stretches and timed pauses (see the data extracts in this chapter; and the key at the end). This is necessary because CA research has shown that such apparently tiny and insignificant details of the talk systematically affect what participants do next, and how they do it. If, as analysts, we want to understand how people do things in and through talk, we need to attend to their talk at the same level of detail as they do. A comprehensive transcription notation representing various characteristics of the timing and delivery of talk has been developed – and continually refined – by Jefferson (2004). However, it is

the recordings themselves (and not the transcripts of them) that constitute the primary data of CA, and these are regularly revisited during the analytic process. CA is unusual in that data sets are often shared – indeed, many of the ‘classic’ data sets are available as a resource for the CA research community. These are, increasingly, becoming available as web-based resources. See, for example: <<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/sound-clips.html>> (for sound clips to accompany Emanuel Schegloff’s publications) and <<http://www.cambridge.org/9780521532792>> (Resources, Appendix 2, for the audio file of a classic conversation between two girls, widely-known as ‘TG’).

The naturalistic data sets analysed by conversation analysts divide into two types: ordinary conversation and institutional talk (see Drew (2003) for a discussion of the relationship between them). We discuss these, and exemplify the kinds of findings derived from them, in the following two sub-sections; finally, in the third sub-section below, we show how fundamental features of talk-in-interaction are discovered through analysis of data sets like these.

Studies of ordinary conversation

Schegloff (1996c: 4) refers to ordinary conversation as the ‘fundamental or primordial’ site of social life: it is the medium through which we are socialized, through which we conduct our daily social interactions, and (as we will see below) through which social institutions are managed. CA research has drawn upon ordinary, everyday conversations ranging from parents interacting with children (e.g. Wootton, 1997) to friends sharing a backyard picnic (e.g. Goodwin, 2003); from heterosexual students chatting in a dorm room (e.g. Schegloff, 2007) to telephone calls to and from lesbian households (Land and Kitzinger, 2005)². What such apparently diverse data sets have in common is that they provide ‘snapshots’ of people actually going about the business of their everyday lives, instead of (as in most qualitative research in psychology) reporting on it retrospectively.

For example, instead of reporting *opinions* about how children should be brought up, or providing *retrospective accounts* of child-rearing practices, we can observe parents *child-rearing* – as in the following episode in which mother (Mo) and four-year-old child (Ch) are actually, there and then, engaged in an etiquette lesson:

```
[(2) Jo/age 4 (Wootton, n.d.)]
01 Ch: Put on the li::ght.
02      (0.9)
03 Mo: Pa:rdo:n?
04 Ch: (.)
05 Ch: Put on the light please
06      (.)
07 Mo: ( ) better ((then Mo puts
      on the light))
```

Mother responds to the child’s request (eventually – after nearly one second of silence, giving the child the opportunity to add the missing etiquette term) with the kind of item (‘pardon’) normally used to claim a problem of hearing or understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). Here, the child’s repeat adds the etiquette term ‘please’, displaying her understanding that this may be an etiquette lesson – and this is confirmed by mother’s response, which approves the revised request before complying with it³.

The focus in CA research is on identifying actions in talk-in-interaction, and on developing a technical specification of how these are accomplished. Many of these actions appear entirely familiar and rather mundane: opening and closing conversations (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973); agreeing and disagreeing with assessments (Pomerantz, 1984); telling news (Maynard, 1997); referring to persons (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979); or dealing with problems of understanding (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). Others – such as ‘confirming an allusion’ (Schegloff, 1996b) – do not have readily-available vernacular labels. In CA research, the challenge is to make the familiar strange – to recognize that the everyday actions we take for granted, particularly when conversation runs off smoothly, are *accomplishments*, collaboratively achieved by all parties to the conversation.

These are actions that everyone in the world – across culture, language and the specifics of sex, or ‘race’, or class – must be able to accomplish in interaction. Without the capacity to open and close conversations, or to refer to persons, for example, an individual would not be a competent member of his or her culture. Although features of the ways in which these actions are carried out may be culture- or context-specific, the actions themselves are universals of human communication⁴.

Let us now look at an example of the kind of technical specification that conversation analysts develop. The action here is ‘breaking bad news’. In the next three data extracts, someone has bad news to tell (a death, a cancelled trip, a medical diagnosis). In our discussion of them, we draw on the work of a number of conversation analysts – as noted above, data sets are often shared, and the same extracts repeatedly (re)analysed by different researchers (for the first extract below, see Schegloff, 1988; Terasaki, 2004; for the second, see Drew, 1984; Schegloff, 1988; and for the third, see Maynard, 1992). These researchers – and others – have observed a recurrent pattern in ordinary conversational tellings of bad news: the talk is organized such that the *recipient* of the news turns out to be the one who actually says it.

The first data fragment to exemplify this pattern is taken from an ordinary conversation on the telephone between two friends, Belle and Fanny:

[DA:2:10, from Schegloff (1988: 443)
The audio file for this data
extract can be accessed at:
<<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/RealSoundFiles/Servo-Mechanism/page443a.ram>>]
01 Bel: ... I, I-I had something
02 (.) terrible t'tell you.=
03 =So [uh:]
04 Fan: [How terrible [is it.]
05 Bel: [.hhhhh]
06 (.)
07 Bel: Uh: ez worse it could be.:
08 (0.7)
09 Fan: W'y'mean Ida?
10 (.)
11 Bel: Uh yah.hh=

12 Fan: Wud she do die:?=
13 Bel: =Mm:hm,

Notice that Belle, the bearer of the bad news, does not actually tell it herself: it is Fanny who eventually announces the news (in question format): ‘Wud she do die’ (line 12). Belle produces a pre-announcement (Schegloff, 2007) – ‘I had something terrible t’tell you’ (lines 1–2) – which indicates to Fanny that she has bad news, but she does not actually produce the news: most obviously at line 8 (a silence of seven-tenths of a second is a very long time in conversation). Belle’s protracted delay in producing the ‘terrible’ news she has projected leads Fanny to derive – and articulate – the components of the news herself: first, who it is about (line 9), and then what has happened to her (line 12), leaving Belle simply to confirm that she (Fanny) has understood correctly (lines 11 and 13).

We can see a similar pattern in the second data fragment. Charlie has phoned Ilene to tell her that (because a change of plan on the part of the woman, Karen, with whom he had intended to stay) he is no longer able to offer her, as promised, a lift to Syracuse at the weekend. At line 1, he produces an announcement about Karen’s change of plan (‘she decided to go away...’), but delays conveying the negative consequences of this decision for Ilene:

[Trip to Syracuse, 1-2, from
Schegloff (1988: 443) The audio file
for this data extract can be accessed
at: <<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/RealSoundFiles/Servo-Mechanism/page443a.ram>>]
01 Cha: She decidih tih go away
02 this weekend.
03 Ile: Yeah:,
04 Cha: .hhhh=
05 Ile: =.kh[h
06 Cha: [So tha:[:t
07 Ile: [k-khhh
08 Cha: Yihknow I really don’t have
09 a place tuh sta:y.
10 Ile: .hh Oh:::..hh
11 (0.2)
12 Ile: .hhh So yih not g’nna go up
13 this weeken’?
14 (0.2)
15 Cha: Nuh:: I don’t think so.

Charlie's protracted delay in producing the bad news leads Ilene to derive – and articulate – it herself. Even when Ilene claims to 'get it' – with her prosodically emphasized change-of-state token (Heritage, 1984b), 'Oh:::': (line 10) – Charlie still delays announcing the bad news himself. His silence at line 11 is as interactionally consequential as Belle's at line 8 in the previous extract. It leads Ilene herself to articulate the bad news – that the consequence of Charlie's having lost his place to stay (because of Karen's change of plan) is that the trip to Syracuse is off (lines 12–13). Ilene announces the news, leaving Charlie simply to confirm it (line 15).

These are just two instances of a recurrent pattern in ordinary conversation: of course, many more are required to develop a technical specification of the practices through which an action, like breaking bad news, is accomplished (see the final section of this chapter for more detail of the process of doing CA research). In the following sub-section, we illustrate how this same conversational action (breaking bad news) is achieved in an institutional context.

Studies of institutional talk

Ordinary conversational competencies – such as those involved in breaking bad news – also underpin the (generally more specialized) talk found in institutional contexts like, for example, healthcare interactions:

practices such as describing a problem or trouble, or for telling good or bad news, are carried across the threshold of the doctor's office and affect how doctors and patients go about addressing particular interactional tasks.

Maynard and Heritage (2005: 428)

The following data fragment is taken from an interaction in a clinic for developmental disabilities (see Maynard, 1992), between a doctor and the mother of a child who has been referred to the clinic. The interaction follows

a clinical assessment of the child's problems, and the task facing the doctor is to deliver a (bad news) diagnosis. Here is how he does it:

[8.013, from Maynard (1992: 337–8)]

- 01 Dr: What do you see? as- as his
02 (0.5) difficulty.
03 (1.2)
04 Mo: Mainly his uhm: (1.2) the
05 fact that he doesn't
06 understand everything.
07 (0.6) and also the fact
08 that his speech (0.7) is
09 very hard to understand
10 what he's saying (0.3)
11 lot[s of ti]me
12 Dr: [right]
13 (0.2)
14 Dr: Do you have any ideas wh:y it
15 is: are you: d[o yo]u?h
16 Mo: [No]
17 (2.1)
18 Dr: .h okay I (0.2) you know I
19 think we basically (.) in
20 some ways agree with you:
21 (0.6) .hh insofar as we think
22 that (0.3) Dan's main problem
23 (0.4) .h you know does:
24 involve you know language.
25 (0.4)
26 Mo: Mm hmm
27 (0.3)
28 Dr: you know both (0.2) you know
29 his- (0.4) being able to
30 understand you know what is
31 said to him (0.4) .h and
32 also certainly also to be
33 able to express:: (1.3) you
34 know his uh his thoughts
35 (1.1)
36 Dr: .hh uh:m (0.6) .hhh in
37 general his development...

There are striking similarities between bad news tellings in ordinary conversation and what we see here in institutional talk. Although it is the *doctor* who has information about the diagnosis, he delays telling it – just as we saw Belle and Charlie do – thereby creating an opportunity for the recipient to tell the bad news herself. He explicitly asks the mother for her understanding of the

child's problem (lines 1–2) and its underlying cause (lines 14–15). And although, in this case, the mother does not *actually* produce the bad news herself, the doctor acts *as if she had*. In saying (at lines 19–20) 'we basically ... agree with you' (where 'we' is understood as a collective reference to himself and other medical experts), he treats her as if she had produced the bad news he is now simply confirming. The doctor's diagnostic telling is built off the mother's report of the child's difficulties and claims to be an agreement with her. This is an institutional adaptation of the ordinary conversational action of breaking bad news – and it illustrates how studies of ordinary conversation typically underpin studies of institutional talk.

Communication in medicine and healthcare is perhaps the largest area of institutional CA (see Heritage and Maynard (2006) for a state-of-the-art overview). Studies of conversational phenomena – such giving a 'bad news' diagnosis (see above) – clearly have huge practical implications for the training of healthcare practitioners and the delivery of healthcare services. Work in this area includes studies of acute, as well as specialist, medicine (Heritage and Stivers, 1999); primary healthcare (Robinson and Stivers, 2001); counselling and therapy sessions (Peräkylä, 1995); and calls to telephone helplines (Baker, Emmison and Firth, 2005; Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2007; Shaw and Kitzinger, 2007).

Other key areas of institutional CA include interactions in classrooms (Koshik, 2001), courts (Atkinson and Drew, 1979), and other workplace settings; news interviews (Clayman and Heritage, 2002a); and calls to the emergency services (Zimmerman, 1992). Empirical work has shown that each of these institutional contexts has specialized conversational practices, but also, that these are derived from the practices of ordinary conversation. We turn now to research on the fundamental features of talk-in-interaction that underpin *all* kinds of talk.

Fundamental features of talk-in-interaction

Drawing both on ordinary conversation and on institutional talk, conversation analysts have identified fundamental structures, rules and practices of talk-in-interaction. These include: turn-taking; sequence organization; action formation; repair; word selection (including person reference); and the overall structural organization of interaction. Within each of these areas there is an established set of core findings foundational to the discipline of CA and essential to any adequate CA study.

Turn-taking

The classic paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) presents a model for ensuring that, by and large, people speak one at a time in conversation. Summarized very simply, the model proposes the existence of turn-constructual units (TCUs) – whole sentences, phrases, sometimes just single words, or even non-lexical items (grunts, whistles, sharp intakes of breath) – which, in context, are recognizable as possibly constituting a complete turn. Each speaker is initially entitled to just *one* of these – after which, another speaker has the right (and sometimes the obligation) to speak next. Turn-taking organization is designed to *minimize* turn size, such that a turn of one (and only one) TCU is the default. Extended turns, with lengthy and/or multiple TCUs, are *accomplishments* and this has important implications for the analysis of longer turns at talk, including – but not limited to – storytelling (Schegloff, 1982, 1987). The model also encompasses speaker selection techniques.

Sequence organization

This second technical domain deals with the *structure* of talk-in-interaction. The most basic type of sequence involves two (adjacent) turns at talk by different speakers, the first constituting an *initiating* action, and the second an action *responsive* to it (Schegloff, 2007). Most initiating actions can be followed by a range

of *sequentially-relevant* (i.e. appropriately 'fitted') next actions, but these alternative responsive actions are not equivalent (Sacks, 1987/1993). In CA terminology, an acceptance of an invitation or a granting of a request is a *preferred* next action, while refusal of an invitation or denial of a request is *dispreferred*. 'Preference' is a structural concept, rather than a psychological one: i.e. the fact that an invitation 'prefers' acceptance is independent of the personal preference of the recipient of that invitation. (Most of us will have had the experience of accepting an invitation that we would – personally – have preferred to have refused.) The basic two-turn sequence can be *expanded* (and a great many are), at the beginning (pre-expansion), and/or in the middle (insert expansion), and/or at the end (post-expansion) of the sequence (Schegloff, 2007). As a result, very long stretches of talk can be built around the core structure of a single two-turn sequence. Most conversations, of course, will consist of many such sequences, some expanded, some not.

Other fundamental features

Space does not permit discussion here of the other fundamental structures, rules and practices of talk-in-interaction foundational to CA. For action formation see, in particular, Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; for repair, Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977); for word selection and person reference, Sacks and Schegloff (1979) and Lerner and Kitzinger (2007); and for the overall structural organization of interaction, Jefferson (1980). An understanding of all of these is crucial for conducting competent CA, whether working with ordinary conversational data, or with institutional talk (where the core findings of CA provide a benchmark for understanding more specialized forms of communication).

CONTEXTUALIZING CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

In this section, we contextualize CA in relation to broader discussions of social science theory and methodology, particularly as these

pertain to qualitative research. We first identify some of the main issues and key debates associated with CA; and then look (briefly) at the relationship between CA and related qualitative methods and methodologies.

Issues and debates

The issues underpinning the key contemporary debates around CA are, in many respects, pertinent to discussions of other qualitative approaches to research, certainly approaches based on the analysis of talk. These issues are: whether the approach can be used politically; the role of quantification; and the relationship between cognition and conversation. We will briefly outline each of these debates as it relates to CA in particular.

Using CA politically

Some recent critics of CA – feminists and others (e.g. Billig, 1999; Lakoff, 2003; Wetherell, 1998) – have proposed that CA is not well suited to the feminist agenda of understanding power and oppression, or to the pursuit of political agendas more generally. Their critiques incorporate three main arguments: (i) that CA's underlying (and often unarticulated) social theory is incompatible with feminism and other critical perspectives; (ii) that CA's emphasis on participants' orientations cannot be reconciled with the analyst's focus on gender, class, sexuality (and other such variables associated with the operation of power relations), especially when these are not apparently oriented to by participants themselves; and (iii) that CA's apparent obsession with the minute details of talk-in-interaction excludes – even obscures – broader social and political realities.

These critiques incorporate various 'mis-understandings or misreadings' of CA (Schegloff, 1999: 559); and we have laid out in more detail elsewhere (Kitzinger, 2000; Kitzinger, 2007a) our own argument that it is precisely those features of CA that are critiqued as anti-feminist or apolitical which offer the most exciting potential for feminist-informed and politically engaged CA work.

We have also demonstrated through our own research how some of the technical tools which define CA as a discipline (sequence organization, person reference, repair) can be deployed within a feminist framework (Kitzinger, 2005a, b, 2007a; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Land and Kitzinger, 2005; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2007).

Quantification

The classic CA studies (particularly studies of ordinary conversation) have been purely qualitative. However, Heritage (1999) predicts that the discipline will become more quantitative during the next period of its development, as conversation analysts connect particular features of talk to the outcomes of that talk. For example, in their analysis of video-recordings of paediatric medical visits, Stivers, Mangione-Smith, Elliott, McDonald and Heritage (2003) showed that inappropriate antibiotics prescribing (for viral conditions where antibiotics are ineffective) was statistically more likely when parents offered a candidate diagnosis (47% got antibiotics) than when they did not (29% got antibiotics).

Other conversation analysts have quantified changes in talk over time. For example, in a study of US presidential press conferences between the 1950s and 2000, Clayman and Heritage (2002b) coded and statistically analysed more than 4000 questions from journalists to the president, documenting how these questions became less deferential and more adversarial over time.

As Schegloff (1993: 102) notes, these large data sets are 'multiples or aggregates of single instances', such that qualitative analysis is 'not an *alternative* to single case analysis, but rather is built on its back' (our emphasis). He warns against premature quantification of superficially identifiable interactional phenomena, as potentially diverting attention from detailed analysis of individual instances, noting that '[q]uantification is no substitute for analysis' (p. 114). Further, many of the fundamental features of talk-in-interaction identified by conversation analysts are too complex to submit to meaningful

coding and statistical analysis (note that both studies described above focus on turn design, which is relatively easy to code and link to measurable outcomes).

Conversation and cognition

There is a lively contemporary debate – less within CA than between CA and discursive psychology – concerning the relationship between cognition and conversation (see te Molder and Potter, 2005; and the Special Issue of *Discourse Studies* [2006, 8(1)]). In general, CA has disengaged from the cognitive realm, in favour of a focus on the observable features of talk-in-interaction. While not *denying* the existence of a cognitive realm, it has treated the interaction order as largely autonomous from it, since conversation can be shown to be systematically organized independent of the purported psychological states of conversationalists.

While CA treats the mind essentially as a Skinnerian 'black box', it does engage with cognition as made manifest in talk-in-interaction. This is perhaps most clearly seen in work on the communication competencies of people with speech disorders, autism, or aphasia, from which underlying cognitive deficits can be inferred (see note 2). There is also a (small) body of work on phenomena such as conversational poetics (Jefferson, 1996), puns (Schegloff, 2003a) and 'the surfacing of the suppressed' (Schegloff, 2003b).

There is an important distinction to be made between the understanding of cognitive phenomena as oriented-to interactional devices (as is typically the case in discursive psychology) and the understanding of cognitive phenomena as 'manifest' in talk (as is becoming the case in conversation analysis: see Drew, 2005; Shaw and Kitzinger, 2007).

Related methods and methodologies

Like other methods of qualitative data collection such as interviews and focus groups, CA is based on talk data; but it is distinctive in two key ways: CA uses naturalistic data; and it involves direct observation of

the thing itself, not retrospective reports of it. Researchers who use interviews and focus groups usually want to analyse the topic or the content of talk (that is, *what* people say), and typically do so using techniques such as thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), or one of the other qualitative methods included in this volume. There is a common perception that CA is not useful in this endeavour – because it is (erroneously) seen as focusing on *how* people say things, rather than on *what* they say. However, CA brings together topic and action, treating what people say and how they say it as inseparable.

Like other qualitative methodologies such as ethnographic observation and discourse analysis (the discursive psychology kind, as in Chapter 5 of this book, rather than the Foucauldian variant of Chapter 6), CA prioritizes naturalistic data; but it is distinctive in depending upon (and contributing to) a cumulative body of knowledge about the fundamental features of talk in interaction (turn-taking, sequence organization, repair, etc.) This is the key distinction between conversation analysis and discursive psychology (Kitzinger, 2006). The CA/discursive psychology boundary has become somewhat blurred in recent years, as discursive psychology has shown an increasing reliance upon CA (see, for example, Edwards and Potter, 2005; Hepburn, 2004; Stokoe and Weatherall, 2002; Chapter 5, this volume).

DOING CONVERSATION ANALYTIC RESEARCH

In this section, we use our own recent study of surprise displays (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006) to illustrate what is involved in doing CA research. This study is part of a larger project on the social construction of emotions, focusing on the use of what we call ‘reaction tokens’ (e.g. Wow! My goodness! Ooh!) in emotion displays. It builds on Goffman’s (1978) analysis of response cries or ‘exclamatory imprecations’ (p. 798) which produce the effect of being visceral eruptions of emotion, in part because they appear to

be spontaneously ‘blurted out’ (p. 799) in response to some object or event.

As with most CA projects, ours began with a noticing of some phenomenon of interest – these kinds of interjections – which raised for us the puzzle, ‘what are these doing?’ The second step in CA research is to put together a preliminary collection of instances of the phenomenon of interest – in our case, reaction tokens. Unlike most other research, CA research is not topic-based – although it may be limited to a particular data set, such as a corpus of conversations between parents and young children (Wootton, 1997), or a series of after-hours calls to a doctor’s surgery (Kitzinger, 2005b). Rather, phenomena investigated by conversation analysts include lexical items (e.g. ‘oh’, Heritage, 1984b; actually, Clift, 2001); conversational practices (e.g. repeats, Schegloff, 1996b; collaborative completions, Lerner, 1991); and actions (e.g. compliments, Pomerantz, 1978; responses to teases, Drew, 1987). The collection will continue to grow over the course of the research project as additional instances of the phenomenon are encountered.

We initially collected more than 600 possible instances of reaction tokens. When first assembling a collection, the phenomenon is (generally) only loosely specified, and possible instances of it, and of related phenomena, are collected inclusively. For example, in our collection of reaction tokens we included both lexical items (‘Goodness gracious me’, ‘Jesus Christ’) and noises that seemed to be doing the same kind of interactional work (a sharp intake of breath, a whistle). We also collected items that we later differentiated from reaction tokens (e.g. ‘oh’ as a news receipt; ‘That’s amazing’ as an assessment). One objective of making a collection is to develop a precise specification of what constitutes an instance of the phenomenon: in contrast to most research in psychology, such a specification is an outcome or finding of CA research, and not an a priori operational definition. In order to answer the question ‘what is it doing?’ the CA researcher needs to develop a precise specification of the ‘it’ under consideration. It is likely that

BOX 4.1 Key Steps Involved in Doing CA Research

- Step 1: 'Noticing' of a conversational phenomenon of interest
- Step 2: Assembling a preliminary collection of candidate instances of the phenomenon
- Step 3: Identifying the largest, or most important, subset within the collection
- Step 4: Analysing the clearest cases of the phenomenon within this subset
- Step 5: Analysing less transparent cases
- Step 6: Analysing deviant cases

Further Reading:

Schegloff, E.A. (1996). Confirming allusions: Toward an empirical account of action. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102(1):161–216.

Wilkinson, S. and Kitzinger, C. (2006). Surprise as an interactional achievement: reaction tokens in conversation, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 69(2):150–182.

what are eventually identified as clear cases, as boundary cases, and as clear non-cases, will be included in the collection at this stage, together with a range of ancillary items (like our news receipts and assessments).

Given the likely range and diversity of instances in a collection, the third step in CA research is to identify subsets within the whole, and to begin analytic work with one or more of these – typically the largest subset. Among our more than 600 candidate instances of reaction tokens, the largest subset was reaction tokens analysed as used to perform surprise – that is, they registered the unexpectedness of information conveyed in a prior turn at talk⁵ – and so our initial analysis focused on this subset. The fourth step is to begin analysis with the clearest cases of the phenomenon of interest; the fifth step is to extend analysis to less transparent cases; and the final step is to include analysis of deviant cases – that is, ones which do not fit the emerging pattern. Deviant cases are likely to include occasions where one might expect the phenomenon to occur, but, in fact, it does not (see Schegloff (1996b) for two varieties of this); ones where one might not expect the phenomenon to occur, but in fact it does; and highly atypical occurrences. We illustrate the fourth, fifth and sixth steps of the analytic process below with examples of two

clear cases; two less transparent cases; and a deviant case (see Box 4.1 for a summary of the key steps involved in doing CA research).

Let us begin, then, with two of the clear cases (see step 4) from our large collection of surprise tokens: the 'Oo::h!' in fragment 1 below; and the 'Wow!' in fragment 2 below. Both instances are taken from helpline calls: the surprise token 'Oo::h' in fragment 1 (line 4) is responsive to the caller's description of her pain free labour (lines 1–3); and the surprise token 'Wow!' in fragment 2 (line 3) is responsive to the call-taker's description of her young family (lines 1–2).

Fragment 1

[RT114N: Kitzinger BCC 103:11]
 01 Eve: I w- got to six centimetres
 02 and I hadn't had no pain
 03 at a:ll.
 04 Clt: Oo::[h!]
 05 Eve: [U:m] [a:nd]
 06 Clt: [That']s
 07 amazin[g.]
 08 Eve: [I] know.

Fragment 2

[RT376: Kitzinger HB30]
 01 Clt: I had three under two at
 02 one point.
 03 Lau: Wow!
 04 Clt: Because the second- the
 05 second turned out to be
 06 twins.
 07 Lau: Ah!

These are clear examples of how surprise displays typically run off (see Wilkinson and Kitinger (2006) for many more). In each instance, a first turn containing something presented as a surprise source is followed by a second turn containing a surprise token (Oo::h!, Wow!). As outlined earlier, CA work on sequence organization has shown how the basic action unit of conversation is the adjacency pair (consisting of an initiating action followed by a responsive action); and how the turns in an adjacency pair can stand in a preferred or a dispreferred relation to one another. In each instance above, the two turns stand in a preferred, or aligning, relationship. Across our data set, we find that when a turn is designed to present something as surprising, the surprise token is produced right after the surprise source, without delay, qualification or mitigation. This is typical of preferred responses.

The CA literature on turn-design enables us to identify the key features of turns designed to elicit surprise. In part, the information conveyed is surprising independent of the turn design, insofar as co-cultural members share the knowledge that labour is generally painful and that three children under two is unusual in their culture. But these turns are also specifically designed to present these as surprising. In fragment 1, Eve uses a negative observation (Schegloff, 1988) – ‘no pain’ (line 2) – and an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), produced with exaggerated prosodic emphasis – ‘at a::ll’ (line 3) – to suggest a noticeable departure from what might be expected, and to underscore the absence of (even mild) pain. In fragment 2, the call-taker gives exaggerated prosodic emphasis to a numerical value (‘three under two’), producing the number of infants in her family as higher than might be expected. In each of these instances, then, recipients produce immediate, unqualified surprise tokens, displaying their understanding that the prior turn was designed precisely to elicit the surprise they have so promptly produced. This observed pattern accounts for the

clearest instances in our collection of surprise tokens.

Our collection also includes less transparent instances (see step 5). In a substantial minority of cases, surprise tokens are produced, but they do not immediately follow the surprise source. Here are two examples. In each, there is a delay between the turn presenting the surprise source (fragment 3, line 1; fragment 4, lines 1–2) and the surprise token responsive to it (‘Goodness!’, fragment 3, line 4; ‘My goodness!’, fragment 4, line 6).

Fragment 3

[RT319: Kitinger HB]
01 Clt: I’ve had five at home
02 Ros: Fi::ve,hh
03 Clt: mm
04 Ros: Goodness!

Fragment 4

[RT471: Kitinger BCC 483] (They are talking about breastfeeding)
01 Clt: Even adoptive mothers can
02 do it you kno:w.
03 (.)
04 Saf: °↑Can they°.
05 Clt: Yup.
06 Saf: °My goodness!°
07 Clt: .hhh I:f the:y’ve (.) I
08 mean it’s much easier
09 if they’ve already had a
10 ba:by ((continues))

In each of these cases, the surprise token *could* have been produced right away, immediately following the surprising first turn – but, instead, in each case, its production is delayed by intervening talk (and, in fragment 4, also by a short silence, at line 2). In each, a caller ostensibly seeks – and receives – confirmation of (some aspect of) the surprising prior turn *before* producing a surprise token. In fragment 3, Ros checks the number of home births the call-taker has had (through a prosodically marked partial repeat of the prior talk, ‘Fi::ve’, line 2); and, following confirmation, produces a surprise token, ‘Goodness!’. In fragment 4, after a brief gap (perhaps ‘stunned silence’, see Wilkinson and Kitinger, 2006), Saffron asks for confirmation of the call-taker’s assertion that adoptive

mothers can breastfeed (through an elliptical partial repeat of the prior talk, ‘↑Can they’, line 3); and following confirmation, produces a surprise token ‘My goodness!’.

The talk that intervenes between the surprise source turn and the surprise token works as a display of ‘ritualized disbelief’ (Heritage, 1984b), constituting a little performance of surprise in its own right. However, turns such as ‘Five’ and ‘Can they’ are different from the surprise tokens in our collection (and were not included as part of it) because, unlike surprise tokens, they are initiating actions. They are seeking confirmation of some surprising information, and they make relevant, in response, a confirmation (or, of course, a denial or retraction) of it. ‘Five’ and ‘Can they’ are treated by their recipients as questions (and they answer them), whereas reactions like ‘gracious’ and ‘golly’ are never so treated. Although it is true that these displays of ritualized disbelief do not so much ask questions as convey a stance (that information in the prior turn is unexpected and as in need of confirmation before it can be otherwise receipted and reacted to), nonetheless they are normatively treated as questions by co-interactants. And when they occur, they come right after a turn containing a surprise source – that is, in the position which may otherwise be occupied by a surprise token. Across our data set, we find that this pattern of response – a surprise token delayed by intervening talk – is more common when the surprise source turn is not analysably designed as such (that is, when it does not include design features such as negative observations, extreme case formulations, or exaggerated prosodic emphasis of numerical values).

Thus far, we have shown (in fragments 1 and 2) how recipients of a surprise source produce the effect of a visceral eruption by ‘blurring out’ a surprise token immediately after the surprise source. As fragments 3 and 4 show, however, recipients of surprising information can also delay production of a surprise token long enough to check out – and receive confirmation of – that information.

A key finding of this project, then, is that surprise tokens may be prepared for well in advance, and/or produced after a considerable delay. Our analysis provides evidence that, as Goffman (1978) claimed (but did not show), emotion displays are not visceral eruptions, but interactionally achieved performances. This conclusion relies not only on analysis of the clearest cases (in which viscosity is most vividly performed) but also on analysis of less transparent cases (in which an as-if-visceral performance is produced after a delay; see Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2006) for delays much more extensive than those displayed here).

Finally, we turn to an example of a deviant case (see step 6): an instance when a surprise reaction is *not* produced in response to a surprise source (see Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2006) for an instance when a surprise reaction occurs unexpectedly). In fragment 5, from a call to the Birth Crisis helpline, the caller (Gill) reports as surprise sources her babies’ birth weights. Here, surprise reactions (from the call-taker) are relevantly missing. As fragment 5 opens, Gill, who is pregnant for the third time, is explaining her concern about her forthcoming labour with reference to the length of her previous one.

Fragment 5

[Kitzinger BCC7: 5:17-7:13]

01 Gil: um (.) VEry long: (.) well
 02 co(h)mpa(h)ra(h)tively
 03 >anyway< (.) It was about
 04 thirteen hours first
 05 stage..hh Two hours second
 06 stage. .hh Um: an[d-]
 07 Clt: [Th]at is
 08 long isn’t it for a second
 09 bab[y. mm.]
 10 Gil: [Yeah.] Well my first-
 11 Marilyn was nine pounds.
 12 Clt: mm hm
 13 Gil: ((swallows)) Christian was
 14 nine pounds twe:lve.
 15 (.)
 16 Gil: So he was quite big.
 17 <But the second stage I felt
 18 was the bit that DIdn’t go
 19 brilliantly well but .hhhh
 20 I felt quite compromised on

21 what position I was in.
 // ((about 1 minute later))
 90 Gil: And he was born.
 91 (.)
 92 Gil: And um (0.2) he was nine
 93 pounds twelve so(h) he
 94 was quite big.
 95 Clt: \$ We:ll you have very
 96 healthy big [bab]ies.
 97 Gil: [yes]
 98 Um: (0.5) I had a
 99 physiological third stage
 100 which I think (.) didn't
 101 go brilliantly well as well
 102 ((continues))

At line 11, Gill provides the information that her first baby weighed 'nine pounds'. The average full-term birth weight (in the UK) is around eight pounds. This cultural knowledge, here presumed to be shared, in part constitutes the weights in lines 11 and 14 as surprise sources. The call-taker, however, merely offers a continuer ('mm hm', line 12). Gill then 'ups the ante', pointing out that her second baby was even larger ('nine pounds twelve', line 14). In the absence of any reaction from the call-taker at line 15, Gill offers her own assessment of the baby's weight ('he was quite big', line 16), before continuing with her story. About a minute later, Gill's narrative reaches the birth itself (line 90), and she reiterates both the baby's birth weight (lines 92–93) and her assessment of it ('he was quite big', lines 93–94). This time the repeated information does elicit a turn from the call-taker, but she does not align with Gill on the issue of size. The call-taker (again) refuses the opportunity to marvel at the babies' birth weights, substituting an emphasis on their health (lines 95–96). A surprise reaction is therefore still hearable as relevantly missing and, after a short delay (line 98), Gill continues with her narrative. It is likely that the reason for the call-taker's refusal to align is that Gill is offering size of baby as an account for length of labour. Displaying surprise at Gill's unusually heavy babies might be heard here as endorsing this claim of causality, a claim explicitly challenged by the call-taker later in the call.

Fragments 1–4 all exemplify surprise sources and surprise tokens standing in a preferred, or aligning, relationship: that is, where surprise tokens are produced in response to surprise source turns designed to elicit them (albeit after some delay in 3 and 4). Fragment 5, by contrast, is a deviant case in which surprise sources and surprise tokens stand in a dispreferred, or non-aligning, relationship (in this case, no surprise tokens are produced, despite – as we have shown – Gill's vigorous pursuit of such a response). The deviant case analysis shows us how, in withholding surprise as a reaction to a turn (or turns) designed to elicit it, a recipient can display some alternative stance towards what can be expected in the normal case of things. In aligning (or not aligning) about what is and what is not surprising, co-interactants invoke – or challenge – understandings of what is normative for their culture.

This research contributes to a variety of domains, including social psychological research on the social construction of emotion; basic CA on how surprise is organized interactionally; and – in relation to the particular data extracts included here – institutional/applied CA on understanding helpline interaction. The research example we have given is typical of CA work using a collection of instances to examine some phenomenon of interest. There is another kind of CA research: single case analysis, in which 'the resources of past work on a range of phenomena and organizational domains in talk-in-interaction are brought to bear on the analytic explication of a single fragment of talk' (Schegloff, 1987: 101); for examples see Goodwin (1995); Schegloff (1988); and – in the institutional context of emergency calls – Whalen, Zimmerman and Whalen (1988).

CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF CONVERSATION ANALYTIC WORK

CA enables us to understand the basic, 'generic' practices of human social interaction,

many of which are central to psychological research. It also offers a way to increase our understanding of central social institutions – medicine, law, education – as these are ‘talked into being’ by participants themselves.

More specifically, CA offers a theory and a methodology for investigating the social organization of talk-in-interaction, its structures, rules and practices. CA’s theory includes a model appealing to many qualitative researchers of a social order grounded in ongoing, interpretive work; and it provides a clearly specified, yet nuanced definition of intersubjectivity, as depending on displayed understandings of prior talk. Its methodology is clearly specified, and researchers can draw upon an already established database of fundamental facts about the organization of interaction. CA methodology can be used flexibly across many different contexts, with studies of ordinary conversation providing a benchmark against which more specialized forms of communication in a wide variety institutional contexts can be compared.

CA work is extremely demanding of the researcher. It is very time-consuming and labour-intensive – from initial transcription (which is a pre-requisite for analysis), through the various phases of analysis itself. It is also extremely complicated, and requires extensive training in concepts and techniques before it can be used effectively. Unfortunately, because CA is recognized as a powerful tool, it is picked up and used – often incorrectly – sometimes as an adjunct to, or component of, other methods/approaches.

Some of the key challenges for the future are:

- (i) The continuing development of ‘basic’ CA, as well as the application of CA in institutional contexts. Despite the accumulated findings of some 40 years of research, there is a lot we still do not know about basic features of interaction. In the enthusiasm for applying CA in institutional contexts, researchers have not always realized the full potential of analyses of institutional talk for developing basic CA.
- (ii) Within institutional talk, the relation of conversational structures and practices to outcomes,

in order to speak to policy makers. This is likely to include more use of quantification – and this needs to be achieved in ways that do not do violence to basic conversational phenomena.

- (iii) The increasing use of video data, enabling a more detailed examination of the integration of gesture and other body behavioural cues with talk (following Goodwin (1981) and Wootton (1997)); and an understanding of embodied action as an organization of practice in its own right (work begun by Lerner and Raymond, 2008).
- (iv) The development of work on emotion displays, particularly those involving prosodic features of talk (pitch, tone, loudness), and non-lexical forms of communication (laughter, crying, grunts, squeals, sighs). CA has, to date, focused primarily on lexical material, and there is much to be done in this – particularly difficult – area.

In sum, the methodological demands and challenges of CA will prove daunting to some; nor is CA necessarily the most appropriate approach for those interested primarily in topic-based research (as opposed to research integrating topic with action). We continue to use a range of methods and approaches in our own work; and even in projects with a strong CA component, we have found other methods invaluable (e.g. Shaw and Kitzinger (2005); Toerien and Wilkinson (2004)). However, for those prepared to undertake the necessary training, and who are intrigued, above all, by what people can do with talk, and how they go about doing it, CA offers the qualitative researcher in psychology an extremely rigorous, yet exquisitely sensitive, means of understanding social life.

NOTES

1 Conversation analysts sometimes also study interaction in non-naturalistic settings, such as interviews or focus groups. In this case, the interactions taking place there and then, in the interview or focus group itself, constitute the data – rather than (as in the case of most interview or focus group research) participants’ reports of interactions that have taken place in other contexts (see Wilkinson (2004, 2006) for a more extended discussion and examples of this).

See Guimaraes (2007) for an example of CA analyses of interactions in which the researcher was a participant.

2 CA also studies people with restricted or impaired communication – such as non-native language speakers (Wong, 2005); people with speech disorders (Bloch, 2005), autism (Dickerson, Rae, Stirling, Dautenhahn and Werry, 2005), Alzheimer's (Kitzinger and Jones, 2007), or aphasia (Goodwin, 1995) – in their everyday conversational contexts, as well as in institutional contexts. Such research relies on, and is built on, an understanding of how competent communication normatively runs off.

3 This is also a very nice demonstration of intersubjectivity in action: the child's turn at line 5 displays her understanding of mother's prior turn; and mother's turn at line 7 confirms that the child's displayed understanding was correct. The conversational practices of repair – which deal with (ostensible) problems of hearing or understanding – provide an essential mechanism for monitoring and maintaining intersubjectivity (see Schegloff, 1992).

4 The fundamental structures of talk-in-interaction identified by CA have been shown to apply across dozens of languages – with only very minor differences in the practices through which particular actions are implemented (attributable, for example, to the formal structure of a given language).

5 We also limited our initial analysis to reaction tokens in second position – that is, where they are responsive actions (they also occur in other positions); and to those responsive to prior talk (rather than to events in the world). These constituted the majority of instances in our collection. We also excluded reaction tokens produced in reported speech from the initial analysis.

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TRANSCRIPTION KEY

Aspects of the relative timing of utterances

[] square brackets
= equals sign

< 'less than' sign
(0.5) time in parentheses
(.) period in parentheses

overlapping talk
no discernible interval between turns (also used to show that the same person continues speaking across an intervening line displaying overlapping talk)
'jump started' talk with loud onset
intervals within or between talk (measured in tenths of a second)
discernable pause or gap, too short to measure

Characteristics of speech delivery

. period
, comma
? question mark
¿ inverted question mark
! exclamation mark
- hyphen/dash
: colon

↑↓ up or down arrow
here underlining
HERE upper case
°here° degree signs
>this<
<this>
hhh
.hhh
(h)
hah/heh/hih/hoh/huh
() empty single parentheses
(bring) word(s) in single parentheses
((coughs)) word(s) in double parentheses

closing intonation
slightly upward 'continuing' intonation
rising intonation question
rising intonation weaker than that indicated by a question mark
animated tone
abrupt cut-off of sound
extension of preceding sound –the more colons the greater the extension
marked rise or fall in intonation immediately following the arrow
emphasized relative to surrounding talk
louder relative to surrounding talk
softer relative to surrounding talk
speeding up or compressed relative to surrounding talk
slower or elongated relative to surrounding talk
audible outbreath (no. of 'h's indicates length)
audible inbreath (no. of 'h's indicates length)
audible aspirations in speech (e.g. laughter particles)
all variants of laughter
transcriber unable to hear words
transcriber uncertain of hearing
transcriber's comments on or description of sound; other audible sounds are represented as closely as possible in standard orthography, e.g. 'tcht' for tongue click; 'mcht' for a lip parting sound

Discursive Psychology

Sally Wiggins and Jonathan Potter

INTRODUCTION

Discursive psychology begins with psychology as it faces people living their lives. It studies how psychology is constructed, understood and displayed as people interact in everyday and more institutional situations. How does a speaker show that they are not prejudiced, while developing a damning version of an entire ethnic group? How are actions coordinated in a counselling session to manage the blame of the different parties for the relationship breakdown? How is upset displayed, understood and receipted in a call to a child protection helpline? Questions of this kind require us to understand the kinds of things that are 'psychological' for people as they act and interact in particular settings – families, workplaces and schools. And this in turn encourages us to respectify the very object psychology. Discursive psychology does not start with a 'technical' story of mental processes, behavioural regularities or neural events that are happening somewhere below and behind the business of interaction. Rather it starts with the categories, constructions and orientations through which a sense of agency, say, or severe distress, or

a moment of understanding are displayed in a piece of interaction in a particular setting.

Discursive psychology is not focused on discourse because it is interested in the psychology of language as a topic amongst others (prejudice, social influence, etc.) as it has been traditionally understood. Indeed, it takes a very different approach to language than is common in psychology. It is focused on discourse because it is the primary arena for action, understanding and intersubjectivity. It starts with a view of people as social and relational, and with psychology as a domain of practice rather than abstract contemplation. Its methodological principles follow from its meta-theoretical, theoretical and conceptual arguments, although these are further supported through their empirical fruitfulness.

This chapter will introduce the perspective of discursive psychology. We outline theoretical and methodological features, using examples from current research to elucidate our arguments. In doing so, we demonstrate the potential influence and future development of discursive research methods within psychology. We start by outlining the theoretical and intellectual roots of

discursive psychology (occasionally, DP) and its emergence within psychology. We then focus on contemporary issues and debates. For example, what is the importance of everyday practices? What is the status of cognitive notions in DP? And how does it deal with seemingly intractable topics such as embodiment? We will overview key studies to highlight what is distinctive about DP. The chapter will also detail the practicalities of DP research, from the initial stages of gaining ethical approval and collecting data, through to transcription and analysis. Examples from our own research on eating practices will be used to illustrate some of these stages in more detail. Finally, we consider limitations of the approach, and speculate as to the future of discursive psychology.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY OUT OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discursive psychology was developed out of a particular form of discourse analysis that was outlined most fully in Potter and Wetherell's (1987) highly influential book *Discourse and Social Psychology*. This pioneered qualitative discourse research in psychology, providing the basis for some of the first qualitative papers in empirical journals such as the *British Journal of Social Psychology* and *European Journal of Social Psychology*. Potter and Wetherell's book reconceptualized the topic of social psychology and outlined an alternative methodological approach that could be used in place of the experiments and questionnaires that had been the mainstay of published psychological work at that point. It drew on conversation analytic work on both everyday and institutional settings (Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Levinson, 1983). It also built on post-structuralist ideas. Some of these were from the Foucaultian tradition of Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine (1984); others drew on thinking from Barthes, Derrida and other continental figures, as seen in the earlier work by Potter,

Stringer and Wetherell (1984). There is also an important debt to the work of Wittgenstein and linguistic philosophy (see Potter, 2001). This is partly a direct influence and partly comes through the important philosophical respecification of psychology developed by Harré (Harré and Gillett, 1994). Finally, it owed a major debt to the sociology of scientific knowledge and in particular Gilbert and Mulkay (1984). This is a potentially confusing mix; discipline was provided by taking as its major focus discourse – talk and texts – and, in particular, the ways in which discourse is oriented to actions within settings, the way representations are constructed and oriented to action, and a general caution about explanations of conduct based in the cognition of individuals.

Although Potter and Wetherell (1987) outlined many of the features later refined in discursive psychology it is worth highlighting two areas of difference as they have major methodological implications. First, a major focus of Potter and Wetherell (1987) was on the identification of the structured discursive resources that underlie and sustain interaction. There are different possibilities for the analysis of resources. While ethnomethodologists have focused on the role of membership categories (e.g. Hester and Eglin, 1997), rhetoricians, and particularly Billig (1996), have focused on rhetorical commonplaces. However, Potter and Wetherell developed the notion of interpretative repertoires from Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) earlier work. Interpretative repertoires are clusters of terms organized around a central metaphor, often used with grammatical regularity. They are flexibly drawn on to perform different actions (see Edley, 2001).

We can illustrate this notion with the example of Wetherell and Potter's (1992) major study of racist discourse in New Zealand and, in particular, its distinct way of addressing the notion of culture. They did not treat culture as a feature of the lifestyle, rituals and world view of Maoris as anthropologists would; nor did they treat it as a mental stereotype organizing the information processing of the Pākehā (White, European

New Zealanders) as social cognition psychologists would. Instead, they identified two interpretative repertoires through which culture was flexibly and locally constructed to perform different activities. On the one hand, the Culture-as-Heritage repertoire was used to build culture as an antiquated inheritance that should be treasured but requires protection from the rigours of the 'modern world'. On the other, the Culture-as-Therapy repertoire constructed culture as a psychological requirement that would stop Maori becoming rootless and mentally unstable. It is not that there is one notion of culture that these repertoires express differently; it is that culture is *constituted* in importantly different ways by these repertoires. Wetherell and Potter (1992) note that these repertoires show a sensitivity to difference organized around social relations rather than genetics, and are thus free of many of the connotations of racism. This is one of those reasons that they can be used (in newspapers, parliamentary debates and everyday talk) to make powerful and hard to rebut attacks on Maori political movements and undercut the legitimacy of Maori claims.

The notion of interpretative repertoires has been drawn on by many studies from across the social sciences. It offered a picture of complex, historically developed organizations of ideas that could be identified through research, and yet were flexible enough to be reworked within the contingencies of different concrete settings. This theorizing of the flexible requirements of practice offers some advantages over some neo-Foucaultian notions of discourse that are more brittle and tectonic (Parker, 1992); and this flexibility was developed in the important reworking of ideology in the domain of practice by Billig and colleagues (1988). Nevertheless, Wooffitt (2005) has suggested that the notion still fails to fully accommodate the complexity of human conduct; and there are major questions as to whether the structuring of repertoires is a consequence of preformed conceptual organizations or a by-product of the pragmatic organization of practices (see Potter, 1996, Chapter 6). Furthermore, the original repertoire notion required a series

of procedures and criteria for the reliable identification of something as a repertoire. Yet, many current studies offer only the vaguest idea of how the repertoires are identified and how they relate to a corpus of data (Potter, 2003a). There are important points of principle here, illustrated in the influential exchange between Schegloff (1997) and Wetherell (1998).

The second area of difference between Potter and Wetherell's (1987) conception of discourse analysis and the later discursive psychology concerns the place of open ended interviews in the generation of analytic materials. Potter and Wetherell draw on some work using naturalistic materials, but much of their discussion, and the majority of the very large body of subsequent studies using interpretative repertoires that this work spawned have used open ended interviews. Discursive psychology is distinct from the earlier tradition of discourse analysis in almost completely abandoning open ended interviews as a research method. This was partly due to profound problems with the production and analysis of open ended interviews (Potter and Hepburn, 2005a).

Despite these major differences there are some important continuities between Potter and Wetherell (1987) and discursive psychology. Both draw heavily on constructionist sociology of scientific knowledge and the revitalized rhetoric of Billig (1996). Both focus on categories and descriptions and the way they are involved in actions. Both offer a respecification of basic psychological notions. Let us illustrate this with the notion of attitudes. Potter and Wetherell (1987) started a wholesale respecification of the notion of attitudes by highlighting two troubling features for traditional work.

First, when materials from outside the very constrained settings of forced choice attitude scales are examined, we see considerable variability. The same speaker seemingly offers different evaluations of the same thing in different contexts. Such variability is an empirical embarrassment for attitude research. Indeed, variability as an empirical discovery from the careful study of discourse

was a key motor to the first wave of discourse research, because variability not only shows up problems with traditional pictures of attitudes as inner dispositions, it also provides a way of identifying the different activities that evaluations are involved with.

Second, although attitude research typically treats attitudes as hypothetical mental entities, they enter into the research process in terms of evaluative descriptions: words such as 'good', 'bad' and more extended descriptions that construct some element of the world in a negative or positive way. In traditional work there is a clear cut separation between the object of the attitude and the attitudinal stance of the person – evaluative language is treated mainly as a medium accessing the mental entities. Potter and Wetherell (1987) highlight the role of descriptions as constituting the attitudinal object in particular ways. For instance, a speaker can produce a highly negative description of a minority group while claiming not to have negative attitudes to that group (Potter and Wetherell, 1988; see also Van Dijk, 1989; Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

This early discourse analytic work on attitudes drew on important work from rhetorical psychology. For example, in a series of studies Billig (1988, 1989, 1992) showed that people offer views in specific contexts, typically where there is at least the possibility of argument. Indeed, Billig treats evaluation as inseparable from argument, thus highlighting its socially embedded and practical nature. Most people do not sit over dinner arguing the merits of the force of gravity. Moreover, where people construct arguments for something and provide the justification of their own position they are simultaneously criticizing the counter-position (sometimes explicitly, sometimes not).

One of the central themes developed in *Discursive Psychology* (Edwards and Potter, 1992) was the close inferential relationship between versions of 'reality' (things in 'the world', actions, events, history and so on) and 'mind' (things 'in the head',

attitudes, dispositions, feelings, expectations and so on). People construct versions of both of these things in their talk and their texts, and they do so in the service of action. For discursive psychology this pervasive practical reasoning is a topic of study. For example, research has considered the way callers to a child protection helpline construct their 'attitude' in ways that are appropriate to the act of reporting abuse (Potter and Hepburn, 2003, 2007). There is quite a complex interactional task here. The caller constructs the abuse as serious, potentially damaging or upsetting and, conversely (and relevantly for the context) as not something the caller gets pleasure from or feels good about. However, the negative position must not be of such severity that they show him or herself as remiss in not calling the police. More subtly still, the callers show that the abuse is experienced as personally negative, and yet this is not the prime reason for the call – they are not, for example, trying to cause problems for noisy neighbours (Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005).

Recent developments within DP have drawn more extensively on conversation analytic (CA) principles. For example, CA shows a way of approaching topics that psychologists would regard as attitudes in terms of situated practices of evaluation or assessment. Here, evaluations are structured events in talk; they are sequentially organized within turn-taking and are the products of, rather than the precursors to, an interaction. The work of Pomerantz (1978, 1984, 1986) has been particularly insightful in this area. For instance, assessments and subsequent (or second) assessments are structured so as to minimize stated disagreement and maximize stated agreement between speakers (Pomerantz, 1984). When expressing an assessment, one is therefore performing an action, such as praising, insulting, complaining and so on. This action is itself structured through the sequential organization of the talk. Research on evaluations in DP reflects this emphasis, bringing to the fore the action orientation and sequential organization of evaluative expressions, such as the use of different types of food evaluation to justify

or account for particular courses of action (Wiggins and Potter, 2003).

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Discursive psychology builds from three core observations about the nature of discourse (see Potter, 2003b; Potter and Edwards, 2001). First, discourse is both *constructed* and *constructive*. It is constructed in that it is made up of linguistic building blocks: words, categories, idioms, repertoires and so on. These are used in a wide range of ways to present particular versions of the world. For instance, take an utterance as simple as 'let's go to my Dad's house for lunch'. This invokes categories of family members (my Dad, rather than Steve, say; and Dad rather than my Mum), buildings and locations (house, rather than 'over there'), actions ('let's go', invoking other people in this movement) and mealtimes as specific events ('lunch', rather than just 'food'). Discourse is also constructive in that these versions of the world are a product of the talk itself, not something that may putatively exist prior to the talk.

The second main principle is that discourse is action-oriented. That is, in talking and writing we are primarily carrying out actions. This may seem rather obvious, since to 'talk' or 'write' are actions in themselves. But it is more than this. Discourse is the primary medium for social action; in speaking we blame, justify, invite, compliment and so on. Hence to separate talk and action as psychologists commonly do (for example in distinctions such as attitudes vs. behaviour) is to set up a false dichotomy, and to overlook the ways in which talk achieves things in itself.

Third and finally, discourse is situated. It is situated within a specific sequential environment; words are understood according to what precedes and follows them. This is similar to the conversation analytic notion that talk is *occasioned* (see Wooffitt, 2005).

It is situated within a particular institutional setting, such as a telephone helpline, school classroom or family mealtime. Discourse is also situated rhetorically, within a particular argumentative framework. One way of describing something will always be countering – either explicitly or indirectly – alternative ways of describing the same thing (see the earlier discussion of Billig's work). Thus, to understand discourse fully, one must examine it *in situ*, as it happens, bound up with its situational context.

These principles have most clearly been developed in *Representing Reality* (Potter, 1996) and *Discourse and Cognition* (Edwards, 1997). In the former text, Potter develops a systematic account of the way versions are built as objective, as mere descriptions of actions or events. This addresses the question of how speakers manufacture the credibility of versions, and how this building can be challenged and undermined. Taking the example of attitudes again, this work considers the way in which versions can be produced to generate evaluations as features of the objects and events rather than positions or dispositions of speakers. This is clearly a key task when talk is about delicate or controversial topics, where motives and dispositions may be closely inspected. Thus constructing a version of a minority group that simultaneously produces negative characteristics (e.g. involvement with sexual violence) combined with a display of 'sympathetic' motivation toward that group (perhaps drawing on one of the culture repertoires discussed above) can work to avoid being seen as having racist attitudes (Potter and Wetherell, 1988). Note the way that the relationship between 'mind' and 'the world' is reworked here in the talk.

One of the achievements of DP has been to highlight how crucial this relationship is as a practical feature of interaction. People construct versions of the world that have implications for their own dispositions and thoughts; and they construct versions of that psychological stuff to have implications for actions and events in the world. This practical distinction between subjective and objective notions is further developed in Edwards

(1997; see also Edwards, 2005). Here, the focus is on the ways in which accounts, blaming, justifications and so on are worked up in talk to perform particular activities. For example, how categories of 'mind' or 'body' are constituted through description to reduce one's accountability for an event. Emotions like 'anger', for example, can be worked up as physical, uncontrollable events ('boiling over', 'burning up with rage') to characterize an event as a brief 'lapse' in one's usual demeanour. DP here is developing the constructionist approach to emotion (Harré and Gillett, 1996) in a more specifically analytic and interactional direction.

MAIN ISSUES AND DEBATES

We now turn to some of the issues within discursive psychology and between discursive psychologists and critics. We will take three examples: the preference for working with naturalistic materials; the alternative to cognitivism; and the respecification of embodied practices.

Naturalistic materials

The earlier tradition of discourse analysis developed by Potter and Wetherell (1987) and exemplified, for example, in work by Billig (1992) and others was often dependent on some form of open-ended interview as its principal data generation technique. More recently, the style of critical discourse work that has addressed issues of subjectivity and neo-liberalism using a psychodynamic meta-theory has also been based almost exclusively on open-ended interviews (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; see Chapter 6 of this volume).

Potter and Hepburn (2005) summarize some of the problems with the use of open-ended interviews. They note that they are often used in ways that wipe out many of their interactional features (by focusing on extracts from participants' 'answers' and using forms of transcript which wipe out many of the elements of talk that conversation analysts have shown to be live for participants). Even when

more care is paid to these features interviews present challenging difficulties. It is very hard to disentangle the social science agendas that are imported with the question construction, terminology and the whole set up of the interview. Both interviewer and interviewee move between complex and sometimes indistinct footing positions. For example, participants are often recruited as members of social categories (a schoolteacher, say), but they may position their talk in various complex ways with respect to that category membership. Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) highlight a range of difficulties of this kind. There are also complex and hard to analyse issues with respect to the stake or interest that each party may show in what they are saying. There are major challenges here for qualitative researchers in a range of different traditions. For the most part these issues have been avoided rather than faced up to and open ended interviews remain the default data generation techniques for different traditions of qualitative research (for discussion see Potter and Hepburn, 2005a,b; and responses by Hollway, 2005; Mischler, 2005; Smith, 2005).

Instead of working on open-ended interviews DP has focused on naturalistic materials. By naturalistic we mean records of what people actually do, such as in therapy, counselling, helpline interaction, mealtime conversation, everyday phone calls, neighbour mediation and so on (see, for example, the different contributions to Hepburn and Wiggins, 2005, 2007). These materials are *naturalistic* rather than *natural* to highlight the epistemic troubles that go along with the status of the 'natural' and to show an appreciation of issues of 'reactivity' that arise when recording what people do.

There are a number of virtues of working with naturalistic materials:

- 1 It avoids imposing the researchers' own categories or assumptions onto the data.
- 2 It situates research within the seemingly 'messy' settings of everyday life; people are not separated from the sorts of agentic and accountability issues that arise in social interaction.

- 3 It provides a directly practical way of doing research. Rather than trying to 'apply' findings from one setting (e.g. interviews) to another (e.g. workplaces), it studies peoples' practices in situ.
- 4 It allows the research to be guided by issues that may not have been anticipated by the researcher; this is often how novel and unexpected topics arise.
- 5 It captures life as it happens, in sufficient detail to be able to analyse the complexity of seemingly 'mundane' situations.

Digitized forms of audio and video allow for a more fluid working with these sorts of materials, and are complemented by Jeffersonian transcription, which captures features of talk relevant to action and interaction. The use of advanced digital technology complements this analytic shift from looking at the broad resources for action (categories, rhetorical commonplaces, interpretative repertoires) and how they are used in interview talk to focusing on the organization of practices in settings. It allows the researcher to appreciate information about stress and intonation, overlap and other conversational features with, if appropriate, information about gesture, gaze and so on.

Cognition and cognitivism

DP has developed an alternative to the cognitivism that is the staple of the modern discipline of psychology. Cognitivism is a general approach that treats human action as a product of cognition. As Edwards (1997: 19) puts it:

Whereas *cognition* is a possible topic for investigation, *cognitivism* is a perspective that reduces all of psychological life, including discourse and social interaction, to the workings of cognitive, or even computational, mental processes ... [C]ognitivism inherited its aim, of specifying mechanical input-output processes, from the stimulus-response behaviourism that it sought to replace with the 'information processing' metaphor of mind. The basic cognitivist position [is] that we start with a given, external world, which is then perceived and processed, and *then put into words*.

In cognitivist approaches discourse is treated as the *expression* of thoughts, intentions

or some other entity from the cognitive thesaurus. At its strongest, action and interaction are treated as *only* explicable in terms of cognitive precursors (for a general overview of cognitive psychology and interaction research see Potter and te Molder, 2005). Different qualitative approaches take different positions on the status of cognitive processes and entities; most hope to reform cognitivism rather than respecify it in its entirety.

DP conceptualizes psychological issues in a non-cognitivist way. Instead of treating discourse as dependent upon, and explicable by way of, cognitive objects and processes, it studies cognition's involvement as a participant's concern. That is, it treats mind, experience, emotion, intention and so on in terms of how they are *constructed* and *oriented to* in interaction. DP includes a range of areas of work that explore this general problematic. Some studies focus on the practices through which psychological implications of talk are managed. They ask how motives are established or memories are discounted as flawed (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992). Other studies consider the practical uses of cognitive language (e.g. Edwards, 1999 on anger and jealousy). Another strand of work is focused on the respecification of central topics in social cognition, cognitive psychology and cognitive science (including scripts and schemata, categories, attitudes and beliefs, emotions; see Edwards and Potter, 2005). Finally, other work has concentrated on studying psychological methods in practice and the way they constitute their objects and produce them as the property of individuals (see Antaki, 2006; Auburn, 2005).

Embodied practices

Psychological research sometimes claims to study 'embodiment' or embodied practices – so called physical, gestural and bodily objects – as if these were straightforward categories and events. These are often presented as a counter to discourse work, as if the existence of embodiment was, de facto, proof that discourse has its limits. Discursive

psychology starts from a different place. It focuses on the practical, oriented to, interactional displays of embodied practices. Just as cognition is treated as a participants' concern, so is embodiment. Starting in this way allows discursive researchers to ground their claims in a sound theoretical and analytical position; that which is based on the constitutive nature of discourse. We cannot separate off other objects as being somehow beyond or behind discourse, without providing a solid account of how these are 'non-discursive'.

DP work picks up embodiment in different ways. Increasingly it is working with video records that allow issues involving gesture, gaze, physical orientation and so on to be incorporated into the analysis. Note that it is not a matter of simply observing such things as a technical analyst. For DP researchers such things enter into analysis in terms of the formulations and orientations of the participants (that is, such things need to be *shown* to be relevant in the analysis rather than assumed to be relevant by the analyst; see Heath, 2005). This is particularly important given the complex role that 'seeing' has in social practices (e.g. Goodwin, 1994). For an analytic example, see MacMartin and LeBaron's (2006) study of gaze and body orientation as a display of ambivalent participation in a therapy group for sex offenders.

Another way that DP research addresses embodiment is to study the way 'embodied practices' are constituted and reified in discourse. Work on gustatory 'mmms', for example, demonstrates how displays of bodily pleasure (in this case, food) are co-ordinated and finessed around mealtime interaction (Wiggins, 2002). Rather than being treated as simply expressions of a putative gustatory experience, this research examines the sequential and rhetorical positioning of these expressions in the unfolding interaction; they are thus shown to be highly collaborative utterances attending to other activities in the talk, and resisting any simple dualism between body and talk. This tradition of work is in its early stages. Nevertheless, it offers a coherent program that considers

embodiment as a direct and central part of human practices.

PRACTICALITIES OF RESEARCH

In this section, we clarify the various steps involved in DP research. These are: devising a research question, gaining access and consent, data collection and building a corpus, transcription, coding, analysis and application. Note that there are no hard and fast rules for discourse research; it is defined by its interest in, and appreciation of, action and interaction as situated, practical and orderly (see Box 5.1). Here, we use examples from our own research to provide concrete illustrations of the research process.

Step 1: Devising a research question

DP research begins with a research question or set of questions around a topic area. Often this is guided by an interest in a particular form of interaction, such as telephone helpline interaction or marriage guidance counselling, and the processes and practices involved in this setting. For instance, one may be interested in how helpline staff members make sense of the variety of calls received and how they manage the sensitive nature of reports of child abuse. These research questions then become increasingly focused as the research progresses. Questions and possible interpretations about the interaction are tested and refined through repeated examination of the data.

Our interest in mealtimes was with the nature of food – lovely, well made, fattening, for example – and how this is constituted and bound up with activities such as offers, compliments and acceptances. We decided to focus on family mealtimes, where children under the age of 15 years are present, as these are more likely to be settings where regular mealtimes occur. A brief pilot study confirmed this, after also considering groups of students and young professionals sharing mealtimes. So our research question began as a broad interest in these issues, and was

BOX 5.1 Methodological Features of Discursive Psychology

There are no hard and fast rules for discourse research – it is defined by its interest in, and appreciation of, action and interaction as situated, practical and orderly.

- The central topic is discourse – talk and texts as parts of practices – as this is central to psychology. It recognizes the primacy of the social and relational nature of human life, and therefore starts with that analytically.
- It is interested in the most intimate and personal of psychological phenomena, in feeling and thinking, in a wide range of features of embodiment, and in the way social life is organized institutionally.
- Research questions typically focus on what people do in the settings that they live their lives. They may build on prior work or be stimulated by a collection of materials.
- The materials for study are usually digital audio or video recordings of people in particular locations – family meals, counselling sessions, helplines, or political interviews. Just about anything that is a feature of people's lives can be an object of study.
- Occasionally analysis will work with open-ended interviews – but discursive psychology is generally distinctive amongst qualitative approaches in being a nuanced observational science avoiding the apparatus of open-ended or ethnographic interviews, experiments and questionnaires common elsewhere in psychology.
- The materials for study are transcribed using a system that captures features of interaction such as intonation and overlap that are significant for what is going on.
- Analysis will work with both recording and transcript.
- A typical study will build a collection of some phenomenon that will be the topic of more intensive analysis.
- Analysis will work with this collection. It will focus on both standard patterns and exceptional cases. These will be used to develop and test ideas about what is going on in the material.
- Analysis will work with, and be validated by, the understandings of participants which are displayed in the unfolding interaction.
- The research write up is designed as far as practical to allow the reader to assess the validity of the analytic claims made about the materials.
- Discursive psychological studies may contribute to a cumulative new picture of persons in relation; they may contribute to a range of applied questions and they may address broader critical issues related to ideology and asymmetry.

For more detail see:

Edwards, D. (2004). Discursive psychology. In K. Fitch and R. Sanders (eds), *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction* (pp. 257–273). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hepburn, A. and Potter, J. (2003). Discourse analytic practice. In C. Seale, D. Silverman, J. Gubrium and G. Gobo (eds), *Qualitative Research Practice* (pp. 180–196). London: Sage.

later refined as the extensive use of evaluations during mealtimes became apparent. We were then guided by questions such as, 'how are food evaluations used by speakers in mealtime interaction?' 'What are the different forms of food evaluations and what actions are they involved with?' Different ideas as to what is going on in the data could then be checked out through further analyses.

Step 2: Gaining access and consent

Once the initial set of research questions have been devised, access to the data source and

gaining ethical permission to record the data are the next steps in the research process. This is often achieved through the use of a contact person (such as a medical practitioner, counsellor or schoolteacher) who can then provide links or access to a particular data source. Sometimes advertising may be necessary, though direct contact – by telephone, letter or in person – is often the most fruitful way of beginning the process of gaining access. This also requires some sensitivity and patience, in order to build up a certain degree of trust between the researcher and the participant(s), particularly where a sensitive data source is

being used. For example, Hepburn and Potter (2003) detail their experiences of gaining access to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) child protection helpline, from the initial introductory letter to writing out an ethics script for the helpline staff to use. This research involved recording a number of calls to the NSPCC on what are highly sensitive and delicate issues: actual or potential cases of child abuse.

In the UK, ethical permission must also be obtained from appropriate bodies, such as when working within the National Health Service, in schools, prisons, or with organizations such as the NSPCC. This can also take some time, though the process provides an opportunity for the researcher to be clear about each step of the research before they begin. Specifically, consent must be gained for using audio and/or video recordings of all participants involved in the interaction and for using verbatim quotes (anonymized, and digitally disguised when using the audio/video data directly) in any written reports or presentations. Ten Have (1999) provides a useful basic consent form that can be reworked for specific research topics.

In our own research, recording family mealtimes required us to gain consent from all family members about the use of audio recording equipment during their mealtimes over a period of 3–4 months. Personal contacts were used to gain access to different families, so each family was recruited separately. This was done either by phone or letter, in person or via the contact person who knew the family. Given that at this stage in the research the particular type of family recruited was less important to us, we did not have to directly see them in person; this also protected their anonymity further. Consent forms were provided for the adults to sign, for themselves and on behalf of children under the age of 16 years (we made sure that all parties were present for the briefing about the work). An information sheet accompanying the consent form provided further details about the research, and

our own contact details. For instance, this explained briefly that we were interested in ‘family interaction during mealtimes’, rather than any particular characteristics of the individuals themselves, and that the aim was to collect a corpus of naturally occurring family mealtime interaction.

Step 3: Data collection and building a corpus

It is important to have a clear and reliable recording of the interaction being studied. The emergence of digital technology is proving to facilitate DP research in a similar way to the emergence of CA alongside cassette tape technology in the 1970s. Memory stick recorders are ideal, being compact and simple to use. This is particularly important in research where the participants themselves have control over the recording process. They capture several hours of high-quality sound at a time and either have an in-built microphone or can be used with an external flat microphone. Furthermore, files of the digital recordings can be transferred to PC almost instantly. The transportation and management of the data is thus much simpler; files can be saved in various formats and edited using audio programs such as Adobe Audition (or freely available packages such as Audacity; see the discussion of transcription below). Data collection thus begins with selecting the highest quality equipment available, and the accompanying software and hardware needed to manage this data. Short cuts at this stage can lead to poor quality recordings which can cause major problems (and be deeply frustrating) later in the research.

This process also involves building up a corpus of data, upon which interpretations and analyses can be tested and validated. While the principles of DP can be practiced on any small piece of talk or text, DP research requires a thorough examination of a collection of similar instances. A corpus may be built by recording data repeatedly in a particular setting – such as a number of mealtimes with the same family, and across different families – or through collecting together data

from similar settings, such as different kinds of telephone helplines. This process will of course be dependent upon the research question and whether or not this is specific to a particular location or setting.

Our research enabled us to collect mealtime interaction from different families, to ensure we captured as wide a range of discursive practices as possible. Therefore our only criterion for inclusion in the research was that families had at least one child under the age of 15 years, and that they ate together regularly as a matter of course. As far as possible, we did not want our recording their mealtimes to change their usual routine. The recording equipment was supplied to the families themselves so that they could record their mealtimes without any researcher being present; again, the emphasis was on naturalistic interaction. The recording was then usually instigated by one family member who handled the recording equipment at each mealtime. We left the equipment with the families for up to 4 months, depending on their routine, and asked that they record whenever possible, when they had a meal together. This provided a greater range of material, such as family breakfasts, weekday meals and Christmas dinners, over a longer period of time. The result was a corpus of around 80 hours' worth of mealtime talk.

Step 4: Transcription

In discursive research, the primary data source is always the original recording, whether this is audio or video, in digital or analogue form. For analytical and dissemination purposes, however, it is necessary to have a paper copy of the recorded interaction. The transcription process itself is built up using a word processing package alongside the sound files (whether these be in a digital format, or played on a tape recorder or minidisk recorder); ideally with both windows open on the computer screen for easy management. DP uses the transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson for CA. This is relatively easy as it makes use of standard keyboard symbols and common conventions.

Crucially, it represents those features of talk that have been shown by studies of interaction to be treated as relevant by the participants (emphasis, overlap, pause length, intonation and so on). No one should be misled into thinking these are trivial things that can be ignored in research. A large body of research in conversation analysis has shown that these things are fundamental to the sense of talk for the participants. Transcription can be a demanding and time-consuming process; each hour of interaction can take around twenty hours of transcription time, more if the sound is of poor quality or there are a number of speakers talking¹. For detailed discussion of issues in transcription and overview of the basic system see Jefferson (2004).

With digital data, the transcription process is much easier to manage. Audio programs such as Adobe Audition can be used to copy, search and edit files. It is straightforward to build a collection of sound files that include sequences of the phenomenon of interest (say gustatory mms). Background noise or extremely quiet sounds can be reduced or enhanced to enable a fuller transcription of the data. It is also easy to anonymize proper names or identifying details (e.g. by reversing them, which leaves the intonation and word length intact) or to change the voice quality to disguise the speaker. Video software such as Adobe Premier provides the parallel facility to blur faces to disguise individuals.

Transcribing features of talk that do not correspond to individual lexical items, such as laughter, sighing, crying or expressions of gustatory pleasure, has received significant DP attention. This requires the transcriber to pay particularly close attention to intonation, stress and so on – the reward, however, can be unexpected insight about issues at the core of psychology and interaction. For example, Hepburn's work on the sequential and intonational features of crying within calls to the NSPCC child protection helpline has demonstrated the significance of subtle variations of crying sounds (Hepburn, 2004; see also Hepburn and Potter, 2007). Thus, the presence of a 'wobbly voice' can mark the onset

of a crying episode and helpline staff are tuned to such cues and can be shown to act on them and to provide appropriate receipts and keep the caller on line.

In the future more journal articles will be linked to web-based materials so readers can have access to both transcript and sound and video (e.g. Schegloff, 2002). This is a challenge for journals that have been print based in the past but the internet provides a number of ways of meeting it.

Step 5: Coding

Analysis in discursive psychology is an iterative process that involves repeated listenings to recordings combined with repeated readings of transcript. The coding stage is the precursor to the analysis and involves sifting through the larger data corpus for instances of a phenomenon. At this stage, the process should be as inclusive as possible. As the analysis continues, the coding may need to be repeated, with further searches and shifting boundaries as to what is included in the phenomenon of interest. Possible instances will drop out of the corpus and new analysis will bring in further examples. As Hepburn and Potter (2004) have noted, the coding and sifting process itself can result in analytical issues developing or vanishing. For example, what may seem to be a rather peripheral instance of a phenomenon may prove to be a deviant case that will later confirm the analysis.

Returning to our example of gustatory 'mmms', we first coded the material for instances where explicit food or eating talk was included. From this, we then focused on evaluations of food, such as 'nice' or 'like'. As analysis began on these evaluations, we also noticed the frequent use of the gustatory 'mmm' expression as an alternative means of assessing the food. This led us to search for all instances of 'mmm's within the full data corpus. Many of these were used as continuers (Schegloff, 1982), though a subset were produced by people eating, or in response to descriptions of different types of food. We classified these as

gustatory 'mmms' – where they were associated with food and were explicitly evaluative in a positive direction – and found approximately 210 in around 80 hours' worth of mealtime interaction.

Step 6: Analysis

As with the initial searching and coding of the data (which, as noted above, is an iterative process), the subsequent procedures of DP analysis are not formulaic. Instead, there are a range of activities to be worked through, in no specific order. These are to focus on how the discourse is constructed, and constructive of different versions of events, how it is situated in interaction, and how it is bound up with actions. There are ways to know when you are going along the right lines, and when the analysis is merely description (see Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter (2003) for a full discussion on this matter). This allows analytical insights to be developed gradually, rather than being pre-empted by using a more passive step-by-step process.

Let us work through an example from Wiggins (2002) here. The analysis of the gustatory *mmm* highlighted three features of food talk. First, expressing pleasure is organized sequentially within interaction. That is, speakers orient to other turns in talk when performing the *mmm*. This may seem an obvious point, but it has important implications with respect to how such utterances are understood as documents of underlying states or as communicative objects in their own right. Second, gustatory *mmms* are often used as stand-alone expressions rather than combined with other words or expressions. When the *mmm* is accompanied by another term, it is typically an evaluation as in the following extract:

Extract 1 (taken from Wiggins, 2002)

1.	(0.8)
2. Simon:	<u>mm</u> ↑mm: (0.2) that's
3.	↑lovely
4.	(0.6)

These *mmm*-plus-evaluation sequences were common within the data corpus.

The organizational pattern of this sequence highlights three features of the construction of 'pleasure':

- that it is an immediate reaction (one can express the *mmm* with food in the mouth, as if capturing the sensation as it is experienced; a 'sensation receipt');
- that it is spontaneous (it can be expressed at various points throughout a mealtime without needing to preface or announce a topic shift; it is omni-relevant in situations where food or drink is being consumed); and
- that it is vague (there is an ambiguity in the *mmm* that is never fully elaborated upon; speakers rarely go into detail as to what is eliciting this expression).

The third feature of food talk that the gustatory *mmm* highlighted was the way embodiment is constructed in the ongoing interaction in a way that is very hard to separate from that interaction. This can be seen in a number of ways. First, a gustatory *mmm* can be used to provide agreement with another speaker's account, and to offer the basis on which this agreement is made by invoking a physical pleasure. Second, it can be used to add credibility to one's account of food, as well as evidencing the account. Third, its sequential location as prior to more elaborate verbal descriptions works to construct a body-discourse dichotomy, despite the collaboratively produced nature of such constructions. The extract below provides an example of this.

Extract 2

1. Simon: its actually got ↓quite
2. a bit of: uhm (0.6)
3. >is it<
4. (0.2) ↑brandy or-
5. Anna: mmm
6. Simon: rum >or something<
7. (2.0)
8. Jenny: ↑mm[mm
9. Simon: [mmmm
10. Jenny: >see what you mean<
11. Simon: °by jove [that-°
12. Anna: [was on the box
13. ↑there's- (0.4) there's a
14. few: different
15. ingredients: in ↓it
16. (0.6) alcoholic

Validation of DP research is already built into the process of data collection and analysis. By working closely with naturalistic materials the research stays faithful (as far as is possible) to the phenomena being examined. By presenting lengthy analyses alongside the transcribed data, readers can make their own judgements as to the plausibility and coherence of the analysis. This also enables researchers to check the coherence of their analyses against previously published work, providing an extended corpus of material that is publicly available. Validation of analytic claims can also be checked through deviant case analysis, whereby claims about any patterns or specific interpretations can be compared with instances where these patterns seem to be absent. For example, in the analysis there were only a small number of cases where the *mmm* was preceded, rather than followed, by the evaluation – close inspection of these helped us understand the role of *mmms* in displaying a spontaneous 'bodily' response.

Step 7: Application

The practical element of DP is already built into its methodology, in that it works with naturalistic interaction and people's practices. On one level, DP provides detailed insight into the management of everyday life: such as how food is negotiated at a family mealtime, how helpline staff members deal with a variety of calls, how medical practitioners and patients arrive at a mutual understanding of a particular complaint, and so on. Knowing how these processes work is an important step in any intervention. So on another level, DP can be used to solve particular issues or problems, as the researcher works with specific organizations or individuals.

In the case of our eating research we can help families to understand and change the way they talk about food in front of their children, to encourage them to eat healthier foods or to persuade reluctant adolescents to eat sufficient amounts of food. We can also focus on how obesity treatment is managed;

how patients are encouraged to take responsibility for their eating habits, and how to foster effective long-term strategies for maintaining a healthy weight. Most generally, it is striking to note that despite the importance of food and eating to two major areas of current societal health concern (eating disorders and obesity) there has been virtually no research that has studied eating naturalistically and directly, that has looked at it initially as an activity, that is done socially, and that involves a range of normative expectations and organizations. The full practical implications of such research are not yet clear – but challenges it raises for more traditional models of research are already crystallizing.

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Discursive psychology focuses on psychology as something embedded in interaction, and as something that gives interaction sense and coherence. It is almost unique in modern psychology in offering a naturalistic study of what people do in the settings that are relevant to those actions. Ultimately the topic of DP is psychology from the perspectives of participants. This approach is not without its constraints – DP cannot be sensibly used as a ‘toolbox’ method. Indeed, when it is used as such a method to approach questions formulated in the traditional psychological style – what is the effect of X on Y? How does X vary with Y? – it is most likely to result in incoherence. Effective work from this perspective requires a consistent approach to the questions, data management and so on. This means that those researchers who hope for more powerful research coming from supplementing qualitative and quantitative research need to be cautious of generating epistemic confusion.

DP research has also worked primarily with audio data, though the prevalence of video data is coming to the fore as technologies in this field develop. Work within CA and ethnomethodology, such as that by Goodwin (2000) and Heath (2005), on gaze and gesture has been particularly influential

in this move. The inclusion of visual practices in DP analysis, however, is not straightforward; one can treat these in a similar way to the treatment of embodied practices (discussed earlier). So there is no simple add-on way in which video data can be incorporated into DP analysis. Rather, it should be used as a means of explicating practices in more detail, providing clarification on what happens during pauses, for example. Nevertheless, digital video (and audio) technology has enabled researchers to develop different ways of working with naturalistic materials.

THE FUTURE OF DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY

This is an exciting time to be part of discursive psychological research. New developments within theoretical and empirical issues are pushing forward the boundaries of our understanding of psychology as a discipline. The power and sophistication of this research has increased in leaps and bounds in the last few years. Much has already been done to both inform and challenge psychological research. DP is a young approach that has much of its potential in front of it. The following are just some areas of new development in DP work:

- 1 *Psychological methods as topic.* Inspired by path breaking conversation analytic work, DP has been developing studies of social research methods in practice. This work can consider the practical ways in which the research instrument is accomplished. For example, in a series of studies Maynard and colleagues have considered the interactional organization of the standardized survey (e.g. Maynard, Houtkoop-Steenstra, Schaeffer and van der Zouwen, 2002). Although this work is not necessarily critical, it often throws up challenging issues for psychologists – for example, when Schegloff (1999) studied the administration of a test for pragmatic deficit in a stroke patient he was able to highlight the sophisticated pragmatic skills that the patient displayed in the course of failing the test. One of the themes in this work is the way that the interactional procedures are implicated in the production and individuation of particular psychological entities.

For example, Antaki and Rapley (1996) show the way particular question organizations and responses contribute to the production of a particular version of life satisfaction for individuals with learning difficulties and Puchta and Potter (2002) show how various procedures are used in market research focus groups to produce attitudes as individual possessions. This strand of work has important potential – it will be particularly interesting to consider social cognition and social cognitive neuroscience research in this way.

- 2 *Psychology and institutions.* DP has been focused on materials collected from institutional settings. This has provided a rich arena for addressing the way particular psychological (or 'psychological') terms and orientations have institutional roles in particular settings (Edwards and Potter, 2001). It has also offered a different approach to social organization than that offered in most social psychology which has been aimed at the identification of generic social processes that are as far as possible independent of the specifics of institutions of historical settings (Gergen, 1982). One of the aims of DP is to show the way institutions such as therapy, education, focus groups, court cases are characterized by specific 'psychological business'. DP analyses are intended to explicate both the psychological business and the nature of the institution. For example, Stokoe and Hepburn (2005) studied the different ways in which noise was formulated in reports of abuse to the NSPCC and reports of neighbour trouble to a mediation helpline. The specific construction of the reports offered a way of explicating fundamental differences in the practices of the two institutions.
- 3 *Revising cognitivism and subjectivity.* As noted earlier in this chapter, work is already well underway in terms of respecifying cognitive categories and concepts. This has implications for both mainstream cognitive and social cognitive psychology and for newer 'critical' approaches to subjectivity. Some discourse work has engaged with, and reworked psychodynamic notions (Billig, 1999; Wetherell, 2003). Other work has focused on the management of subject–object or mind–world relations, a central theme since the start of DP. For example, Edwards (2007) considers the delicate and subtle procedures through which versions of subjectivity are produced to manage accountability. There is increasing overlap here with conversation analysis and its sophisticated take on how issues of shared knowledge, epistemic asymmetry, understanding and so on

figure in specifics of interaction (e.g. Heritage and Raymond, 2005). In the medium term there are important and consequential debates to be had at a theoretical and analytic level with critical work that nevertheless theorizes subjectivity with a more classical interiority (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2005) and work focused on the notion of identity from either a critical or social cognition perspective (see Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). The end point of such debates is not yet clear, but the journey is exciting and important.

NOTES

- 1 Given the length of time needed, it is often worth investing in a qualified transcription service to do the words only transcript, which can then be worked on in more detail by the researchers themselves.

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Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Michael Arribas-Ayllon and Valerie Walkerdine

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1970s the term ‘discourse’ has come to refer to an expansive and diffuse field of qualitative research concerned with the analysis of language and text. Some have referred to the emergence of discourse as a ‘growth industry’ among Anglo-American academics (Hook, 2001a, 2001b) and the product of ‘marketing’ aimed at undergraduate pedagogy (McHoul, 1997). Either way, what has become known as ‘discourse analysis’ is understood here in terms of its own unique conditions of emergence which have been shaped and transformed by different intellectual desires, problems and institutional demands. The result is that doing discourse analysis can mean very different things and often subject to competing interpretations. We are not interested in policing boundaries of what ought to constitute discourse analysis, nor divining what Foucault really meant by discourse. Nonetheless, a ‘Foucauldian’ approach to discursive analysis is distinguished from other versions of analysis to show how it might be usefully applied to critical psychological research.

It is customary to offer the disclaimer that there are no set rules or procedures for conducting Foucauldian-inspired analyses of discourse. To avoid the trap of formalizing an approach that clearly eschews formalization, we will discuss instead three broad dimensions for the analysis of ‘discursive practices’. Firstly, the analysis of discourse entails *historical* inquiry, otherwise known as ‘genealogy’. Secondly, analysis attends to mechanisms of *power* and offers a description of their functioning. And lastly, analysis is directed to *subjectification* – the material/signifying practices in which subjects are made up. We believe this latter dimension of Foucault’s work provides an important analytic for contemporary psychological research.

In reproducing our own version of Foucault for psychology, we apply these methods to discourse itself in order to specify what a Foucauldian approach might look like. Our first point of departure is to understand the *conditions of possibility* out of which a definite conception of discourse emerged. In other words, how has it become possible to speak of ‘discourse’ and apply ‘Foucauldian

discourse analysis' within contemporary psychology?

CONTINENTAL DEBATES

A Foucauldian conception of discourse emerges from very specific historical and cultural conditions, namely French debates between humanism and Marxism. Our aim is to briefly outline some of the intellectual debates and political events out of which the concept of discourse emerged.

During the 1960s, issues of meaning became the focus of interest for radical social theorists. Saussurian linguistics was applied by structuralists at a time when humanist conceptions of authorship and experience dominated social theory. According to structural linguistics, language was a homogenous system governed by a general structure of rules. However, structuralism failed to initiate a decisive break from humanism; its tendency to privilege linguistic constants, its failure to theorize conflict and its general disregard for context offered little challenge to the humanist notion of timeless human nature.

Prior to the events of May 1968, humanism and Marxism engaged in a number of key debates. Althusser (1970) took a firm anti-humanist stance, arguing that bourgeois institutions attribute agency to individuals only to hide the determining effect of social structures on behaviour. Marxism formulated a precarious position of having to provide an account of subjective conduct without reducing a theory of the subject to class relations or reinstating the rational subject of humanism. After the events of 1968, and the subsequent failure of the French Communist Party (PCF), it was generally believed the PCF 'missed the mood of the workers, ignoring their more radical demands ... they acted to separate rather than weld together the various – worker, student and petty-bourgeois – forces' (Macdonell, 1986: 15–21).

After May 1968

The events of May 1968 clearly illustrated the need for an alternative model of political change. By the early 1970s, new formations of protest grew out of the lessons of May 1968 – the women's movement, the gay liberation movement, the prison movement, the anti-psychiatry movement, the anti-nuclear and the ecological movements – all of which required a new critical theory to understand its processes. The character of these movements highlighted the inadequacies of traditional Marxism which tended to reduce them to class struggles or homogenize them into the labour movement (Poster, 1984). The new order of social problems seemed to lie beyond the base/superstructure model of Marxism, a problem Althusser attempted to address in his reformulation of ideology.

The 'new philosophers' (Foucault, Deleuze, Guattari, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Castoriadis, Lefort and Lefebvre) refer to a group of French intellectuals who revised their thought in line with the political exigencies of May 1968. Going beyond Althusser's position meant having to abandon structuralism and directly confront Marxism by initiating a number of moves: firstly, a rejection of Althusser's functionalist reading of ideology as a monolithic form of state power; secondly, a rejection of the subject of humanism who always exists prior to social relations; and, thirdly, emphasize the constitutive effect of signification. Based on their readings of Nietzsche, both Foucault and Deleuze sought a more flexible and differential model of power to explain why the labour movement failed to pull together in May 1968. They argued for a model of power that operates locally and according to specific historical conditions. Furthermore, power does not function to repress individuals, but produce them through practices of signification and action. Signification, unlike theories of representation, does not refer to actions and things, but are themselves actions which 'intervene with things' (Bogue, 1989).

Although Althusser and Foucault both formulated the problem of the subject as constructed through mechanisms of practice and refused the division between ideas and action, the similarity ends there. Foucault rejected the functional totality of ideology, providing instead a detailed investigation of how forms of subjectivity are constituted by material/signifying practices. Unlike Althusser whose principle concern was the effects of ideology on the working class, Foucault was able to relate discourse to diverse social groups – prisoners, homosexuals, medical patients and the insane – linking them to the specific practices in which they were located. By the early 1970s, work on discourse began to identify heterogeneous links between institutional practices and the construction of subjectivity. A new relationship between theory and practice provided conceptual tools for re-theorizing social change. Practice was no longer considered the ‘application of a theory’ but an interactive and open-ended process (Deleuze, 1977: 205).

CHANGING THE SUBJECT

A Foucauldian conception of discourse was introduced to Anglo-American psychology in the late 1970s. The new left critique in France was taken up in Britain under the name of ‘poststructuralism’, providing new ways of dissolving the political impasse between humanism/anti-humanism within the social sciences. On one side, humanist psychology was intent on discovering the personal, intellectual and motivational capacities of a foundational subject. On the other, anti-humanist psychology saw in the former the development of instruments for the regulation of social life. For the radical humanist, the only means of rejecting ‘bourgeois’ psychology was through the positive removal of state power. But the events of May 1968 underlined the limitations of a ‘politics of liberation’: one can no longer simply wait for the revolution.

Poststructuralism would introduce new theoretical tools that no longer relied upon

a radical critique of ‘society’. One could now side-step the society–individual dualism by first dismantling the monolithic, unitary character of power proposed under Marxism and structuralism. Rather than an instrument of repression, Foucault conceptualization of knowledge as ‘discourse’ shows how psychology actively constitutes the social domain. Psychology is neither progressing towards the rational discovery of objective truth, nor is it in conspiracy with the oppressive powers of the state. At the level of discourse, poststructuralism begins to ask a different set of questions: How did psychology come to be what it is? What are the effects of psychological knowledge on the objects they produce? These are principally ‘genealogical’ concerns which sets out to trace the conditions of possibility for psychological knowledge. Genealogy investigates the specific effects by which objects are constituted in ways that are amenable to technical and governmental intervention.

In the late 1970s the view of knowledge as both productive and regulatory was put to work in the journal *Ideology and Consciousness* (Adlam et al., 1977). From within psychology, a rigorous and systematic attempt to introduce the writings of Lacan and Foucault appeared in *Changing the Subject* (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984). It was the pioneering work of this text that formed an inspirational response to the general dissatisfaction of individualism, Cartesianism and positivism within mainstream psychology. Outside of psychology, Nikolas Rose adapted the post-structuralist work he developed in *Ideology and Consciousness* (Rose, 1979) to give a more sociological treatment of the emergence of the ‘psy-complex’ (Rose, 1985). Though it is necessary here to speak of an ‘inside’ or ‘outside’, the division between psychology and sociology is, as Parker (1999b) notes ‘an academic division of labour that encourages people to think that what they do as individuals and what they do in society should be in separate compartments’. For the authors of *Changing the Subject* it was precisely this individual–society dualism

that formed an obstacle to re-theorizing subjectivity.

So, how did the insertion of discourse in psychology literally 'change' the subject? Firstly, the turn to discourse initiates a radical decentring of psychology's subject. The subject whose 'coherence' and 'rationality' was the discovery of repeated measurement, classification and calculation, whose ahistorical, existence formed the locus of cognition, was now opened up to the very apparatuses and techniques through which it was constituted. Psychology's subject emerged from myriad domains – the asylum, the hospital, the family, the school, the court – wherein psychological instruments were standardized, formalized and calibrated. Psychology's subject took shape among the diversity of concerns – racial degeneration, intellectual decline, juvenile delinquency, industrial inefficiency, childhood sexuality and development – made visible and calculable by political authorities. Far from guaranteeing the discovery of the subject with all its hidden pathologies and latent capacities, the project of positivism formed the very regime of production through which a psychological subject appeared. In short, changing the subject began with linking its production to various technologies of power.

But it is true that, with the turn to discourse, psychology encounters a new set of problems. After all, discourse is not really a 'theory' of the subject. What it offers is an explanation of the local and heterogeneous positioning of subjects within relations of power. Power, in this sense, is not the possession of individuals, but operates *through* individuals by acting upon their actions¹. The problem that begins to emerge is one of reconciling difference with heterogeneity. For instance, the effect of decentring the subject of psychology is one of exposing the multiplicity of power relations through which it is constituted. The subject is not so much a 'thing' but a *position* maintained within relations of force – the mother, the wife, the father, the worker, the child, the delinquent, the patient, the criminal, and so forth. Furthermore, these multiple

positionings are contradictory and discontinuous; they are not roles that pre-existing subjects take up, but an emergent space formed among vectors of force-relations.

A further problem is that subjects are *not* discourses nor are they determined by them. In *The Subject and Power*, Foucault (1982) is at pains to specify the element of chance through which subjects are formed. The contradictory nature of subjectivity is not, as it is ordinarily understood, a 'logical' problem. There is a sense of affirmation with which the subject manages to escape a pure determination. Because power acts on *possible* actions there is always the possibility of acting 'otherwise'. This is the ethical dimension of freedom expressed more clearly in Foucault's later works on governmentality (1991) and Greek subjectivity (1986, 1997a, 1997b). But the problem of difference is not quite put to rest and becomes the focus of concern in the third and final section of *Changing the Subject*. After the moment of deconstruction, the irreducible difference of subjectivity becomes an affirmative possibility, but, as the authors state, '[it] is not enough to explain the possibility of subjectivity' (Henriques et al., 1984: 204). Indeed, if subjectivity is the site of multiplicity, of continuous and discontinuous forces, states and feelings, then what is 'the specificity of the construction of actual subjectivities in the domain of discursive practices?' (Henriques et al., 1984: 204).

In the absence of any theory of subjectivity, discourse provides a clearing for reconstructing the subject of psychology. Foucault himself was reluctant to ascribe interiority though at times he alludes to the 'soul' as that spatial dimension trapped within the subject of normalization (Foucault, 1977; Butler, 1997). Many would turn to psychoanalysis to find ways of combining the multiple and contradictory positionings of the subject within power (Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1997; Walkerdine, 1988; Zizek, 1992, 1997). Possibilities of combining discourse with psychoanalysis were found in Lacan, whose work presupposes a decentred and divided subject. Also, there is room within Lacanian analysis to demonstrate how the

unconscious – fantasies, dreams, flows of desire – is constituted by one's positioning within discourses. This turn to psychoanalysis seems to respond to a number of absences within Foucault, offering a more nuanced account of how power fabricates an 'inner life' of consciousness that is linked, in quite complex ways, to the effects of power.

'DOING HISTORY'

In keeping with our genealogical treatment of discourse, we want to give an account of two examples of discursive analysis that are faithfully 'Foucauldian' in their application. What unites these analyses is an historical investigation that takes the power/knowledge relations of psychological theories and practices as their principal object. In this section, we give a demonstration of how histories of the formation of psychological discourse are put to work.

Psy-complex

For Nikolas Rose, genealogy is a critique of psychological knowledge by reconstructing an 'event' in its history that alters our relation to psychology in the present. And yet this meticulous reconstruction of 'the psychological' is not wholly concerned with the birth of the discipline, nor uncovering a truer version of psychology's history. The genealogical enterprise Rose (1979) undertakes in his paper 'The psychological complex: mental measurement and social administration' is, by his own admission, an exercise in the 'gathering of clues' to understand how psychology was engaged in the constitution of 'the social'. In reconstructing what he calls the *psychological complex* – 'a heterogeneous but regulated domain of agents, of practices, of discourses and apparatuses which has definite conditions and specifiable effects' (Rose, 1979: 6) – he is performing not so much a genealogy of psychological measurement as a genealogy of the social.

Rose begins with an 'event' that breaks with the assumption that psychology emerged as a coherent discipline, animated by

a general *rational* principle and by an underlying *cause* that could reconstruct a global history of psychology. Starting his investigation with the discourse on intelligence, he traces out the relationship between the problem of the mentally defective, the development of mental measurement and the practice of social administration. The problem of the mental defective is found among a eugenic discourse in America which formed part of a strategic political project. This project was systematically linked to a cluster of concerns regarding the good-order and well-being of the population. Criminality, pauperism, mental deficiency and even inefficiency appeared as aberrations which defied detection and explicit methods of classification. The ambiguity with which these objects evaded the inspection of the state would give rise to a double strategy of control: *moralization* and *medicalization*. The instruments of mental measurement would emerge from a discourse on the social which centred around questions of *degeneracy*.

The focus of Rose's inquiry is not simply a discourse of intelligence or degeneracy, but an understanding of how psychology became a relay (*savoir*) between other forms of knowledge – political economy, the law, medicine, education. But before it could occupy this role, psychology required a Darwinian conception of 'population' and 'normal' variation, both of which formed a powerful combination for regulating *individual differences*. The discovery of the 'normal curve' would bear out a systematic relationship between four terms – population, norm, individual and deviation – providing the vital conditions for the science of mental measurement. Combined with the much older discourse of ancestry, it was now possible to calculate distributions and variations of intellectual ability via the law of ancestral heredity. According to Francis Galton, the father of eugenic theory, the lower classes were those deemed unfit to compete in the stakes of life; their inferior social position was a testimony of the inferiority of their efficiency and fitness. The new eugenic discourse exposed what was

thought to be an alarming deterioration of the national stock. Statistical calculations of census material estimated that the lowest twenty five percent of the adult stock was producing fifty percent of the next generation.

It was in terms of a solution to degeneracy that opened a space for the formation of a psychological complex. First, psychology would deploy around the *behaviours* of children various instruments for the detection of feeble-mindedness, and second, devise techniques of measurement that would effectively discriminate the 'normal' from the 'idiot', the 'intelligent' from the 'deficient'. So had begun the great campaign of socialization out of which the individual of psychology would emerge as the rational ideal of civilized society.

Rose's Foucauldian reconstruction of psychological knowledge shows how its conditions of formation lie among 'a complex series of struggles and alliances between distinct discourses organized into various strategic ensembles' (Rose, 1979: 58). This strategic dimension of knowledge/power reveals the complex linkages and operations in which psychology served as a technology in the administration of the social.

Developmental psychology/pedagogy

Valerie Walkerdine's (Venn and Walkerdine, 1978; Walkerdine, 1984) work on developmental psychology and child-centred pedagogy uses Foucauldian genealogy to give a much sharper focus to a contemporary problem. Taking the apparent failure of the 'pedagogy of liberation' in the late 1970s as her starting point, she traces a history of the discursive practice of child-centred pedagogy. This is partly a strategy of demonstrating that the claims of developmental psychology are historically specific, and that the psychological basis of 'the problem of pedagogy' forecloses the possibility of posing radical solutions. The genealogical approach adopted here is more explicitly a deconstructive enterprise for

investigating the conditions of possibility for modern primary school education in Britain, and the circumstances in which 'the child' emerged as a specific object of science (for more on this, see also Chapter 23 in this volume).

How did pedagogic practices become suffused with the notion of a normalized sequence of child development? How did psychology transform classrooms from the disciplinary apparatus of speaking, hearing and replicating to the child-centred practices in which teacher training, classroom design and curriculum materials would liberate the potential for autonomy, exploration and play? The first step is to disentangle the scientific discourses from practices of child-centred pedagogy. Notions of development are separated from the self-evident continuity of 'ontogenesis' and traced back to nineteenth-century technologies of classification and individual regulation.

Compulsory education in nineteenth-century Britain emerged from concerns about the moral degeneration of the population, and formed part of an ensemble of techniques for the *prevention* of crime and pauperism. Schooling would stimulate the intellect, give instruction in an orderly and virtuous course of life, and foster a spirit of independent labour. These were the principles inscribed on the Bentham-like machinery of 'monitorialism' – a mechanism for the moral regulation of souls through constant monitoring and ceaseless activity. It was amid the development of normalizing interventions of population statistics and demographic studies of 'class' that some intellectual observers began to demand the promotion of 'understanding' over the discipline of habits. Philanthropists and progressive educators like Kay-Suttleworth and Owen believed that monitorialism did nothing to foster 'affection, imagination and the realization of potential'. Pedagogy should not be the mechanical reproduction of the moral but the extension of the natural and normal. It was such counter-arguments that transformed the 'schoolroom' into the 'classroom' as sites for the normalization of

the natural and the promotion of affection and understanding.

By the twentieth century, Walkerdine traces two parallel developments that related to the scientific classification of children: child study and mental measurement. The first was a Darwinian discourse that conducted systematic observations on the natural development of the young child as a 'species'. The second development covers the same terrain analysed by Rose – Darwinian conceptions of biological selection and variation. At the intersection of these two movements the object of 'the child' would emerge with all the conceptual clarity of a moral concern dressed in scientific respectability. The naturalization of mind as the object *par excellence* of psychological development was later investigated by Piaget. Though Piaget was not taken up in any systematic way, he occupied a position within 'an ensemble of discursive practices ... in helping to legitimate and redirect forms of classification of stages of development as regulatory and normalising pedagogic devices' (Walkerdine, 1984: 176–7).

The idea of 'individual freedom' is a new departure that begins to emerge in the first decades of the twentieth century, and forms a consistent theme among the many experiments of pedagogy in the first three decades. In some ways this was already an existing continuity of class-based pedagogy that later mutated into a therapeutic technology for the psychological reconstruction of 'delinquents'. It was not so much that freedom itself was therapeutic but that freedom was a developmental possibility within a Rousseauian state of nature. The natural would come to symbolize romantic opposition to coercion and exemplify the liberal turn to natural self-government. As the links between scientific experimentation and pedagogy were tightened and more numerous, the concept of play no longer specified a natural context of learning but a specific mode of learning. Play would form a crucial site for observation and normalization, and a central

pedagogic device for the production of the self-governing citizen.

So how did the child-centred approach become fully enmeshed among contemporary practices of pedagogy? By the 1930s, concerns over child poverty and juvenile delinquency gave rise to 'adolescence' as an object of scientific thought and action in the UK. Under a Conservative government, the Hadow Consultative Committee (1928–1933) formed the tripartite system of education still in place today. Among its justifications for the new administration were psychological arguments that specified a normalized sequence of development. The age of 11 or 12 years emerged as the crucial break at which point psychology would provide ready-made techniques for distinguishing those fit for further education and those more suited to work. By 1933, the second and third Hadow reports integrated both discourses – mental measurement and development – to produce the modern child-centred pedagogy. At the centre of this programmatic and scientific production of the child were three interlocking themes: (1) the imperative of individual freedom; (2) the biological foundation of natural development; and (3) the pedagogical technique of observing and recording naturalized development. Together, the physical, emotional and mental comprised the total facts of child development.

By today's standards good pedagogy and good teaching is the ability to observe, monitor and intervene in the development of the child by accurately reading their actions. Using naturalistic data of a learning context, Walkerdine shows how Michael's failure to learn mathematical principles of place value is experienced by the teacher as a personal failure rather than a by-product of the pedagogy itself². Is it possible that Michael's actions are intelligible according to a different regime of sense-making? Rather than learning place value through the internalization of action (i.e. play), Michael possibly recognized a relationship 'between the written signifiers and their combination on the paper', in which case his actions are not an aberration to the child-centred approach but

a sophisticated method of grasping mathematical principles (Walkerdine, 1984: 193). The point of Walkerdine's genealogy is not to dismiss psychology or dispense with current methods of pedagogy, but to show that one can deconstruct the tendency of reducing problems in learning to psychological explanations of normative, rational development.

In both case studies we have tried to show how genealogy is a meticulous study of the formation of objects, the transformation of practices, the intersection of chance-events as conditions for the production of discourse. Both show genealogy can be conducted in a variety of ways and according to different objectives. Rose's reconstruction of the psy-complex is almost exclusively an engagement in primary and secondary historical material. His object is not so much the focus on a contemporary problem but retracing the birth of psychology to its moral, political, economic and technical conditions of emergence. Walkerdine's genealogy is more directly a counterpoint for understanding contemporary practices of child-centred pedagogy. She combines historical material with video and interview data to give clarity

and sharpness to a contemporary problem. Neither genealogy prescribes solutions but each seeks to establish an alternative relationship to our contemporary regimes of psychological truth.

WAYS OF DOING FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this section, we want to discuss two things: first, we want to give a sense of how Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) differs from other discursive approaches, to show how it articulates its object at a different level of explanation than, say, ethnomethodology or linguistics; and, secondly, we offer a light sketch of what a Foucauldian approach might look like. In what follows, we want to avoid delimiting a Foucauldian analytic to a set of formal principles but offer some methodological signposts that analysts might apply to critical psychological work (see Box 6.1 for a summary of some methodological guidelines for conducting FDA).

So, what does Foucault mean by 'discourse' and how does it differ from Anglo-American versions? Firstly, it would seem that when

BOX 6.1 Some Methodological Guidelines for Conducting Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Selecting a corpus of statements

A corpus of statements are samples of discourses that express a relationship between 'rules' and 'statements'. Criteria for selecting statements might include:

- 1 samples of text that constitute a 'discursive object' relevant to one's research
- 2 samples that form 'conditions of possibility' for the discursive object
- 3 contemporary and historical variability of statements:
 - i.e. how is the same object talked about differently?
 - i.e. how and why do statements change over time?
- 4 identify and collect texts:
 - i.e. policy documents, intellectual texts, newspapers, semi-structured interviews, autobiographical accounts, ethnographic observations and descriptions, etc.

Problematizations

Problematizations are examples where discursive objects and practices are made 'problematic' and therefore visible and knowable. They often form at the intersection of different discourses and expose knowledge/power relations. Problematizations serve an epistemological and methodological purpose: they allow the analyst to take up a critical position in relation to research; and they allow the analyst to trace how discursive objects are constituted and governed.

Technologies

Technologies are practical forms of rationality for the government of self and others. There are two kinds of technologies appropriate for psychological inquiry: power and self. Technologies of power seek to govern human conduct at a distance while technologies of the self are techniques by which human beings seek to regulate and enhance their own conduct. Technologies are also 'truth games' realized either on a larger political scale or among local and specific instances of interaction – e.g. the rhetorical function of language.

Subject positions

Identifying subject positions allows the analyst to investigate the cultural repertoire of discourses available to speakers. Not only are they positions on which to ground one's claims of truth or responsibility, but they allow individuals to manage, in quite subtle and complex ways, their moral location within social interaction.

Subjectification

Subjectification refers to an 'ethics' of self-formation. How do subjects seek to fashion and transform themselves within a moral order and in terms of a more or less conscious ethical goal – i.e. to attain wisdom, beauty, happiness and perfection? Through which practices and by what authority do subjects seek to regulate themselves?

Further Reading

- Carabine, J. (2001). Unmarried motherhood 1830–1990: A genealogical analysis. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor and S.J. Yates (eds), *Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis*. London: Open University Press.
- Kendall, G. and Wickham, G. (1999). *Using Foucault's Methods*. London: Sage.
- Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power and Personhood*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
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Foucault refers to 'discourse' he is not referring to a particular instance of language use – a piece of text, an utterance or linguistic performance – but describing rules, divisions and systems of a particular body of knowledge. In this sense, discourse approximates the concept of 'discipline' in at least two ways: it specifies the kind of institutional partitioning of knowledge such as medicine, science, psychiatry, biology, economics, etc. But it also refers to the *practices* through which certain objects, concepts and strategies are formed. Let us examine this claim more closely.

At the beginning of 'The Order of Discourse', Foucault asserts the hypothesis: 'I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of *procedures*, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to

cope with chance event, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality' (Foucault, 1972: 216, emphasis added). Here, the emphasis upon 'procedures' that govern the production of discourse establishes the materiality of knowledge as an instance of power. This is quite different to Anglo-American traditions where discourse is typically construed as an instance of linguistic usage. Foucault's (1972) rendering of the 'statements of discourse' is expressly formulated to highlight this difference between formal structures of verbal communication and the historically contingent rules and conditions for the production of statements. Kendall and Wickham (1999) adopt a more strictly Foucauldian understanding of discourse as the relationship between 'rules' and 'statements' and provide five steps for doing FDA (pp. 42–46). In this section, we want to explore other ways of doing FDA by offering a set of flexible

guidelines for the analysis of texts, practices, and subjectivity.

Selecting a corpus of statements

The analyst must recognize discourse as a 'corpus of statements' whose organization is relatively regular and systematic. The first task, then, is selecting the kind of statements appropriate to one's research question (see Carabine (2001); Fairclough (1992: 226–7); Kendall and Wickham (1999: 42–6); Parker (1992) for different but very useful explanations for how this might be done). Given the historical dimension of Foucauldian work, a corpus of statements would not only include a variety of discourse samples that will generate answers to a question about our relation to the present, but also incorporate samples that are historically variable. This temporal variability is an important way of showing how a given object say, 'madness', 'criminality' or 'delinquency', has been spoken about differently in the past and exposed to different forms of regulation, punishment and reform. It is important to note that what binds a corpus of statements together in terms of its internal validity is that each statement forms the 'conditions of possibility' for the studied phenomenon. Furthermore, because Foucauldian analysis is more interested in *discontinuity* than continuity, a corpus of statements seeks to adequately reflect the diversity of discursive practices, and pinpoint their transformation over time and across different institutional spaces.

The kinds of texts we choose to include in our corpus, again, relates to the kind of questions we are asking. FDA can be applied to any kind of text, though Foucault himself was more interested in historical documents, legal cases, sets of rules and descriptions of institutional practice, and even autobiographical accounts and personal diaries (see 'I, Pierre Rivière' (Foucault, 1978a) for an unusually lucid explanation of how Foucault conducted his inquiry). Parker suggests that FDA can be carried out 'wherever there is meaning' (Parker, 1999a: 1), but this is

perhaps a little misleading since Foucault actually resisted reducing discourse to 'meaning' (cf. Foucault, 1972; cf. Hook, 2001a; Rose, 1996). Rather than how meaning is constructed in an interactional setting, he was more concerned with how 'games of truth' are played out among more global, political domains. But to say this is the only way to conduct FDA is unnecessarily limiting. So long as FDA is conducted in terms of recognizing the 'genealogical background' of the study, then any context or setting is suitable for analysis.

There are five kinds of 'text' that are suitable for FDA, though the list is by no means exhaustive; these are:

- 1 Spatiality and social practice
- 2 Political discourse
- 3 Expert discourse
- 4 Social interaction
- 5 Autobiographical accounts

Firstly, texts can be constructed by means of personal observation and description of spatial and architectural surroundings, and the kinds of social practices they give rise to. These 'ethnographic' texts are derived by the researcher's field notes of a given setting, like parks, hospitals, urban architecture, and sites of cultural production. Secondly, FDA is commonly performed on political discourse, like policy documents, parliamentary debates, press releases and official reports on matters relating to governmental processes. Thirdly, discourse analysis usually makes an object of expert discourses found among intellectual texts, like official publications, research and empirical findings. Fourthly, FDA is widely conducted on a variety of speech activities and settings such as *in situ* interaction (e.g. naturally occurring talk), institutional talk (e.g. doctor–patient relations), semi-structured interviews, telephone conversations (e.g. therapeutic discourse), focus group discussions and audio-visual documentation of interactions (e.g. classroom activities). Conversation analysis provides a more technical approach for understanding the

structured nature of talk and the forms of social organization they produce. Lastly, autobiographical aspects of conversations and interviews provide ways of accessing the continuity of experience over time, descriptions of moral and ethical practices and ways of constructing the self as an object of particular discourses. Forms of narrative analysis provide useful ways of understanding 'subjectification' as practices and techniques of self-management and behaviour modification.

Problematizations

There are many ways of beginning one's analysis. Often selecting a discursive object depends on the research question (Fairclough, 1992; Willig, 2001). But Foucauldian analysis might proceed by giving analytic attention to the problems that render a certain kind of thought possible. In drawing our attention to problems, the analyst is concerned with how the construction of a discursive object allows us to establish a critical relation to the present, to decompose the certainties by which we understand ourselves as 'selves' (cf. Rose, 1996), or engage in a 'progressive politics' of the present (Foucault, 1978b). Discourse analysis does not arbitrarily select just any object, but one that throws into relief the practices on the basis of which certain *problematizations* are formed (Foucault, 1985). In this case, the discourse analyst might ask: under what circumstances and by whom are aspects of human being rendered problematic, according to what moral domains or judgement are these concerns allowed to circulate? What *official discourses* and *counter-discourses* render these problems visible and intelligible? In other words, problematizations draw our attention to the material practices wherein being is rendered thinkable, manageable and governable.

For instance, in the previous section Walkerdine (1984) shows how three different problems emerge in relation to her work on child-centred pedagogy. The first serves as a point of departure for genealogical

analysis by problematizing the liberatory politics of education in which developmental psychology plays a part. The second problem emerges in relation to the present: the young boy, Michael, whose grasp of mathematics is thought to be a 'conceptual failure' because he strays from concrete practices of learning. And third, the teacher's reaction to Michael's failure as one of guilt and insecurity because she felt she had 'pushed' the child and not let him learn 'at his own pace' (1984: 193). By foregrounding these problems, it becomes possible to show how developmental psychology reduces all problems of learning to the acquisition of the child and forecloses the possibility that learning is achieved via other creative and conceptual means. For the discourse analyst, focusing on problems allows two things: (1) its constitutes the point of departure for grounding one's inquiry within the wider politics of the present; and (2) in very local and specific settings, it focuses on the ways in which objects are constructed; it foregrounds the material relations through which these constructions are produced or contested; and it invites us to think differently about the present by taking up a position outside our current regimes of truth.

Technologies

In *Technologies of the Self*, Foucault (1988) describes his own work as a critical inquiry of how humans develop knowledge about themselves. Rather than take knowledge at face-value, he suggests we accept it as 'very specific *truth games*', as specific techniques human beings use to understand themselves. He goes on to elaborate four types of technologies, each of which are 'a matrix of practical reason': (1) technologies of production, (2) technologies of sign systems, (3) technologies of power and (4) technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988: 18). FDA usually focuses on the technologies of power and self. There are two ways we can think of the relationship between these two technologies. The first is more sociological and indicative of the kind of work conducted

by Rose (1996). For Rose, technologies are not specifically located within an interactional context, but refer to 'any assembly of practical rationality governed by a more or less conscious goal' (Rose, 1996: 26). They are usually located beyond text, and refer to an assemblage of knowledge, instruments, persons, buildings and spaces which act on human conduct from a distance. In this sense, Rose is more interested in understanding the constitution of human subjects through technologies of power. But there is another way of thinking about technologies which is more suited to psychological inquiry. Technologies can also make sense of the interaction between oneself and others and how power is exercised over oneself in the technology of the self.

Because technologies are forms of 'practical reason' they are realized simultaneously as material and discursive practices. A conversation, for instance, is not merely the construction of some object in language and thought, but also the act of accomplishing or performing something. In this sense, it is not entirely incompatible with FDA to draw on the rhetorical aspects of interactional activities. For example Michael Billig's (1991) work in rhetorical psychology explores the argumentative and persuasive nature of talk as resources which inform everyday reasoning. In this sense, we might think of technologies as particular kinds of 'truth games' in which participants engage in conflict, competition and power. Technologies may also take the form of more technical and subtle forms of interactional activity like account-building, turn-taking, and case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986). Generally speaking, however, conversation analysis approaches tend to shift the focus away from issues of materiality and power by attending to the technical organization of talk which often assume the equal participatory status of its speakers (see Wooffitt (2005) for an excellent discussion on the differences between rhetorical psychology and conversation analysis). But there is also another sense of technology that applies to how individuals problematize and regulate their own conduct in

accordance to particular goals. We examine these ethical relations of 'self on self' later in the section.

Subject positions

As we have seen, discourses not only constitute objects in various and, sometimes, contradictory ways, but they also offer positions from which a person may speak the truth about objects. A subject position identifies 'a location for persons within a structure of rights and duties for those who use that repertoire' (Davies and Harré, 1999: 35). But 'positioning' also involves the construction and performance of a particular vantage point (Bamberg, 1994); it offers not only a perspective from which to view a version of reality, but also a moral location within spoken interaction. This is not dissimilar to how the 'moral adequacy' (Cuff, 1994) of people's accounts are linked to the 'moral order' in which they seek to locate themselves (Sacks, 1992). A key point here is that moral location and moral order are intimately linked in spoken interaction and are themselves practical technologies for speaking the truth (Hodge, 2002). Margaret Wetherell (1998) also shows how a post-structuralist conception of subject positions finds some compatibility with conversation analysis. In her ethnography of middle class masculine identities she shows how conversation analysis provides greater analytic potential for understanding subject positions within conversational processes. Wetherell (1998: 401) shows how subject positions are 'local, highly situated and occasioned', and that claims of 'sexual prowess' by one young male is managed by occupying a variety of subject positions: diminished responsibility ('drunk'), external attributions of success ('lucky'), internal attributions of success ('out on the pull'), an agent engaged in consensual sexual play ('she fancied a bit a rough'), immoral ('moral low ground'), etc. The variability of these positions are given some order by referring to broader discourses of male sexuality as 'performance and achievement' and an ethics of sexuality

justified in terms of 'relationships and reciprocity' (Hollway, 1984; Wetherell, 1998: 400–1).

Subjectification

The term 'subjectification' arises out of Foucault's historical work on Greek ethics and subjectivity (Foucault, 1985, 1997a). Specifically, it refers to the making of subjects through two kinds of technologies: power and self. In the first instance, subjects are constituted through technologies of domination by acts of 'subjection'. In the second, subjects are formed via technologies of the self, that is, by acting on themselves within a particular moral order and according to a more or less conscious ethical goal. In referring to an 'ethics' of self-formation, Foucault (1988) does not mean that individuals act on themselves according to some personal moral philosophy, but engage in specific practices of self-regulation to 'transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1988: 18). Ian Hodge's (2002) work on therapeutic discourse provides a nice illustration of how techniques of conversation analysis are applied to interactions between callers and psychotherapists about sexual relationships. Rather than a 'moralizing' technology, these interventions work at the level of *ethical problematizations*, providing 'the means through which callers might regulate their own behaviour and normalize their future possible conduct' (Hodge, 2002: 455). By reframing callers' problems in an ethical form, Hodge shows how counsellors recruit the self-regulating capacities of the caller by establishing that both caller and counsellor share a moral universe.

EXAMPLE OF FDA

In what follows we provide a brief illustration of how FDA might be applied to contemporary research. An example is taken from the

first author's PhD work on the subjectifying effects of Australian welfare reform. Here, FDA investigates practices of subjectification at the interface of both social and human technologies.

Subjects of welfare

In this study, FDA is used for two purposes: to conduct a genealogy of contemporary welfare rationalities, and to investigate the effects these have on practices of freedom and self-formation. The study begins with problematizations of welfare recipients in Australia. The discovery of 'welfare dependency' in 1999 signalled the government's commitment to reforming the Australian social security system through policies of 'mutual obligation'. These policies effectively contractualized welfare services for the chronically ill, lone parents and the long-term unemployed, and imposed work-for-the-dole schemes on young people. They seek to continuously monitor the behaviour of the poor and counteract the demoralizing effects of welfare dependency through psychological readjustment. The discourse of dependency has a long history, extending as far back as feudal bondage, and undergoes significant transformation in the early nineteenth and late twentieth centuries³. Today, dependency assumes all the characteristics of a behavioural syndrome, singling out the passive, indolent and work shy from 'at risk' sectors of the welfare population. A genealogy of dependency would therefore interrogate the historical conditions out of which it became possible to pathologize the poor in terms of a moral/psychological deficiency of conduct.

The following analysis examines the effects that current welfare rationalities, like discourses of dependency, have on practices of subjectification, namely among those receiving assistance. The task is to examine the interface between work and welfare and investigate the conditions that produce the subject of neoliberal welfare reform. Consider the experience of Angela, a 19-year-old welfare recipient, who lives in a rural community with high unemployment.

Angela narrates a story of humble working class beginnings, living a comfortable rural life wherein financial disadvantage is counterbalanced by feelings of freedom and familial security. At the age of 16 Angela leaves school and moves to Sydney to live with friends and find work. The transition to a large city is narrated as a growing sense of maturity and personal autonomy. Fantasies of urban life are short-lived, however, as friends begin to migrate to other cities, and the precarious circuits of shared accommodation raise feelings of isolation despite regular casual work in a call centre. The return to community is narrated as a painful loss of autonomy, coupled with the sense of closure that characterizes her current welfare position. A sense of self struggles to emerge with any clarity as she tries to supplement her income with sporadic casual work in the local service industry. But despite the constraints of welfare and work, Angela narrates an acute sense of psychological agency:

I think that there is a lot more choices elsewhere, like when I moved back from Sydney and I said to mum 'I am never going to work in a supermarket, I am not going to do this and I am not going to do that', and then after about a year I asked mum 'I wonder if they have got any jobs at the checkout' ... I don't know it is just the situation I am in and I am not happy and I am starting to realize that you can't be too choosy and money is money and work is work and you have to do the shitty jobs sometimes to move on and do something better, that's how it goes, you can't just jump into the right job straight away and expect that that is going to be it, then um the fact that I am open minded about it all rather than 'I am only going to do this', especially in town where there are not that many opportunities, or that many different kind of jobs ... everyone has so many options, it is only limited by what they think is, the limits around them, but I mean like if I really wanted to I could get up and leave, I mean I have done it before on less than what I've got now and did it, so it is just myself that is making it a problem ... so in that sense that is where my freedom if you like is a little bit limited ... it is a lot harder to do it, but like really I have got nothing holding me back, I can go and do whatever I want.

There are two problematizations of interest here. The first precedes the narrative in terms of the possibility of reading Angela's

story as one of dependency – a subject who lacks the personal resources to find regular work in the community. The second relates more directly to the personal, affective dimension of the narrative – the growing loss of autonomy and the awkward moral management one must perform to evade the stigma created by the former. The position of the 'welfare dependent' threatens to subsume the more virtuous position of the 'jobseeker', in which case Angela must present herself as having undergone some kind of personal and moral transformation. What is also interesting is the particular 'technology' from which the affirmative voice draws. In the absence of any real change in the material circumstances of community, it is primarily a psychological relation to self that emerges as a new valuation of work: the 'shitty' checkout job is transposed into a lucrative possibility, not because material circumstances demand *any* form of paid work, but because 'self-realization' is a more praiseworthy way of articulating self-reliance. In order to evade the stigma of dependency, Angela draws on a 'psychological' technology of self-improvement to position herself in alignment with a moral order.

Despite the limited opportunities of community, one is confined only by one's ability to make choices. This account constitutes the kind of resilience and fantasy of flexibility that has become a condition of modern wage-labour. For the young female worker there is no sense of work offering long-term security other than forming a transient relay in the maximization of experience and the on-going construction of an individual biography. Angela's narrative, we think, exemplifies the kind of psychological autonomy that younger generations of workers are now enjoined to think as possibilities for the active construction of identity and lifestyle through the fantasy of unlimited choice. What of course recedes into the background is the broader structural exigencies and constraints that might render this discourse of subjectification hopelessly inadequate in addressing the insecurity

of work. The moral management of the self ensures that material contradictions of political economy, community and employability are transposed into personal difficulties.

The new technologies of self-actualization appear as political authorities seek more active solutions to the problems of freedom and security. The new post-welfare regime insists that society is to be 'active' as welfare recipients undergo continuous monitoring for the ethical reconstruction of the self. In the Australian case, a range of techniques are used on recipients that mix coercion, exhortation and constant surveillance to produce active forms of citizenship. But income support also presupposes a position where ethical activity is already precarious or impossible to achieve, in which case narratives confirm an intensification of moral management, self-blame, ambivalence, and psychological reconstruction. FDA shows how Angela's account of subjectification poses a particular problem of experience which is more clearly understood in a genealogical context.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, we described what a Foucauldian approach to discourse might look like, how it applies to critical psychological work and provided some conceptual markers for analysing practices of subjectification. We also cautiously advised that perhaps there is no such thing as 'Foucauldian discourse analysis', and that if such a thing existed it would look quite different to linguistic versions of discourse. Others have already warned (Parker, 2004; Pennycook, 1994; Threadgold, 1997) that as discourse analysis crystallizes into its own discipline, more radical approaches (i.e. poststructuralism) will be subsumed by dominant and more marketable forms of applied linguistics⁴. While for linguistics this may be a celebration of differences, for other approaches this homogenization of discourse is currently determining which forms of knowledge are

to be valued and upheld and which are to be devalued and discarded.

It is true that non-linguistic versions of discourse are susceptible to misunderstanding. The high level of abstraction may seem to imply that 'everything is discourse'. Since the early 1980s, for instance, discourse has been criticized for its object-status (reification) and presumed agency (anthropomorphism). These related accusations of 'discourse babble' are the symptoms of an extraordinary vagueness about French continental theory. In this chapter we hope to have given some clarity to a Foucauldian conception of discourse. After all, discourses are not 'things' but form relations *between* things; they are not objects as such but the *rules* and *procedures* that make objects thinkable and governable; they are not autonomous entities but cohere among *relations of force*; and, finally, discourses do not 'determine' things when there is always the possibility of resistance and indeterminacy.

Other criticisms of discourse invoke an either/or relation between relativism and realism. Foucault's position on discourse is unique in the way he eschews foundationalism without necessarily sliding into nihilism, relativism or realism. This raises a curious ambivalence in relation to discourse and 'the real'. If discourse eschews the possibility of apprehending a reality independent of discourse it is because there are no foundational certainties (whether in truth itself or within the subject) for guaranteeing knowledge. But at the same time we must avoid the kind of universal suspicion that maintains that truth is consciously concealed (Gordon, 1980). 'The real' is a historical question rather than a general epistemological question about the status of truth. It requires a meticulous reconstruction of events that breach what is obvious, natural or inevitable in order to rediscover 'the connections, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal, and necessary' (Foucault, 2000: 226–7).

Another more serious criticism is the claim that poststructuralism eliminates a social actor. But perhaps this is unfair. When Foucault (1970) provocatively declared 'the death of man' at the end of *The Order of Things*, it was suggested that humanist philosophy had finally run its course. But where anti-humanism dispenses with a theory of agency it does not mean that poststructuralism can no longer speak sensibly about acting subjects. Anti-humanism reminds us that what we call human being is now 'under erasure' – no longer stable, reliable or serviceable (Hall, 1996). Following Derrida (1981), we are not forbidden to think of human subjects as capable of action but what can be thought about subjectivity, identity, personhood, etc., is now placed at the limits of thought. Hence, poststructuralism only requires a minimal or 'thin' conception of the human material on which history writes (Patton, 1994).

We have given some basic guidelines of Foucauldian analysis as a way of doing social critique. For critical psychology, this means recognizing how psychology and other forms of knowledge are instrumental in making up our current regimes of the self. Recent analyses of advanced liberal government show, for instance, how governing in the name of the social enjoin new forms of contractualization linked to new problematizations, new strategies of control, and new subjects of control. A potential for future inquiry would diagnose new technologies that seek to maximize our freedom through *autonomization* and *responsibilization* of self (Rose, 1999). And quite rightly, these technologies are found among the details of conversations as well as wider programmes of intervention. We think a Foucauldian approach would benefit from importing linguistic tools from conversation, rhetorical or positional analysis so long as analysts never take their 'genealogical eye' off the problem. Whatever the horizon of research, Foucauldian analysis makes explicit the historicity of the objects we interrogate.

NOTES

1 'It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; but it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action' (Foucault, 1982: 220).

2 'The normative production of "good teaching" means that the teacher must experience herself as inadequate, feel guilty, anxious and insecure. If the child has failed, by implication the teacher's gaze has not been total enough, she has not provided enough experience, has committed the "sin" of "pushing" the child. After all, within the parameters of the discursive practice, all children would and could develop correctly if only the teacher were good enough' (Walkerdine, 1984: 193).

3 Space prohibits a full discussion of the genealogical context of Australia welfare reform. Suffice to say, the regulation of the poor through the moral reconstruction of conduct is not a new technique, but emerged from classical liberal thought, particularly among policies that were instrumental in the birth of state welfare. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 can be read as an attempt to distinguish the undeserving poor from the deserving poor, leaving the undeserving to fend for themselves in the new national labour market, while placing the deserving poor under the cruel and deterrent conditions of the workhouse. The intellectual contribution of Bentham, Malthus and Riccardo were influential in naturalizing a domain of poverty, while at the same time distinguishing 'pauperism' as the proper object of regulation. This resonates with present arguments about 'welfare dependency' which arguably reactivate a discourse of pauperism. But nineteenth-century virtues of independence, self-responsibility and self-discipline are given a new ethical gloss: independent labour is said to foster self-respect and self-esteem, to restore confidence and identity. Arguably, the present conditions of assistance are designed to elicit the self-managing capacities for whom psychological training ensures the moral reformation of self, the ethical reconstruction of will, so that the poor might be quickly recycled into flexible labour markets.

4 '... there is a danger that discourse analysis as commonly conceived in applied linguistics will increasingly come to define the questions that can be asked about language use' (Pennycook, 1994: 120).

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Psychoanalytic Approaches to Qualitative Psychology

Stephen Frosh and Lisa Saville Young

INTRODUCTION: WHAT HAS PSYCHOANALYSIS TO DO WITH QUALITATIVE METHODS?

Psychologists working within academic traditions both in Britain and in the United States have often found themselves both attracted to and repelled by psychoanalytic ideas. It is as if the two disciplines have contested the same ground – how to understand human behaviour, especially apparently disturbing behaviour – and have been caught up in a dispute that is at the same time epistemological, practical and political. How one can know the reality of psychological phenomena has been a key element in this contestation, with this debate being coded (perhaps speciously) as that between an ‘objective’ (psychological) and a more ‘subjective’ (psychoanalytic) approach to understanding. This has, historically, been paralleled by differences in the focus of investigation, which for psychologists has been mainly directly observable or at least measurable phenomena (behaviours or reports on subjective states,

taken at face value) whilst for psychoanalysts it has been what Freud (1917) calls the ‘dream work’ – the tricky, hard-to-observe ways in which unconscious material finds its way into consciousness.

As will be seen, this divergence between a ‘ground up’ model of psychological explanation, in which observable facts are given priority, and a theoretically driven, ‘top down’ model continues to exercise qualitative psychologists who find themselves drawn to psychoanalytic ideas as one possible route to moving beyond ‘mere’ re-description of what their research participants tell them. At the outset, though, it is worth noting how the move produced by the growth of qualitative social psychology towards a new openness to investigations of ‘meaning’ (for example, through discourse and narrative analysis; Emerson and Frosh, 2004) and to the potential of psychoanalysis as a conceptual and methodological tool (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2003; Kvale, 2003), make it ever easier to envisage collaboratively ‘binocular’ accounts in which the concepts

and procedures of both traditions might be brought to bear on psychological material. The 'new' social psychology, with its roots in social constructionism, Foucauldian critique and methodologically scrupulous qualitative research (Chapter 21; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1998; Potter and Wetherell, 1987), offers a grounded way in which to articulate the psychosocial bases around which personal and social accounts of experiences and beliefs are constructed. The possible contribution from psychoanalysis derives from the sophistication of its ideas about emotional investment and fantasy, which can offer a 'thickening' or enrichment of interpretive understanding brought to bear on personal narratives, especially those arising out of interview situations. In particular, because of its concern with the 'split' subject (Frosh, 1999), psychoanalysis might supply a framework and methodology through which subject positions can be explored without necessarily having recourse to assumptions concerning the stability of selfhood or the separate sphere of the 'personal'. Instead, the *investment* subjects have in certain discursive positions can be seen to intertwine with the constructive power of discourses to produce the kinds of fluid and complex texts characteristic of in-depth narrative research. Put crudely, psychoanalytic interpretive strategies may be able to throw light on the psychological processes, or perhaps the conscious and unconscious 'reasons', behind a specific individual's investment in any rhetorical or discursive position. This may offer a more complete (because more individualized as well as emotion-inflected) interpretive re-description of interview material with helpful links to clinical perceptions and practices.

The possible syncretism of discursive social psychology and psychoanalysis has a number of facets, but in essence these relate to shared perceptions of the constructive role of language, a concern with language or communication as the medium through which people compose themselves. Thus, both schools of thought assume constructionist theories of meaning, in which reality is always to some extent 'made up' discursively.

Nevertheless, there are important differences in how psychoanalysis and discursive psychology understand personal experience and in each school's approach to language. For the former, talk is primarily mediated by relational dynamics and unconscious processes; while for the latter talk is mediated by the availability of discourses in the social and political realm. Consequently, social psychologists have been critical of psychoanalytic attempts to go 'beyond' language to inner experience. Billig (1997: 139–40) describes the difference thus:

Discursive psychology ... argues that phenomena which traditional psychological theories have treated as 'inner processes' are, in fact, constituted through social, discursive activity. Accordingly, discursive psychologists argue that psychology should be based on the study of this outward activity rather than upon hypothetical, and essentially unobservable, inner states. In this respect, discursive psychology is inimical with psychoanalytic theory, which presumes that hidden unconscious motive-forces lie behind the surface of social life. Psychoanalytic theorists often treat outward social activity as a cipher for unobservable, inner motivational processes.

While discursive psychology explores the cultural resources that people draw on in accounts, psychoanalysis is more interested in talk as suggestive of psychic structures that organize individuals' internal worlds in particular ways. This *psychic* realm is seen as being informed by actual events and therefore social structures but also 'added to' from the unconscious. Thus, psychoanalysis conceptualizes discourse as a site where the internal world of psychic reality is expressed and revealed. Individuals are 'unconsciously impelled' to express themselves in particular ways, resulting in discernable patterns that will differ from individual to individual. A psychoanalytic reading goes 'behind' the text as the positions that individuals construct through their talk are taken to be indicative of anxieties, defences and particular ways of relating that develop in infancy and recur throughout their lives. By contrast, from a discursive perspective, individuals express themselves in ways that are familiar or readily available to them within their

social context (Wetherell, 2003). Discursive psychology reads the text for the identity positions that are constructed for the person talking and the audience listening, and for the broader cultural discourses and subject positions it draws on in these constructions.

In this regard, Wetherell (2003) speaks about psychoanalysis as predicated on a problematic psychological–social dualism. She argues that the deep psychological properties or structures that psychoanalysis is interested in are separated from social relations and therefore represented as static, confined to early development, without any exploration of their possible transformation through subsequent and ongoing social relations and practices. Similarly, Sondergaard (2002: 448) argues that using psychoanalysis reproduces the individual/social dualism because of its strong focus on ‘inner-psychological and individually demarcated reality’. This is at the core of the distinction between the psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious, with its insistence on the materiality of an underlying domain of expressive meaning, and the kind of ‘discursive unconscious’ postulated by Billig (1997), which understands the unconscious as a domain of prohibited speech. Billig points out that conversational devices have defensive functions: the centrality of politeness and the accomplishment of morality in and through conversations necessarily implies that the temptation of rudeness or immorality is repressed. For Billig, this repressive aspect of conversation is a point of fruitful contact between psychoanalysis and discursive psychology, although he admits that theoretical adjustments need to be made on both sides. He argues that discursive psychology needs to pay attention to the absences as well as the presences in dialogue. This suggests that there will need to be some willingness to interpret ‘past’ what can be easily transcribed as text. On the other hand, psychoanalysis, rather than viewing repression as individual in operation, needs to perceive it as socially produced in overt interpersonal activity. Developing a psychosocial account of relationships and subjectivity that can draw on psychoanalysis without dumping

the significant advances produced by discursive social psychology thus requires openness to interpretation grounded in an understanding of the social as something that permeates apparently ‘individual’ phenomena; whether this project can be advanced through a psychoanalytic approach to qualitative methods is the concern of this chapter.

REFLEXIVITY

With the querying of positivism characteristic of the discursive turn in the social sciences has come agreement that the human sciences are characterized by the impossibility of any search for absolute knowledge, precisely because of the meaning-making or ‘reflexive’ nature of human psychology itself. Instead, what has come to be privileged is the form that experience takes when it is put into narrative (Bruner, 1993). One important implication of this claim about the essential ‘narrative-generating’ character of human psychology is that influential ideas about such things as ‘human nature’ have an impact on the construction of their own subject; that is, people consume these explanations as part of the process of constructing stories about their lives. This can be seen particularly clearly in the history of psychological theories on ‘race’; the use of psychological ‘expertise’ to generate social policies is also relevant. More generally, the ways in which people construe themselves owes a lot to influential psychological theories, perhaps particularly psychoanalytic and biomedical ones. People’s routine uses of psychoanalytically derived notions such as ‘sexual repression’ or ‘trauma’ or ‘acting out’ as explanations of their own or others’ behaviour are examples here. Conversely, psychological theories draw strength from the ‘common sense’ (that is, ideologically inscribed) assumptions and ways of understanding experience prevalent in the culture. This is linked to a debate in social science on the virtues or otherwise of ‘constructivism’, understood in regard to human psychology as implying the impossibility

of absolute truth: people's understanding of their psychology shifts with the ideas to which they are exposed. Social constructionism, as a variant of constructivism, makes this anti-positivist claim even stronger through arguing that knowledge is negotiated and invented – 'constructed' – out of ideas and assumptions made available by the social and interpersonal context.

The reflexivity argument has a number of implications in relation to the employment of psychoanalysis in qualitative research. For Parker (2005) it focuses and limits the possibilities of psychoanalysis itself, understood as a compelling narrative that is culturally specific and even functional. Research, therefore, is not a process of uncovering (even relative) 'truths' about people, but rather exposes the ways in which people are positioned by the theoretical structures used (by them as well as by researchers) to understand them.

What psychoanalytic research can do, then, is to turn psychoanalytic knowledge around against itself so we understand better the way that psychoanalytic ideas have themselves encouraged us to look for things deep inside us as the causes of social problems. Psychoanalytic subjectivity – our sense of ourselves as having hidden childhood desires and destructive wishes – is the perfect complement to economic exploitation in capitalist society, for both succeed in making the victims blame themselves.

Parker (2005: 105)

This takes to its logical extreme the constructivist/constructionist argument that subjects are produced discursively, though exactly how psychoanalysis will reveal the conditions of its own operation as an exploitative system is left open to speculation. More conventionally, Parker draws attention to the impact of psychoanalysis' emphasis on how knowledge (specifically of the patient) is mediated through the person – the subjectivity – of the knower (the analyst): that is, knowing the other requires knowing the impact of the other on (or 'in') the self, and being able to reflect on this in a way that openly recognizes both the pre-existing investment of the knower/researcher in the

material, and what is added to this by the specific concerns of the other. Parker (2005: 117) comments on how this produces a reassessment of conventional research ideas on subjectivity as a problem:

Subjectivity is viewed by psychoanalysis, as with much qualitative research, not as a problem but as a resource (and topic). To draw upon one's own subjectivity in the research process does not mean that one is not being 'objective', but that one actually comes closer to a truer account. In psychoanalytic terms, the 'investment' the researcher has in the material they are studying plays a major role in the interest that will eventually accrue from the research.

This is a conventional point in relation to psychoanalytic infant observation, where it is held that knowledge of the child can *only* be obtained through registering the observer's emotional response to what s/he sees (Waddell, 1988); coded more broadly as 'countertransference' it is also a feature of all contemporary psychoanalytic practice, especially that influenced by Kleinian and British School thinking. Hence Hollway and Jefferson's (2005) assertion that in their psychoanalytically inflected qualitative work they can ground their interpretive claims through what they refer to as an analysis of the 'countertransference'. Referring to their case study of 'Vince', they claim that information is generated through comparing the different responses the two researchers had to the participant himself:

We used these and the triangulation of them between the two of us. For example, while WH [Wendy Hollway] wanted to describe Vince as quiet-spoken and unassertive, TJ [Tony Jefferson] was more inclined to describe him as timid. We used this information to reflect on how we were differently positioned in relation to Vince through these different countertransference responses. Wendy, who conducted both interviews, found herself feeling suspiciously protective of him, while Tony, having met him briefly, listened to the audiotapes and read the transcripts, felt critical of his timidity. This observation is an example of how to use the psychoanalytic principle of unconscious intersubjectivity to theorize the effect of research relationship(s) on the production and analysis of data.

Hollway and Jefferson (2005: 151)

It has to be said that this looks only schematically like the intense exploration of unconscious material characteristic of psychoanalytic reflection on the counter-transference in the clinical situation, but at least it provides a space for checking out the researchers' responses to the research participant and thinking through what these responses might signify. It also draws attention to the position of the researcher in qualitative work, where the end point of research might be various constructed versions of experience rather than full knowledge of an objective and fixed external reality. The task of the interviewer, therefore, shifts from one of eliciting the interviewee's 'real' views to creating the conditions under which a thoughtful conversation can take place – a 'shared understanding' model (Franklin, 1997). Clearly, in doing work of this kind, the person of the researcher is deeply implicated: if it is the case that psychological knowledge is constructed in the context of an interchange between 'researcher' and 'researched', then understanding the determining characteristics of that interaction – including what the researcher brings to it – is crucial for evaluating the significance of any research 'findings'.

A major difficulty concerns what account can in fact be given of the investments of the researcher in the knowledge-making process. Here, psychoanalysis has considerably more sophisticated concepts available to it than can be found in much social science, but this very sophistication makes the issues more problematic. For example, some social psychologists seem to imply that describing researchers' investments in their work might be a relatively simple, technical matter, perhaps an issue of confession or self-revelation. But what is to be revealed? The researcher's gender, class and 'race' positions may well be relevant and it may be important to declare them as a way to increase the transparency and richness of the data produced. This is, indeed, the strategy employed by some of the best practitioners of the new social science; for instance,

Margaret Wetherell acknowledges that her work on racism in New Zealand is influenced by her own history as a white New Zealander (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). However, even where researchers have been scrupulous in laying out the ways in which they might have promoted certain 'responses' or narratives from their research participants, the most they are able to do is declare their conscious intentions and include material such as full transcripts to enable a reader to form an impression of the researcher's own active contribution. Psychoanalysis suggests that this declaration of relatively explicit aspects of the researcher's persona will never be complete enough to understand what her or his contribution to the research might be – let alone, to comprehend the nuances of the interpretive strategy employed in data analysis. There are likely, for example, to be complex unconscious processes interacting with the research work, encouraging some ways of going about things, inhibiting others. Psychoanalysis might even suggest that the only way to fully explore a researcher's investment in a particular piece of research would be through a dialogic encounter involving the possibility of interpretation of the researcher's activity and checking out the impact of this interpretation on her or his understanding and future conduct. This seems rather a tall order, although perhaps not an impossible one. For example, some very innovative German studies have used a process whereby researchers meet with members of their team in order to explore the thoughts, feelings and associations that have been brought up by the work as an indicator of important issues that may have been communicated indirectly or even unconsciously from the research participant (Marks, 2001). This 'interviewing' procedure is combined with one in which small groups of researchers track their responses to the recording of interviews, identifying moments of heightened emotion reflected in contradictions, interruptions or fragmentations of the material, and then discussing the impact and possible meaning of these. Particularly provocative or difficult interviews might be assessed by the whole research team

with a view to identifying their underlying dynamics. Sometimes the results from this procedure can be striking, as in the work reported by Marks and Mönich-Marks (2003) into the tolerance of Nazism, in which feelings of shame were identified in the research group and used to probe the manner in which research participants defended themselves against such feelings by projecting them onto others, including the victims of Nazi actions. The point here is not that there is some magical route to identifying the unconscious material (supposedly) present in any discourse, but rather that the process of 'locating' and utilizing the investments of *researchers* is a complex and difficult one, but nevertheless one that has to be engaged with at a more profound level than is conventional in qualitative psychology, if psychoanalytic thinking in this area is to be taken seriously.

As Kvale (1999) argues, the standard psychoanalytic interview is an interesting model for a narrative style conversation in which the research participant is encouraged to talk freely and thoughtfully about her or his experience. For example, qualitative researchers interested in generating 'rich' texts might do well to adopt the analytic stance in which a safe temporal and physical space is offered by a professional whose behaviour is characterized by 'free-floating attention' – a serious, non-intrusive yet ruminative type of activity – and in which the relational characteristics of the interview are acknowledged and considered for their effects. It is unusual, except in some ethnographic work, for researchers to spend enough time with research participants for the kind of deeply emotional relationship found in psychoanalysis to develop, and this places strong constraints on the extent to which, for example, transference material can be fostered and examined as part of the research. Nevertheless, holding attentively to what emerges without irritably seeking to order and understand it, and simply encouraging participants to speak on or around the topic under study, is itself quite a radical move for researchers and can pay dividends in terms of the quality of narrative data that is produced. Hollway

and Jefferson's (2000) adaptation of the biographical-narrative method into the 'Free Association Narrative Interview' is a particularly well known implementation of this idea, but it can be found enacted in several 'life history' type research projects (e.g. Plummer, 1995). Hollway and Jefferson (2000: 152) comment:

The free association narrative interview method is based on the premise that the meanings underlying interviewees' elicited narratives are best accessed via links based on spontaneous association, rather than whatever consistency can be found in the told narrative. This is a radically different conception of meaning because free associations follow an emotional rather than a cognitively derived logic. Once we follow that logic, the result is a fuller picture than would otherwise have emerged, offering richer and deeper insights into a person's unique meanings.

The link here is explicitly psychoanalytic and in a way antagonistic to conventional notions of narrative as story-telling: what matters is the emotional sense of the story, not its cognitive logic, because this emotional sense is what points to a person's subjective meaning-making.

The problem this produces, however, is of what to do with the richly subjective, suggestive texts that derive from such free and evocative interviewing procedures. Given all these interlacing subjectivities, how can one interpret their meaning in a reasonably convincing way? Different qualitative interpretive approaches have grown up with their own set of answers to this question, largely relating to varying strategies for 'grounding' interpretation in close analysis of the textual material, and presenting this procedurally for scrutiny by readers (Emerson and Frosh, 2004). What is especially problematic, but also interesting, about the use of psychoanalysis in qualitative research is that its interpretive strategies and grounding procedures have arisen most convincingly in one context – that of the clinical situation of the 'consulting room' – but are here being deployed in another context with strikingly different characteristics. Moreover, psychoanalysis is by no means unitary in its understanding of what

constitutes a good interpretation; indeed, in recent years it has become very hesitant about the idea that it can be used to uncover anything 'real' or 'truthful' about a person. What has changed is predominantly an advancing recognition of the way psychoanalytic formulations are worked out in the context of particular individuals struggling to relate to one another. This also means that as this context shifts, as the relationship changes, so psychoanalytic understanding of what is happening might also have to shift dramatically. Spence (1987: 91) comments:

No interpretation is sacred. If context is boundless and ever-expanding, the grounds for reaching a conclusion about this or that meaning are forever shifting. An archive can be constructed, but its contents will always be open to interpretation and elaboration.

Psychoanalytic understanding depends on the subjective exploration of one person by another; by implication, this means that something different will occur wherever different analysts work, or when different theoretical perspectives dominate, or when social contexts shift. Hence, any psychoanalytic finding can only be provisional, constrained by the conditions under which it has been produced.

VALIDATION

The relativity of the notion of truth here raises the obvious question of validation – of what criteria might be available for enabling distinction between all the possible 'provisional truths' which might arise, including all the provisional or perhaps absolute falsehoods. This is part of a general question arising out of all qualitative analysis of textual material: what are the limits on interpretation? Given, as most qualitative researchers and many (though not all) psychoanalysts would allow, that meaning is not fixed but is constructed in specific situations and usually through particular intersubjective encounters, then alternative interpretations of any text are likely to be viable and may even be

equally persuasive. Under such conditions, what are the constraints operating on interpretation, what is allowable and what is not? For Hollway and Jefferson (2005: 150), the warrant for psychoanalytic interpretation in the clinical situation is reasonably clear: it 'emerges in the therapeutic relationship'. The qualitative researcher is in a different position: whereas the psychoanalyst interprets 'into' the session and can observe the patient's response, the researcher saves her or his interpretation for later (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: 77), and so is faced with what might be called 'dead' text. Outside the psychoanalytic situation, therefore, the warrant for interpretation is more flimsy than within it: Hollway and Jefferson (2005: 151) propose that this warrant includes 'the researcher's multiply informed (hermeneutic) interpretations of interview claims in the context of everything that is known about the person' and in particular that it is legitimate to read through the surface of the text to the life that is 'assumed' to be beyond it. In the context of the case study of 'Vince', this is articulated as follows:

Vince's account is a form of evidence about that life, and our interpretative approach is based on the principle that the ways that Vince constructs his account in the context of the interview relationship can, when interpreted, provide further information about its conflicts... Thus, in addition to typical thematic and narrative analytic procedures, we paid particular attention to the links (free associations) between textual elements and to behaviours that signalled conflicting feelings about the material; for example, changes in emotional tone, long pauses or avoidances. These are some of the symptoms that make visible otherwise invisible internal states.

Hollway and Jefferson (2005: 151)

The obvious difficulty with this is that it still leaves the move from the surface to the proposed depth unanchored. How confident can the researchers be in the accuracy of their particular speculations about the significance of the free associations and emotional markers that they observe? Hollway and Jefferson (2000: 80) fall back on some idea of the recognizability of their interpretations: 'Their reliability can be checked (though never

guaranteed) if, when our interpretations and analyses are studied by others, they are “recognized”: that is, the sense that we made out of them can be shared through the subjectivity of others’. The problem here is that an interpretation may be agreed upon by various people all looking at something from the same perspective (as, for example, psychoanalysts tend to do), but this does not mean that it is right. This is part of Wetherell’s (2005: 171) objection to Hollway and Jefferson’s procedure, which focuses on the ways in which they ‘ignore the discursive context in which they have put Vince; the pressure the interviews place on him to offer a satisfactory account of who he is and the kind of attributional work Vince’s circumstances would demand of anyone placed in them’. The consequence is that a certain kind of story almost has to emerge, as the psychoanalytic frame used by Hollway and Jefferson funnels the research participant’s talk, leading rather ineluctably to a reading that revolves around the pre-ordained notion of the defended subject: ‘Vince’s words become acontextual and psychologized; he becomes a one trick pony, everything he says is leading towards his one true story, and that story is seen as definitive and automatically revealing of his real character’ (Wetherell, 2005). This critique is taken further by Parker (2005: 108), who warns against the Free Association Narrative Interview procedure on the grounds that it is individualizing, essentializing, pathologizing and disempowering; the key complaint is that it is organized around a pre-set discourse that imposes an expert account on the research participant in a typical (of psychoanalysis as well as psychology) ‘researcher knows best’ set of moves.

In response to the problem of validation of truth claims, both psychoanalysis and qualitative psychology have at least partially embraced a hermeneutic position arguing that whilst causal, explanatory truths about people may not be available, meaning-imbued ‘narrative truths’ are. The model for this in the first instance is the reading of literary texts: the richer the text, the more alternative and even contradictory meanings might be pulled

out of it. Narrative truths convince because of their capacity to evoke and structure experiences, to offer coherence where there is fragmentation, to articulate half-understood meanings, to throw light on obscurity. This is not an arbitrary process as it is quite possible to make interpretations of a text which have no coherence at all, and which fail to communicate anything; these would be failed, ‘false’ interpretations. But while the search for narrative truth is not arbitrary, it is difficult: not only is there a strong element of relativity brought into the situation by the variety of different narratives which might be available at any one time, but also as the context for interpretation shifts – as culture changes, for example – so do the narratives which take hold and which hold conviction. This has led some hermeneuticists, most notably Jürgen Habermas, to suggest that the final arbiter of analytic correctness, at least in the clinical setting, should be the patient. Analytic insights, he argues

possess validity for the analyst only after they have been accepted as knowledge by the analysand and himself. For the empirical accuracy of general interpretations depends not on controlled observation and the subsequent communication among investigators but rather on the accomplishment of self-reflection and subsequent communication between the investigator and his ‘object’.

Habermas (1968: 261)

Habermas accepts as psychoanalytic the idea that symbolic structures of intention and meaning are causal in human relations, and from there proposes that psychoanalytic knowledge is validated by its capacity to demonstrate, in practice, the impact of its interventions in these structures. From the point of view of the patient, an interpretation is ‘emancipatory’ in linking the subject with her or his split-off meanings: ‘The interpretation of a case is corroborated only by the successful *continuation of a self-formative process*, that is, by the completion of self-reflection, and not in any unmistakable way by what the patient says or how he *behaves*’ (Habermas, 1968: 266). Emancipation is expressed in a kind of becoming-real

in the session, as the patient recognizes the meanings generated dialogically and takes them in so that they have causal impact, promoting an enrichment of felt experience and a process of enhanced self-reflection.

The hermeneutic account of the psychoanalytic process, and Habermas' version of it in particular, is more compelling than can be developed properly here (see Frosh, 2006), but it also shows up starkly the difficulties for the application of psychoanalytic ideas in the non-clinical research setting. It can be argued that the dependence of psychoanalysis on biographical and interpersonal information in order to ground interpretations means that it is not very appropriate for the analysis of interview material which, whilst it may be rich in details concerning attitudes and thoughts, is relatively sparse in relation to background features and fantasies. This suggests that for psychoanalytic procedures to be appropriate, more focused ways of gathering personal biographical material will need to be incorporated into qualitative psychological studies, and that these should not be merely 'factual' but should privilege respondents' in-depth accounts of their own perceptions of their experience. More broadly, the usual methods of 'testing' psychoanalytic interpretations rely on close observation (at various levels) of the analysand's response to the interpretation, evidence unavailable to the researcher after the event. There is, simply, no response from a text to an interpretation in the way that a person might respond; and unless one is going to incorporate trial interpretations into the research interview itself, it is hard to see a way around this.

Many hermeneuticists have drawn out the parallel between psychoanalysis and textual analysis by focusing on the idea that meaning is the production of effects rather than the naming of truths, and hence that the interpretive process is a matter of 'local' readings of a spoken or authored 'text' (Friedman, 2000). Psychoanalysis, however, is not satisfied with generating particular meanings; it also has an interpretive task that is irreducibly bound up with the unravelling of unconscious conflicts. Here, a distinction worked

on by Ricoeur (1974), between a 'hermeneutics of understanding' and a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' is important, the latter being the mode characteristic of psychoanalysis, with its reluctance to accept what the patient has to say at face value. Friedman (2000: 234–5) revives the textual analogy here when he comments that, 'analysis ... is primarily intent on reading what the patient does not want read, and also, to some extent, the analyst's profession requires that he or she read against the analyst's own inclination'. Asserting the validity of a psychoanalytic concept thus requires *both* recognition of the way psychological 'reality' is impossible to pin down, because it fluctuates and is reconstructed continually as it is enacted and produced in different contexts; *and* an appreciation that some 'readings' of the unconscious are more forceful than others, and can be observed to be so because of their resonance in the participants, their capacity to communicate experience more richly, and their productivity in relation to further associations and deepening of emotional states. Outside the context of the consulting room, this can be applied in the same way as arguments about literary interpretations are applied: what way of understanding generates most material, what pushes thinking on, what 'thickens' the story that can be told about how psychological phenomena might work? None of this is completely satisfactory: psychoanalytic interpretation is always wavering and uncertain even when it can be tested against the patient's response, and even more so when it cannot; but this can be turned into a strength if one can maintain the stance of uncertainty and tentativeness within a context of cautious checking against the emotional tone of the research participant's talk and of the researcher's reactions.

We have been arguing both for the productivity of the application of psychoanalysis to qualitative material and for its problems, and have asserted that the use of psychoanalytic understanding must be tentative, rooted both in biographical information and in a dynamic contact with research participants that allows space for emotional connectedness and the

observation and thoughtful reflection on the relationship that arises. As with other forms of qualitative research, analysis of textual material must be rigorous and cautious, employing psychoanalytic concepts (that is part of the point) but grounding them in clearly observable textual moves – however open these might be to alternative readings as well. No interpretation is sacred, there is no full and absolute truth; but some are more reasonable and persuasive than others on theoretical grounds but also in terms of their logic and productivity, the implications and conclusions to which they lead.

NARRATIVES OF BROTHERHOOD

In what follows, we try to demonstrate some of these tentative possibilities through reference to one specific piece of research into the ‘brother’ relationships of some adult men. This research involved interviews with eight men in middle adulthood, using an open, ‘clinical’ style in which the interviewer (LSY) combined paraphrasing and clarification of participants’ comments with probes into their motives and interpretations of their experiences. Immediately after each interview, extensive field notes were made detailing observations of the participants’ interactions with the interviewer as well as the interviewer’s personal feelings about the interview and the participant. Each interview was transcribed as soon after conducting the interview as possible, including in the transcription the interviewer’s words and responses, false starts, hesitations, pauses, laughing, crying, whispering and overlapping of responses.

The analytic process involved a discursive reading of the entire interview text exploring how the men’s language shores up or tears down certain ways of doing and being (Gee, 1999). Discourses and interpretive repertoires were explored along with how they reinforced or subjugated particular subject positions. Much of the literature on men’s same-sex relationships (sibling relationships and friendships) points to a male deficit

model of intimacy (e.g. Bank and Hansford, 2000; Wood, 1999), so we were interested in whether the cultural ideal or dominant discourse of men as tough, aggressive and unemotional meant that particular men might find it difficult to construct an intimate relationship with their brothers. However, we also explored how men might resist or negate this cultural ideal by constructing a fraternal relationship that undermines hegemonic masculinity.

While paying attention to this ‘social’ dimension of brothering, we also wanted to focus on the deeply personal nature of ‘doing brother’. This involved identifying core narratives in the interview, selected for their emotionality or ‘breaches’ (Emerson and Frosh, 2004), and applying psychoanalytic interpretive strategies to ‘thicken’ the discursive reading of the text. These strategies included analysing the men’s personal biographies, elicited in the course of the interview, and using psychoanalytic concepts (drawn especially from Mitchell’s (2000, 2003) work on siblings) to explore ways in which early sibling and parental relationships might mediate their investments in certain discourses. A second strategy involved using the field notes to understand how the interview context influenced the participants’ investments as well as exploring how the texture of the research relationship might increase the resonance of the analytic interpretations.

Throughout, we recognized that employing this psychoanalytic reading in the research required grounding interpretations not only in the research relationship, but also in textual moves. Therefore, the core narratives were retranscribed using Gee’s (1991) poetic approach in pursuit of a fine-grained analysis of *how* the narrative is told. Gee argues that analysing the structure of a text is an important part of interpretation in that it points to a set of what he calls ‘interpretive questions’ while at the same time also constraining the answers that are given. He offers an analysis of the way a text is put together, the use of intonations, stresses and the rhythmic patterning of words, in an attempt to focus on the subjective and personal meaning making

of the narrator and to resist ascriptivism, the tendency for interpreters to appropriate the narrator's meaning, making it into their own. Gee's poetic approach 'helps to privilege the teller's experience and assumptions "from the inside" of their own language-use' (Emerson and Frosh, 2004: 46).

Box 7.1 offers a brief outline of the methodological procedures involved in the research on brothers reported in this chapter, as one example of a psychoanalytic approach to qualitative research. The left-hand column outlines the steps that were taken to implement the method and the right hand column

lists publications which provide either more detail about the procedure or apply the procedure to research data. It is important to note, however, that research of this kind is a dynamic process and so, while the procedures are listed in chronological order, they nevertheless took place in a cyclical rather than linear manner. In particular, steps 6 and 7 of the list below overlapped considerably during the research process as we sought to root the psychoanalytic interpretation of narratives in the previous levels of analysis (particularly in the field notes and the 'poetic' reading or linguistic analysis of the text).

BOX 7.1 Methodological Procedure

Procedure

1. Conduct biographical–narrative interviews.
2. Write up field notes detailing observations of the participant's interactions with the interviewer as well as the interviewer's personal feelings about the interview and the participant.
3. Transcribe the interviews.
4. Discursive reading of the entire interview text.
5. Identify core narratives in the interview selected for their emotionality or 'breaches'.
6. Retranscribe the core narratives and conduct a fine grained 'poetic' reading of the text.
7. Apply psychoanalytic interpretive strategies to core narratives to 'thicken' the discursive reading of the text. These include analysing participants' personal biographies, applying psychoanalytic concepts to narrative material and analysing the research relationship drawing on the field notes.

References

- See Hollway & Jefferson's (2000) free association narrative method and Kvale's (1999, 2003) psychoanalytic interview.
- See Riessman's (2003) performative approach to analysis. In addition, Hollway and Jefferson (2000), Stopford (2002) and Emerson and Frosh (2004) all use approaches that emphasize the centrality of the interviewer's/researcher's subjectivity and the co-construction of narrative.
- See Lapadat (2000) for a discussion of the complexities of transcribing interview text.
- There are many examples of discourse analysis; for this study we drew mainly on Gee's (1999) approach which shares concerns with Potter and Wetherell's (1987) discursive emphasis on different subject positions across different contexts. See also Frosh et al. (2003) for the application of a discursive reading using a psychoanalytic framework.
- This is a sampling strategy used by Emerson and Frosh (2004).
- Gee (1991) describes his 'poetic' approach in detail. Emerson and Frosh (2004) recently applied Gee's linguistic method to narrative data in a study of young sexual offenders.
- See recent examples of the application of such interpretive strategies by Frosh and Emerson (2005), Gough (2004) and Hollway and Jefferson (2005).

In the next section we present discursive and psychoanalytic readings of one particular case, 'Tom', based on a 'core narrative' from his interview. Because of the focus of the chapter, we emphasize here the interpretive account rather than the linguistic analysis, even though this leaves exposed the difficulties involved in substantiating analytic claims.

Case study: Tom¹

Tom is a 40-year-old married man who is employed as a teacher. He is white, British and has one younger half-brother, Gareth, from whom he is estranged. Tom described their relationship as close when they were children, sharing common interests and fantasizing about living together when they grew up. However, throughout the interview Tom was keen to emphasize the differences between him and his brother. According to Tom, Gareth was rebellious as a child and was therefore sent away to boarding school during which time the brothers grew apart. As teenagers sharing a bedroom they would frequently fight, sometimes physically. The brothers currently have no contact and only hear about each other's lives through their mother. This has been the case for a number of years although, recently, the enmity between them increased due to a family conflict when Tom and Gareth took different sides and Gareth threatened to never speak to Tom again. Tom describes his brother as a 'big man' with a 'big appetite'. In comparison Tom describes himself as 'woolly' and 'intellectual' contrasting his occupation as a teacher with his brother's work in the defence force.

The following extract was selected as a core narrative for two main reasons. First, Tom's narrative is particularly hesitant with frequent narrative cues (such as laughter and false starts) that point to both meaning making within the interview and emotionality. Second, the interviewer's subjectivity and the interview context are both explicitly referred to and therefore serve as rich indicators for psychoanalytic interpretation.

The narrative begins with the interviewer questioning Tom's thoughts about the possibility of his estranged relationship with his brother changing.

Core narrative

- 1 **LSY:** Do you think, um, anything will change as far as you and your brother's
- 2 relationship and what, what would bring about that change? Do you want it
- 3 to change?
- 4 **Tom:** Yeah. I think, you know, I always thought, okay, it would be nice if we
- 5 could be friendly. I need to, I need to be communicating more but, um, you
- 6 know, there's a little bit of embarrassment involved now.
- 7 **LSY:** Mm (pause). What, what's the embarrassment from?
- 8 **Tom:** You know, like it's from things that have happened that, you know, that,
- 9 you know, that (pause) I suppose, embarrassment about the way the family,
- 10 you know, dealt with things. And the way (pause) how I, I dealt with things,
- 11 you know. And so the fact that, that, um, probably you know, you know, I'm a
- 12 man, he's a man and we don't, you know. You're not meant to sort of be
- 13 really, um, open emotionally because, you know, I think he'd find that
- 14 quite, uh, different to cope with, you know. He's quite sporting, you know, so
- 15 plays rugby and, you know, sort of thing. Well you're from South Africa, so
- 16 you understand [**LSY:** Yes, yes] how that sort of, macho sort of thing,
- 17 happens. Isn't that? You would, you know, sort of shrug it off and get on with
- 18 it sort of thing.
- 19 **LSY:** Does he find it difficult to talk about emotional things?
- 20 **Tom:** Yeah and I, and I would with him.
- 21 **LSY:** Mm. Do you find it difficult talking about emotional things with other
- 22 men? Or is it more him than other men?
- 23 **Tom:** No, no. I don't. No, not really. I'm always conscious that, always feel
- 24 that maybe I'm over analysing things too much and a bit more emotional than
- 25 other people. But um (pause)
- 26 **LSY:** And does that make you feel self conscious or (pause)?

- 27 **Tom:** Sometimes. I suppose now I could, yeah,
I'm gonna feel self conscious
28 now talking to you. So maybe it's not just men.
Maybe it's everybody.
29 **LSY:** [laugh] So what do you mean? That you are
going to feel self conscious
30 after the interview looking back or sometimes
you feel self conscious now
31 talking to me?
32 **Tom:** Oh yeah, obviously there's a little bit ... I
don't know if it shows, that,
33 you know, obviously sort of the contorted family
life that I've had. And, you
34 know, maybe there's a sort of self recrimination
about, in terms of, you know,
35 maybe I, I'm the one that, you know, accusing
people of being things. Maybe
36 it's it really isn't, you know. What I, by the way
that I act. And also, you know,
37 yes I'm also thinking how would I feel afterwards
(laugh).
38 **LSY:** Yeah. So what you are sort of saying is a
change in your relationship
39 with your brother will involve having to talk
about things that have happened
40 and that that would be quite difficult for both of
you, being sort of, the fact
41 that you are men that also makes that somehow
more difficult.
42 **Tom:** Mm. Well I imagine if it was just a friend
that I'd fallen out with then I
43 would find that a lot easier than talking to my
brother [**LSY:** Okay] about it
44 so maybe it's just 'cos (pause) just my brother.
This is, you know, I think he is
45 suspicious of like those that, you know, uh sort
of emotional men and
46 sensitivity to things.

Discursive reading of Tom's core narrative

In the above extract, Tom constructs his brother as a 'macho male', drawing on notions of hegemonic masculinity such as physical prowess ('sporting' l. 14) and a lack of emotionality ('shrug it off and get on with it sort of thing' ll. 17–18). In contrast, Tom aligns himself with the intellectual and emotional world. First, Tom describes wanting a better relationship with his brother and clearly identifies talking as a means to repair this relationship. Prioritizing relationships and striving for better communication within relationships are activities associated

with the 'new man'. Second, Tom claims that he is able to 'do' emotional talk with other men, such as his friends, reinforcing his 'new man' identity.

Nevertheless, throughout the core narrative Tom's identity position shifts and inconsistencies arise around whether or not he is comfortable doing emotional talk as a 'new man'. Initially, Tom acknowledges his lack of communicativeness and his feeling of embarrassment linked to expectations around 'real men' not being emotional (ll. 8–12), but then he disowns this macho way of 'doing man' suggesting that it is his brother who would find an emotional conversation difficult to cope with (ll. 13–14). Further on in the narrative Tom states that he too would find it hard doing emotional talk with his brother (l. 20), although later this difficulty is again associated with his brother rather than himself as Tom suggests that talking to a friend would be easier (ll. 42–43). Thus, on the one hand, as a 'new man' he constructs himself as comfortable with 'emotional talk' but on the other hand in his fraternal relationship there are indicators that holding onto this 'new man' position is difficult. How does Tom manage these contradictions in his narrative?

We argue that Tom constructs a coherent sense of self as a 'new man' by suggesting that it is not because he is 'macho' that he feels uncomfortable doing emotional talk with his brother but rather because he is 'over analysing' and 'more emotional' than other people and so feels self conscious. From this perspective, it is precisely because Tom is so identified with a 'new man' way of being that doing emotional talk is awkward. Constructing the narrative in this way enables Tom to hold onto a coherent self construction as a 'new man' while at the same time acknowledging his role in a fraternal relationship between 'real men' in which emotional talk is avoided. Tom's narrative is thus an account of the jostling of masculinities: he asserts his 'new man' identity as a way of positioning himself as 'liberated' in the interview context but at the same time acknowledges the vulnerability and ultimately the subjugation of this 'new man' identity in favour

of being a 'real man' in the fraternal relationship. In Tom's case, the power of the masculine ideal, as unemotional and 'macho', polices the available subject positions in his fraternal relationship, seemingly diminishing the possibility of renewing the brother bond.

Psychoanalytic reading of Tom's core narrative

As noted earlier, one weakness of much narrative data in the context of psychoanalysis is the relative thinness of biographical information. In Tom's case, however, the interview generated a considerable amount of biographical material that can be brought to bear on developing a plausible psychoanalytic formulation of his investment in the presentation of his difference from his brother. We claim that applying psychoanalytic interpretation to these biographical details 'thickens' our understanding of Tom's narrative and that it is possible to root this sufficiently strongly in the text to offset the danger of a completely top-down, theoretically driven account in which what is found is already known from the theory itself. Psychoanalytic thinking is being used here as a provocation to explore the possible sources of investment in the discursive positions described.

The psychoanalytic formulation runs as follows. Tom's mother suffered two major losses immediately before and after he was born. Her first child (a daughter) died before Tom was born and her husband (Tom's father) died when Tom was eight months old. These losses in quick succession are likely to have left Tom's mother emotionally fragile. She remarried shortly after her first husband's death; hence the fact that Gareth is Tom's half-brother. However, Gareth's father left their mother when they were young and she remarried another three times. Her inability to have a lasting relationship as well as her inability to be alone point to possible issues of attachment and loss not uncommon in complicated bereavement. It is possible that these relationship difficulties also played themselves out in Tom's early relationship with his mother. In these circumstances of

loss, how might the parent-child and sibling relationships have interacted to construct a particular fraternal bond for Tom and Gareth?

For Mitchell (2000), the sibling uniquely represents what is both the same as and different from ourselves. The sameness allows for identification with siblings: the sibling is loved as oneself, as one has been loved and wants to be loved. However, the difference between ourselves and another means an inevitable abandonment of this identification: the sibling is also 'another baby (that) replaces the baby one was until this moment' (Mitchell, 2000: 20). It is precisely the sameness (another baby) that emphasizes the displacement, a loss of position or place. The plaintive cry is, 'where do I stand now that my place has gone?' This displacement is experienced as annihilating, as a danger of non-existence. What Mitchell terms 'the law of the mother' is what emphasizes difference over sameness. The law of the mother refers to the mother's injunction that as children siblings are the same, they cannot have babies like adults can; but as siblings they are also different and there is space for one, two, three or more. One way of negotiating the resultant hatred of sameness is through emphasizing difference – 'I hate you, you are not me' (Mitchell, 2003: 27).

Applying Mitchell's theory, one could posit that Tom's experience of displacement at the arrival of his brother meant that as a way of protecting his place, he constructed himself as different from his brother. This may have been a particularly emotive investment for Tom given the emotional climate of loss, which may have made his fear of losing his mother especially pressing. As the brothers grew older, the need to be different from one another may have been further exacerbated by their mother's romantic relationships and the way the brothers had to compete with each other for their mother's attention (something Tom refers to). Tom's investment in a 'new man' discourse and his construction of his brother as quite the opposite may be interpreted as a means to protect them both from competitiveness as well as to maintain a place of his own in the family.

But why then is Tom so ambivalent about this position? Following Mitchell (2003), one could posit that Gareth's birth prompted Tom to regress and return to his mother to seek the symbiotic relationship he always yearned for in infancy. In so doing he confronted an oedipal scenario in which he found not his father, but *another man* in his place, who was continually replaced by one man after another. In the interview, Tom expresses resentment of his mother's multiple marriages, claiming that as a child he never felt that he got much attention from her as she was always preoccupied with her marital relationships. Tom's jealousy of the other men in his mother's life and his wish to have her attention as they did suggests that he may have envied the traditionally masculine positions they represented. However, despite its allure he could also never completely identify with the hegemonic subject position represented by these father-figures. To do so would mean that like his father he is another man and like his brother he is another baby, both likely to be replaced. Hence Tom's investment in difference – he is a different man and another baby – thereby securing his position.

Earlier, we warned against too cavalier uses of psychoanalytic theory offered as a pre-existing grid to force a certain kind of sense into recalcitrant or fragmentary material. This is clearly a risk in the reading we have just given, dependent as it is on a particular theoretical framing of the sibling relationship. For this reason, we seek also a stronger textual grounding for our claims; for the purposes of this account, this is focused particularly on the working out of the research relationship. Our suggestion here is that Tom constructs a special place for himself within the research relationship by populating the narrative space with men against whom he can assert his difference. First, Tom correctly identifies the interviewer as South African and assumes from this that she is familiar with the 'macho male', the sort of man that his brother is. Evoking the interviewer's background means that Tom is positioned as different from not only his brother but from other men with whom the

interviewer has interacted in her past. Tom also frequently asserted his difference from the other participants in the study, displaying great interest in how his story compared to those of other men that had been interviewed and asking twice whether he was 'normal' in the way he had spoken about his brother. Tom's narrative also asserts his difference as a participant in that he imagines other brothers to be '*more matey*'.

One of the interviewer's field notes offers an interesting sidelight on how Tom's sense of being different was felt in the research interchange. LSY wrote, '*Many of the questions were constructed with a positive sibling relationship in mind and were not appropriate for this interview where a negative relationship was being described*'. With hindsight, this observation is strange as there are other interviews that upon analysis we considered to be more difficult and unusual case studies than Tom's. Yet the notes suggest that Tom's interview required special handling, perhaps revealing that his supposed difference and uniqueness, so important to his narrative, were played out in, or projected into, the research relationship. Tom as a participant creates a unique place for himself in the research mirroring his employment of difference in his fraternal relationships as a means of avoiding or denying displacement.

There are other ways in which the interview interaction mirrors the dilemma that Tom may have faced in his childhood. In the beginning of the core narrative Tom is the 'new man' who desires a closer relationship with his brother through a cathartic conversation. Significantly, this narrative echoes the reasons Tom gave for volunteering to be interviewed for this study: he wanted to have the opportunity to express his feelings and thoughts to somebody neutral in the hope that associations and epiphanies might follow. However, as the conversation continues so Tom's 'new man' performance seems to crumble. His narrative becomes more fragmentary, punctuated with long pauses, false starts and with more frequent interruptions by the interviewer. Tom begins to describe difficulties with doing emotional talk as a

man, and as he does so he also performs his difficulties with talk in the interview.

Perhaps what happens here is that having identified the interviewer as South African, and therefore familiar with the 'macho male', Tom's expectations of the interview context shift from being one in which 'new men' are valued. Instead, the context is an interview with a female whose national discourse is one of hegemonic masculinity and yet who is requesting him to open up the conversation in an emotional way. It is almost as if Tom begins to experience the interview and interviewer as emasculating. The field notes draw attention to the interviewer's impressions of a certain irritation or hostility from Tom: *'As an interviewer I felt criticized for the type of questions I asked'*. This research interaction could be interpreted as a mirroring of Tom's relational experiences. The interview felt populated not just by Tom's brother Gareth, but also by South African men and previous research participants, all of whom Tom seemed to compete with by asserting himself as different. However, he also positioned the interviewer as aligned with these other men, by assuming that she was familiar with 'macho males'. Significantly, Tom expressed disappointment at the end of the interview, claiming that it had not met up to his expectations of catharsis. Like his mother in the oedipal relationship, the interviewer fails Tom by emasculating him and associating herself with hegemonic masculinity. Importantly though, she also treats Tom as unique and different enabling him to hold onto his place by asserting his difference from other men, by becoming a special case.

CONCLUSIONS

In the beginning of this chapter we discussed the possibility of 'binocular' accounts in research, which are both grounded in data and theoretically driven, accounts which are cognisant of systemic processes as well as individual perspectives. The above case study demonstrates both the rewards and challenges

of such 'binocularity'. Applying psychoanalytic ideas to Tom's narrative 'thickens' the discursive reading by taking account of his life context and biography and exploring how his unique life trajectory 'hooks into' particular social discourses. Doing so points to the interweaving of the social and psychological in 'doing brother', conceptualizing men as taking up socially available discourses in ways that resonate with the deeply personal. Taking account of biographical material moves the interpretive work forward by making sense, however tentatively, of the ambiguities and contradictions highlighted in the discursive reading. However, this piece of research is not analogous with 'psychoanalysing' Tom. Rather, it is the research relationship and the narrative produced within this research relationship that is under scrutiny. Therefore, throughout our analysis we attempt to anchor psychoanalytic ideas in the texture of the research relationship and a close reading of the text, processes that require commitment to reflexivity and systematic narrative analysis respectively.

There are limits to accessing relational dynamics and unconscious processes in a research context, however fine-grained the analysis. While the interview can elicit actual events in a participant's past, the research context does not afford the luxury of evoking their unconscious correlates over an extended period of time (as in therapeutic situations). Instead, we have to look for patterns in participants' linguistic repertoires and in their way of relating that resonate with our hypotheses. The use of field notes in analysing the above case study enabled 'countertransference' feelings to enrich the analytic interpretation by demanding coherence between the analytic account and the experience of the interview that produced the text. Particular aspects of the researcher's experience of the interview moved the analysis forward while others closed it down. Nevertheless, these field notes are prone to all the linguistic manoeuvres of a self-analysis, and thinking about ways in which this material could be more systematically recorded and sensitively utilized is an important task

for psychoanalytic approaches to qualitative research.

In summary, using psychoanalysis in qualitative studies involves conceptualizing individuals as embedded in social and cultural contexts with socially acceptable and powerful ways of being, but also as individually orientated to these contexts, uniquely invested in discourses in different ways influenced by conscious and unconscious wishes. Such an approach requires thinking about narratives as dynamic processes mediated by, but not reducible to, personal biographies, relational events, linguistic repertoires and subjective experiences.

NOTES

1 Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the anonymity of the participant.

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Memory Work

Niamh Stephenson and Susan Kippax

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about memory work, a research method that involves the collective analysis of experience. Firstly, we introduce the method by tracing its emergence as part of a distinct Marxist feminist political project, and we indicate the synergies between memory work and social psychological interest in the politics of memory. We distinguish between approaches which cast biography as linear and causal of present day experiences and subjectivities and the ways in which memory workers treat past experiences as contingent and malleable. Secondly, drawing on examples from previous research, we give an account of what the method might actually entail. This account is not intended to be prescriptive, but is offered as a point of departure for researchers who are considering undertaking collective analysis of experience. Thirdly, we consider the ways in which memory work is currently being put to use to address psychological questions. Here, we draw on research in the fields of sexuality and gender, and embodiment and subjectivity. In the

fourth section of the chapter, we examine points of tension and connection between the approaches to experience entailed in memory work, narrative analysis and psychoanalysis. We then consider some of the distinct ethical challenges entailed in memory work. Finally, we situate memory work in relation to debates over the politics of researching experience – debates in psychology, the social sciences, cultural studies and the humanities. Memory work, we suggest, is of particular interest to psychologists because it offers a way to research experience without positing experience as foundational to subjectivity or identity. Moreover, this approach invites psychologists to step outside of the discipline's tendency towards 'methodolatry' (Chamberlain, 1999).

In opposition to notions of experience as fundamentally unique, individual and arising from people's subjective interiority, memory workers understand experience as collectively produced (Haug, 1987). Working as a collective facilitates researching both the shared aspects of experience and the social processes through which these

commonalities are produced. Memory work typically entails a group of people with a shared interest in interrogating a particular topic – such as female sexualization (Haug, 1987, 1992), or the gendered construction of emotions (Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault and Benton, 1992) – meeting regularly over a period of months or years. The group members take on the roles of both research participants and researchers: they put forward their own experiences as data (in the form of written memories) and they undertake a collective analysis of these experiences. They interrogate the social production of their experiences trying to identify points where experience is amenable to being re-interpreted, reworked and lived differently. Whilst Haug and others do not explicitly frame memory work in discursive terms, their approach is strongly compatible with the contemporary psychological interest in the discursive construction of experience (Harden and Willig, 1998). In undertaking memory work, Haug and others found that what they had previously thought to be the natural sequences of their lives, started to appear as historically constituted avenues for interpreting and managing the material and social realities in which they were immersed. They began to see themselves as ‘living historically’, as women of their time and women able to act on and intervene in their time.

This emphasis on altering the present through the research process (as opposed to change being an outcome of research) is an important feature of memory work. At times psychologists turn to qualitative methods in order to describe experience. Phenomenology, for instance, hinges on rich accounts of experience (e.g. Watson and Welch-Ross, 2000). But increasingly, this turn is politically inspired: the aim is to represent the experiences of people who have been neglected or misrepresented in psychological research (e.g. Lather and Smithies, 1997). Alternately (or additionally, these trajectories may not be distinct), researchers adopt qualitative methods to better understand the *processes* through which experience is produced (e.g. Harré and Secord, 1973).

This interest – not in experience itself but in its production – is illustrated by the recent turn to discourse on the part of psychologists such as Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Harré and Gillett (1994). Researchers also adopt qualitative methods as tools to facilitate intervening in the production of psychological phenomena as part of the research process (consider participatory action research, for example; e.g. Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2002). Memory work is among the qualitative methods specifically devised, not only to describe and explain, but to intervene in the social production of experience as it is being employed.

This transformative aspect of memory work is illustrated by Pease’s (2000) formation of a men’s memory-work group with the aim of exploring the practices and politics of the profeminist men’s movement. Pease describes the collective analysis of the despair, violence and fear which emerged in men’s memories of ‘discontent with fathers’. It was possible to understand these memories as produced through a dominant narrative of the damage done to sons by fathers’ inadequacies: ‘the father wound’. This narrative has been taken up and proliferated by many in the men’s movement who argue that reworking masculinities must entail forgiveness, reconciliation and identification with fathers (e.g. Biddulph, 1994; Bly, 1990). Analysis of the memories revealed moments when men actively engaged with this hegemonic ‘father-wound’ narrative. Importantly, the analysis did not stop there, it opened up the possibility of intervening in the reproduction of patriarchal power relations through a beneficial *dis*-identification with fathers. That is, the group did not simply identify a dominant discourse at work in their experiences but, drawing on the memories, they went on to identify points of intervention in this questionable version of masculinity.

Before giving an account of what the method actually entails, we want to introduce the particular approach to experience which was developed by feminist researchers in their efforts to contribute to the development of German Kritische Psychologie.

LOCATING MEMORY WORK

Kritische Psychologie and Marxist feminism

The German Marxist feminists who originally developed memory work – Andresen, Bünz-Elfferding, Haug, Hauser, Lang, Laudan, Lüdenabbbm, Neur, Nemitz, Neihoff, Prinz, Rätzel, Scheu and Thomas – came together in the 1980s to research female sexualization (Haug, 1987). They were well versed in contemporary theories of sexualization. However, they were aware of the risk of using theory to explain experience: aspects of experience which do not fit with particular theories, as well as the complexity and contradictions within the experience, are easily overlooked. So they took experience itself as a point of departure: as with grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), they started to theorize from experience (as opposed to subjecting experience to theory). Moreover, they decided to conduct research by theorizing their *own* subjective experience. Making themselves the objects of research – the known as well as the knowers – was seen as a good way to destabilize entrenched power relations between researchers and researched and to work with the productive tension which arises from being positioned as both subjects and objects of research (Willig, 2000). The particular approach to experience entailed in memory work developed out of Haug and others' experience of feminist-consciousness raising groups, and from their engagement with *Kritische Psychologie* (Holzkamp, 1992) – an approach to psychological questions which works with, critiques and extends Marxist thought (Costall and Dreier, in press; Osterkamp, 1999; Tolman, 1994).

Although subjectivity and objectivity are commonly understood as polar opposites, this dualism is questionable (Deutscher, 1983; Tolman, 1994). From a Marxist perspective, subjective experience is always produced through the social conditions of existence. For instance, Pease (2000) describes how men's subjective experiences of their fathers

are produced through patriarchal social conditions. At the same time, objective social structures do not transcend subjectivity; they are reproduced and reworked *in* subjective existence. Consider Pease's (2000) account of how patriarchy is reproduced in men's subjective relationships with their fathers. The relationship between objective social structures and subjective experience is not a simple deterministic one because the objective conditions of our existence are actively *appropriated* (Crawford et al., 1992; Haug, 1987). That is, experience is produced 'not only within ... the pre-given forms into which individuals work themselves, but also in the *process* whereby they perceive any given situation, approve or validate it, assess its goals as proper or worthy, repugnant or reprehensible' (Haug, 1987: 41). Appropriation occurs in 'a field of conflict between dominant cultural values and oppositional attempts to wrest cultural meaning and pleasure from life' (Haug, 1987: 41). For example, the experiences Pease discusses do not simply reproduce patriarchal gender relations: as the memory workers actively appropriate their experiences of 'discontent with fathers', they also challenge and refigure patriarchy by identifying the importance of dis-identification.

Haug and others decided that they needed to devise a method which could allow them to both study and rework the mechanisms through which experience is appropriated. And they found their inspiration, not in debates about research methodology, but in feminist politics. Memory work is part of a much broader move to recognize the personal as political. The women involved in the original group had participated in the feminist consciousness-raising movement. They understood collectively sharing experience to be an effective means of gaining a better understanding of the oppressive social conditions which produce common experiences. Moreover, consciousness-raising is not simply an exercise in 'blaming the oppressors'. To the extent that it contributes to understanding women's complicity in appropriating and reproducing the mechanisms

of patriarchal oppression, it can result in devising strategies to challenge the existing social order. Memory work builds on these aspects of consciousness-raising.

Because the method is inclusive of all those involved in the research, memory work is an apt tool for researchers interested in challenging the boundaries between those typically cast as sources of data and those officially in the business of knowledge production. Hence, it offers possibilities for forging productive research partnerships and for democratizing debates about the place of subjectivity in processes of socio-political change.

The politics of collective memory

Clearly, memory work can be understood as one element of the rise of social and social constructionist approaches to memory in psychology (e.g. Edwards and Middleton, 1988; Neisser, 1982) and these connections have been interrogated elsewhere (Crawford et al., 1992). In this chapter, one of our concerns is to examine memory work's approach to *experience* and its relevance for contemporary debates about the politics of experience (Middleton and Brown, 2005). We also wish to draw attention to signal the political importance of psychological work on collective remembering. Halbwachs (1925/1992, 1950/1980) argued that people need personal experiences and private recollections to be couched within a collective, public chronicle: collective memory is literally the source of individual memories. What is chronicled, or memorialized, shapes subjective experience. Drawing on Halbwachs, Apfelbaum (2000, 2001) explores how the collective memory of the Holocaust has shaped the (im)possibilities of communicating with others. Historical and other public accounts provide the legitimizing foundation for individuals to make sense of their personal experiences and therefore to construct their identities. If memories of events cannot be shared because they are meaningless to others (and to self) they risk being cast as hallucinations, or dismissed as irrelevant to the present socio-political

context. However, to the extent that memory work insists on the possibility that 'meaningless' elements of experience play a role in producing socio-political change (or stasis), it can be a useful tool for contributing to efforts to intervene in the present.

Beyond biography

As Haug and others began to work together, they realized that many of the everyday ideas and practices they used to make sense of experience were getting in the way of their collective analysis. Foremost amongst these is the idea that our lives are lived as linear biographies:

To view childhood and adolescence simply as causal phases of today's person is to assume that actions follow one another logically, that adult human beings are more or less contained within children ... Diversity is compressed and presented as unified evidence that we have 'always' been hindered in our development by this or that person, this or that circumstance.

Haug (1987: 46–7)

That is, they rejected the commonsense notion that events in a person's past *cause* her to be the person she is today. In particular they were aware of the risk of nailing people down to their current interpretations of past experience, fixing identities and the meaning of experience in the process. They wanted to leave space for re-membering and re-interpreting their experiences. When biographical and autobiographical accounts offer linear, causal explanations of individuals as products of our past experiences, they tend to shore up a notion of the subject as coherent and unitary (Phillips, 1999). Such accounts need to be treated with suspicion as their very coherence is afforded by the fact that they 'fit' with normative understandings of life and occlude the social production of experience. For Haug and others, this meant developing ways of theorizing experience which open possibilities for *rethinking* who we are now, for asking how people appropriate the social realm and what is excluded in the process, and for initiating change by

devising different modes of appropriation. To this end, they developed a set of techniques which are described and illustrated in the following section.

ILLUSTRATING THE METHOD

Memory work was never intended to be a fixed unchanging set of practices. In their original exploration of female sexualization, Haug and others did more than write and analyse memories – for example, they undertook visual analyses of a range of images of women's bodies, and they rewrote mythical

stories, translating them into the present as a means of foregrounding and questioning the social and historical constraints on women's lives. However, to give a sense of what might be involved in memory work, a base from which adaptations continue to develop, we will use a set of guidelines drawn up by Crawford and others (Crawford et al., 1992) in their development of memory work to research gender and emotion (see Box 8.1). Groups form out of a common interest in researching a topic, and meet regularly over a period of weeks, months or years, analysing a series of written memories.

BOX 8.1 A Point of Departure: Guidelines for Groups Considering Memory Work

These guidelines have been adapted from Crawford et al. (1992). We would recommend consulting the work of the Haug collective (1987), particularly for researchers who are interested in working with the plasticity of these tools, and Gillies et al.'s (2005) research for those interested in developing new tools.

A. Writing memories

- 1 Write a memory
- 2 of a particular episode, action or event
- 3 in the third person
- 4 in as much detail as is possible, including even 'inconsequential' or trivial detail (it may be helpful to think of a key image, sound, taste, smell, touch)
- 5 but without importing interpretation, explanation or biography.

B. Analysing memories in group discussion

- 1 Each person expresses opinions and ideas about each memory in turn, and
- 2 Looks for similarities and differences between the memories, and looks for links between the memories whose relation to each other is not immediately apparent. Each person should question particularly those aspects of the events which are not readily understandable, but she or he should (try) not to resort to autobiography or biography.
- 3 Each person identifies clichés, generalizations, contradictions, cultural imperatives, metaphors ... and
- 4 Discusses theories, popular conceptions, sayings and images about the topic.
- 5 Finally, each person examines what is not written in the memories (but what might be expected to be), and
- 6 Rewrites the memories.

C. Analysis of memories and transcripts of group discussion together

- 1 The group identifies processes of subjectification (or social construction, or discursive production – depending on the theoretical approach being developed) in the accounts and group discussion and the mechanisms through which subjects actively appropriate these processes.
- 2 The group identifies points for intervening in their experiences of subjectification.

Writing memories

Before writing memories, groups pick a 'cue' for remembering (for example, Pease's 'discontent with fathers' discussed above). They then write about a specific event (not a general account), trying to avoid autobiographical explanations (see Box 8.1, section A). Choosing a specific cue allows the group to identify the particular ways in which appropriation works, the points at which alternate meanings and practices are generated or overlooked. It is important not to go for the jugular in picking cues, to try to avoid really obvious cues which will evoke stories that people are likely to have over-rehearsed (Haug suggests that 'losing one's virginity' is an example of this) or already coded as somehow foundational to one's identity.

Writing in the third person is a curious technique. It is an invitation to co-researchers to observe aspects of themselves. It can release people from their tendencies towards self-justification performing coherent selves, facilitating the emergence of details which appear incoherent or meaningless from normative perspectives. So writing as 'she' or 'he' instead of 'I' enables co-researchers to entertain the possibility that their experiences could be understood and/or lived differently. This technique is of interest for researchers who, following structuralist and post-structuralist critiques of self-identity and foundationalist approaches to subjectivity, are interested in researching experience without assuming unitary coherence on the part of individuals (Althusser, 1971; Scott, 1993). By writing in the third person, memory workers occupy at least two distinct positions – the 'she' of the written memory and the 'I' which re-emerges in the group discussion (Koutroulis, 2001; Stephenson, Kippax and Crawford, 1996). This separation works to create a space to interrogate what otherwise might be treated as the sacred domain of the unitary individual. The rationale for avoiding self-explanation and for concentrating on giving the fullest description possible, including apparently inconsequential details, is similar. The idea is to try to avoid producing a fully

justified account which resists interpretation and reinterpretation, and to include as many details as possible so that the processes of appropriation are amenable to analysis. Typically, groups decide on a cue, then take time to think and write about them, returning with the written memories.

Following these guidelines, memory workers produce very rich data, quite different from the kinds of accounts people give in interviews or focus groups. This difference is illustrated by a study of the discursive construction of young adults' experiences of contraception, a study which employed both memory work and focus groups methodologies (Harden and Willig, 1998). In the focus group discussions people drew on a discourse of health promotion, whereas the memory workers' written accounts were framed by discourses of sex and sexuality. Importantly, whilst analysis of the focus group discussions alone might suggest that notions of health promotion are very present in people's everyday ideas about sexuality, seen from the perspective of people's early concrete experiences of sex – the memory work data – the reach of this discourse is questionable. This divergence signals the importance for research of understanding potential gaps between normative meanings and lived experience.

To give a better sense of the kind of data which memory workers write, here we include two memories. Andrew and Luke (pseudonyms) were two of seven HIV-positive gay men living in Sydney who came together as a memory-work group in order to interrogate their experiences of HIV in the wake of treatment successes (below we discuss the adaptations of memory work entailed in this project). Before 1996 being diagnosed HIV-positive was like being given a death sentence. Since then, there have been real advances in treatment. The promise of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) is that HIV can be lived as a chronic illness. However, for those who can access ART, the treatment regimen can be complicated and requires major life changes; side-effects can range from the embarrassing to the life-threatening (meaning

that people have to change regimens or stop treatments altogether); the efficacy of the drugs is unpredictable (they may not work for an individual, or they may stop working after a period of time); and ultimately, the long-term success of ART is unknown. The men in this memory-work group began by investigating their experiences of the difficulties of fitting treatments into their daily lives and ‘taking charge’ was suggested as a cue. A week later, the accounts people brought to the group were about: the work they undertook to fit treatments into their daily lives; despair over drug failure; and lack of control over treatment decisions. Andrew and Luke returned with these written memories:

‘Taking charge’

Andrew

Andrew had had enough. Feeling this sick wasn’t what he had ever imagined for himself just four months on from starting Combination Therapy Treatment. His doctor ... generally wasn’t giving him much help or information at all. He felt very alone.

So it was on the third morning of being off work that Andrew decided to stop his Combination Therapy to at least give his liver a bit of a break. He was standing in the kitchen looking at the three containers of those innocuous looking pills, cursing them under his breath. He actually didn’t need to be silent as he was alone in the house but he felt that if he started talking out loud he would give the pills more attention than they deserved. And he had already given them too much attention. If only he hadn’t started on Combination Therapy he wouldn’t be feeling this sick. The house started to feel like a prison.

Andrew decided there and then that he needed to make some decisions about getting some alternative treatment. Why had he ever given up on his belief in Alternative and Complementary Therapies and just given in to his doctor and agreed to go on Combination Therapy? Just because it was ‘cheaper’ and easier? But there was no point in arguing about all of that, he just wanted to start feeling better and above all feeling in control.

So he went to the phone and quickly dialled the number of the herbalist that he knew would be able to help. It was only when he had got an appointment with him that he felt like he had started taking charge of his life again, even if it was only a small start. There was a long way to go, but he was finally reconnecting with his belief that he should not just rely on his doctor or the Combination Therapy

Treatments to keep him well. It was up to him, Andrew, to look after himself.

Luke

‘Taking charge,’ he thought, a memory about taking charge. Possibilities started coming to him, one after another: the one when he’d started organizing all the doses in the morning so he’d know he’d taken them; the one when he’d enlisted the help of friends to remind him to take those previously organised doses; the time when he’d begun marking both in his diary, and on the calendar the tablets for side-effects he had to take only once a week – and more – how he’d figured out if he took his meds [sic] with the World Health Organization rehydration mixture¹, the difficult one went down easier; how if he always ate the yoghurt the naturopath recommended with his morning dose ... well – the ways, and times, he’d taken charge seem to go on and on – but he couldn’t pick one, and then when he did pick one – and then another – he couldn’t seem to write it. ‘What the Hell’s this,’ he thought – ‘I can write – this is not complicated.’ Then he realized in spite of all the ways and means he’d taken and devised to take charge, he didn’t feel in charge, he just felt trapped; and he could only write it like this.

Analysing memories

The memories are presented in the group, and the discussion and analysis is audio-taped and transcribed to facilitate further analysis. Rather than treat the written memories as accurate descriptions of past events, they are cast as traces of the social or discursive production of subjectivity. The accounts are treated as moments of experience which can be questioned (see Box 8.1, section B). Frequently, the group discussion proceeds through close textual analyses of individual memories, followed by comparative analyses considering similarities and differences between the accounts (Gillies et al., 2004). The discussion involves questioning what might be taken for granted about the accounts, and avoiding reading them as part of the authors’ individual biographies. This means identifying and interrupting everyday tendencies to give psychological explanations which draw on an understanding (or assumption) about the actor’s interior intentions, their personality characteristics or

unconscious motives and desires. Instead, memory workers ask about the social processes which might contribute to the particular experiences being discussed – such as the lived experience of HIV as entrapment (evoked in the description of Andrew's house as a prison and Luke's feeling of being trapped). In this way, commonsense notions of one's life-story as a linear, relatively coherent sequence of events are avoided.

Discussing personal experience in the group is a way of identifying and resisting the orthodoxies and self-censure in which co-researchers engage. But it is not always easy to do. Haug argues that memory-work groups need to avoid both moralizing reactions to the accounts offered in the group and empathizing with each other. Both responses inhibit the ability to *question* the experiences being analysed. In practice, group dynamics can cut across this interrogation of experience. Boucher (1997: 157) describes the strategies one memory-work group devised to 'keep itself honest', for example, consistently questioning whether the ebb and flow of the group discussion could be a way of avoiding difficult discussions. Yet hearing one's memory being discussed in the group can prompt authors to realize their 'communicative incompetences' – i.e. the gaps and absences which lead to confusion and misreading, the turns of phrase which seem to invite particular evaluations. Focusing on the value-laden language, the details of and the gaps in the memories, facilitates analysis of the processes of appropriation.

The group discussion can lead co-researchers to rewrite the memories as a way of incorporating new insights and rewriting means that misreadings can be clarified. However re-writing memories can present difficulties (e.g. Davies et al., 1997) and many of the researchers discussed in this chapter struggle with it, or do not use it. These difficulties do not stem from problems of remembering, but from the challenges of working as a collective (Stephenson, 2003). Working with the original accounts can be a way – not to affirm individuals' experience (see below) – but to try to keep differences

in play as experiences are analysed. (Some of the techniques of memory work have also been taken up and adapted in interesting ways with individuals rather than collectives; e.g. Thomson and Holland, 2005.)

The group analysis moves between the details of the written accounts to the interrogation of broader social norms, institutions, structures or discourses – depending on the theoretical frameworks being used and interrogated in the research – which may elucidate the memories, or may constrain understanding of them (see Box 8.1, sections B and C). For example, Andrew and Luke offer two different accounts of the emotional difficulties and frustrations people experience in 'taking charge' of medical regimens. These were discussed in the light of broader debates in Sydney over the medicalization of HIV identity and shifts in HIV community and identity in the late 1990s. One position in this debate foregrounded how treatments medicalize, individualize and isolate people from community. The fundamentally solitary nature of ART regimens is evoked in both memories, the action largely takes place in their heads (with the exception of Andrew's move towards the phone and Luke's attempt to enlist his friends' support). This isolation can be contrasted with past activism and lobbying, which provided a focal point for gay and HIV community engagement (Ariss, 1997; Rawstorne et al., 2005). Luke's memory could be seen as a classic example of the difficult experience of being at the receiving end of dehumanizing medical practices. And Andrew's memory can be read as an instance of the oppressive forces of medicalization: in his account his situation is described as the result of 'giving in' to his doctor. Whilst medicine seems to be the source of the problem, Andrew is also blameworthy: *'he had already given [the pills] too much attention. If only he hadn't started on Combination Therapy he wouldn't be feeling this sick; why had he ever given up on his belief in Alternative and Complementary Therapies; it was up to him, Andrew, to look after himself'*. Andrew is described as relating to himself as a potentially autonomous, liberal

subject who, because he is responsible for his own situation, should have the capacity to resist medicalization. This memory of stopping ART invokes a binary opposition between the oppressive force of medicalization and the liberating force of individual autonomy.

Although the problem of medicalization was much discussed in the memory-work group, there were details of people's written memories which complicated the idea that medicine is a force which oppresses HIV positive individuals. In the group and later analysis, Luke's memory was understood as particularly significant because it *troubles* this binary between medicalization and autonomy. Taking treatments can be a paradoxical experience: many people *wanting* to take ART (i.e. those who do not feel forced) are positioned in a discourse of 'patient empowerment'. They are enjoined to appropriate medical advice as rational, autonomous, liberal subjects – that is, to act as if self-mastery is always possible. In contrast to Andrew's account, the tension between striving for control and encountering its elusiveness remains unresolved in Luke's memory. The paradox of this situation is that, unlike the traditional victim of oppressive power whose autonomy is weakened by the force of medicalization (as Andrew describes himself prior to picking up the phone), there is nothing passive about Luke. Rather he actively develops a set of practices to respond to his situation (Rose, 1996). But these practices become the bars of his cage, bars *of his own making*. There can be no clear separation between Luke's experience of trying to take control and his investment in forms of self-regulation which constrain him. This analysis of the memories illustrates how, in memory work, the point of the analysis is not simply to identify the imprint of a hegemonic discourse (such as 'medicalization') on people's experience. The aim is to understand how people actively appropriate these discourses and to identify possibilities for reworking or interrupting problematic discourses.

The memory-work group in which Luke and Andrew participated differed from that

formed by Haug and others. It was not initiated by a collective, but by the researchers who recruited people to participate (as one might for focus groups), and who took the responsibility for writing up the research. Writing about qualitative research is not simply a process of 'writing up' but always a means of developing the analysis (Richardson, 1994). Hence, although the men in this group had more control over the direction of the research and were more involved in the analysis than focus group participants would be, this use of memory work is definitely stretching the method. Haug and others anticipated that memory work would be adapted in response, not to the problem of pursuing collective analyses, but to different socio-political contexts and to different research questions (Johnston, 2001). The continuous adaptation and development of the method is evident when we consider the body of memory-work research which has emerged.

RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES

In this section, we offer psychologists an entry point into the range of ways in which memory work has been taken up and some of the psychological questions it has been used to address. We do this by presenting a review of work undertaken on the psychology of gender and sexuality and on epistemological debates concerning embodiment, subjectivity and the subject of psychology, rather than attempting to provide a comprehensive account of memory-work research to date. This means that much is excluded, including a considerable body of work on learning and development (e.g. Connor, Newton, Pennisi and Quarshie, 2004; Davies et al., 2001; Gannon, 2001; Purohit and Walsh, 2003; Schratz, 2000; Widerberg, 1998).

The psychology of sexuality and gender

Since the publication of *Female Sexualization*, memory work has become an important

and useful tool for interrogating questions of gender and sexuality. Much of this work has concentrated on social relations as the site where gender inequalities are constructed and reworked. This research makes a distinct contribution to gender politics by laying bare the concrete challenges of socio-political change. Patriarchy is not simply something which is imposed on people through external structures or institutions – it is a set of practices and meanings through which people are constructed even as they try to resist. This means that participating in socio-political change creates tensions within the self (for men and women), tensions which are both troublesome and productive (e.g. Crawford et al., 1992; Laitinen and Tiiponen, 1990; Pease, 2000).

In Australia, memory work was taken up by a group of researchers who used it to explore the social construction of emotion (Crawford et al., 1992). Their analyses identify how the construction of emotions shores up a notion of men as rational, autonomous beings, and women as simultaneously irrational, unpredictable and responsible for the care of others. Their work challenges any notion that women are passive victims of a patriarchy, and examines how women's emotions are constructed in active struggles both to make sense of their experiences within the constraints of gender inequalities and to test those constraints. For example, the analysis of memories of anger foregrounded how women's anger is frequently misrecognized. Anger was often a response to injustice. However, because it was manifest in tears of frustration or rage, others often responded with patronizing pity, avoiding the injustice.

In the construction of happiness, too, there was evidence of an active struggle – but in this case a pleasant 'happy' struggle rather than an unpleasant one. Happiness is constructed at the intersection of freedom and autonomy, on the one hand, and recognition, which is grounded in security and love, on the other. In the memories of the Australian memory-work group, the children negotiate the interface between adulthood

and childhood. Consider, for example, two memories written by Julie and Liz:

Julie

Julie was about seven. Her dad was a factory manager of a concrete block factory. They lived in a house on the premises. There were stacks of concrete blocks near the house. Julie climbed among them and, by moving some blocks (just possible), was able to fashion a rather grand fort. No one could see her if she so chose.

In their play – in building a 'grand fort' – the memory workers seek mastery over their environment, and their successes, recognized by parents and teachers, are marked by happiness.

Liz

Liz looked forward to the evenings after dinner when she was allowed to stay up for a while. There were often visitors and there would be lots of talk and laughter in the living room in front of the big log fire. They used to play cards at night – usually rummy or five hundred. Liz's uncle used to gamble madly at five hundred and he was always 'going out backwards'. She loved these evenings when everyone was relaxed and happy.

Members of this same collective used memory work to explore women's lived experiences of heterosexuality in order to better understand possibilities for HIV/AIDS prevention (Crawford, Kippax and Walby, 1994; Kippax, Crawford, Waldby and Benton, 1990). This work foregrounded the literal unintelligibility of women's efforts to negotiate sexual encounters framed by dominant discourses of heterosexuality (such as the male sexual drive discourse; Hollway, 1989) and femininity (Irigaray, 1985) and called for the elaboration of woman-centred discourses of sexuality. Similarly, the memories discussed in Harden and Willig's (1998) memory-work groups, which were meeting around the time the 'post-feminist' debates raged in the UK (McRobbie, 2004) evoked the passive positioning of women in sexual and sexualized encounters. Yet, they also discussed accounts of women's pleasure and active involvement in sexuality, identifying 'discursive spaces ... that resist

the positionings of the male sexual drive discourse' (Harden and Willig, 1998: 436).

The fraught and contested dimensions of appropriation are foregrounded in Koutroulis's (1996, 2001) research on menstruation. She used memory work to identify both the contradictory meanings of menstruation and the work women must do to navigate these contradictions and maintain any semblance of coherent selfhood. Her analysis foregrounds how women are regulated through symbolic meanings of the menstruating body as dirty, an object to be controlled. Whilst experiences of resisting these meanings were discussed, possibilities for resistance were continuously contested by participants' own investments in a discourse of hygiene. Koutroulis argues that re-framing the symbolic impurities of menstruation as a matter of hygiene does not intervene in the power relations through which women are controlled. Rather, it provides another means for the elaboration of the threat that women's uncontrollable bodies can pose to the social order. This analysis points towards the real difficulties women face in reworking their own complicity in patriarchal modes of regulation.

Memory work has also been used to understand how women negotiate the constraints of their positioning in public life (e.g. Boucher, 1997; Livholts, 2001). For example, Boucher (1997) and others examined organizational leadership: analysing women's early experiences revealed the limited notions of female leadership afforded to young girls. Their analysis suggests that whilst women can and do practice different modes of leadership, 'it is much more difficult to come to some kind of internal reconciliation between what they are and what they are meant to be' (Boucher, 1997: 157). Participating in socio-political change is deeply challenging to notions of selfhood, as memory-work research on gender and sexuality illustrates. We would argue that memory work has the potential to do more than identify the tensions women experience: it fundamentally questions any idea that 'internal reconciliation' could or should ever be a useful marker of political efficacy. Following Améry (1980: 69) socio-political

change can be understood as occurring, not 'in the process of internalisation ... but on the contrary, [only] through actualisation, or, more strongly stated, by actively settling the unresolved conflict in the field of historical practice'.

The importance and difficulty of moving beyond attempts to ground socio-political change in identity is foregrounded in Hamerton's research (see Mulvey et al., 2000) on Pakeha women's experiences of privilege and oppression (Pakeha is an indigenous Maori word for New Zealanders of European descent). After several productive meetings where they analysed the construction of femininities, the group's discussions ground to a halt on the question of whiteness. They had grown up in an era when cultural difference was relatively silenced, and Pakeha culture was not seen as an identifiable culture. Hamerton understood her failure to engage the other memory workers in interrogating the meaning of whiteness as an outcome of the irresolvable tension between her commitment to honour the experiences of others (including those in the memory-work group) and to conduct research by continuously questioning experience (below we offer a different reading of this tension).

Embodiment and subjectivity

Memory work has been put to innovative use by those who set out to research questions of embodiment and subjectivity, as well as those who – through analysis of their accounts – are faced with the necessity of theorizing these questions. For example, Kaufman, Ewing, Hyle, Montgomery and Self (2001) found that their written memories of their relationships to the natural world evoked a sense of connectedness with nature. These accounts countered the hegemonic notion of nature as something separate from individuals, something to be dominated and controlled. They argued that – by using memory work – they were able to approach *prereflective* modes of embodiment (or Merleau Ponty's 'immersion-in-the-world') and, in so doing, their work challenged dominant discourses

of embodiment. In our own use of memory work to explore people's experiences of HIV, we have found that analysis of the data challenges the primacy of reflexivity in accounts of social and subjective change (Stephenson and Kippax, 2006). Self-reflexivity, a turn to interiority, is often valued as a means to engage in change by harnessing agency. In contrast, we analysed accounts which suggested that change can involve moving *beyond* oneself and transforming relations with *others* and with the world. From this perspective, starting with a commitment to 'honouring' the integrity of experience (as discussed by Hamerton above) can act to *block* transformation.

The question of embodiment has been the explicit focus of Gillies et al. (2004). They considered how the meanings given to bodily experiences draw on and reproduce a Cartesian mind-body split. In analysing their memories of sweating and pain, they identified the particular constraints women encountered as they actively participated in the control and objectification of their bodies; for example, as manifest in the expectation that pain *should* be controllable. But they went beyond simply using experience as evidence of the problematic aspects of Cartesianism. Their analysis revealed both its presence and its inner workings. Cartesianism worked in diverse ways. Notably, at times the mind-body split was valued as highly functional. For example it enabled people to: stand outside of their bodies so as to observe and enjoy the physicality of experiences; to control pain; or to absolve themselves of responsibility for the lack of control over their own bodies. That is, Cartesianism was appropriated in contradictory ways, and sometimes these contradictions pervaded singular instances of pain or sweating.

Gillies et al.'s research contributes to an ongoing debate about how psychologists might best work with the discursive construction of experience. Many who take discourse to be a linguistic phenomenon are faced with the problem of how 'discourse' and 'materiality' intersect (e.g. Yardley, 1996). Notably, Gillies and others draw on a Foucauldian

notion of discourse which refuses any separation of discourse and materiality. Following Csordas, they argue that the task of elucidating embodiment demands new methodological approaches and techniques. The memories they wrote were replete with details of sensations and physicality (as Kaufman et al. (2001) found). Yet they also started to question their reliance on language in using memory work. Whilst they realized that, ultimately, language is the necessary medium of disseminating research, they began to explore alternative means for working with experience: through collective analysis of their visual representations of aging (Gillies et al., 2005). Interestingly, they found that painting could provide both the means to circumvent hegemonic discourses and act as site for the reproduction of familiar, and constraining, ideas about aging. This step into visual analysis is of interest for an additional reason: memory work assumes a degree of literacy which may exclude people who can otherwise contribute valuable insights. Working with images may be one means of forging more avenues for people's participation in the processes of research (see also Chapter 17 in this volume).

Many of the researchers who are using memory work are interested in understanding how power relations function to constrain experience. Notably, memory workers understand this process as something that occurs in everyday social relations and interactions, sometimes unknowingly or unintentionally. Recent research on subjectivity and embodiment represents an important attempt to develop the conceptual tools necessary for intervening in preconscious, habitual modes of appropriating power relations.

SITUATING MEMORY WORK

Memory work is by no means the only method available for researchers interested in examining the social or discursive construction of experience. Here, we discuss points of overlap and difference between memory work and two broad approaches commonly

adopted in psychological research – narrative analysis and psychodynamic approaches.

Narrative analysis

Not surprisingly, memory work is typically compared with narrative analyses of experience (e.g., Kaufman et al., 2001), but in this chapter we want to emphasize the differences, highlighting the particular ways in which memory workers are invited to refuse and rework familiar psychological concepts. Narrative analysis has, in part, developed out of earlier work on life history (e.g. Denzin, 1970), research which played an important role in reworking the notion that research participants are passive objects of research (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). Although there are many different forms of narrative analysis (e.g. Frank, 1995; Gee, 1986; Gergen and Gergen, 1988) they share a common analytic focus on the stories through which people make meaning of their lives (Reissman, 1993). As with memory work, the objective is to elucidate the social production of the meanings which emerge in people's stories – meanings which reveal the moral and normative construction of experience (e.g. Bruner, 1990). Informed by a hermeneutic epistemology (e.g. Ricoeur, 1996), narrative analysis disputes any notion of a truth of the subject. Rather, the meanings which people give to their experience are assumed to arise in processes of interpretation and reinterpretation.

We want to suggest that memory work is not only interested in the production of meaning in processes of interpretation, but in aspects of experience which elude articulation or may even appear meaningless. Narrative analysis can certainly be a useful tool for identifying the proliferation of normative meanings in the stories people tell about themselves. But, memory workers are specifically asked to try to go *beyond* identification of the constraints on their lives, to imagine other ways of being, and to start to participate in their production. This aim is reflected in the methodological techniques used by memory workers: for example, identifying

the gaps and silences in the memories sparks discussion about, not only self-censure, but the possibility of other ways of being; writing as 'he' or 'she' facilitates questioning and critique of the stories; or avoiding linear biography and writing about singular moments in all their incoherence opens trajectories other than those followed to date. Of course, not all memory-work research harnesses the full possibilities of the method. However, many of the analyses we have discussed in this chapter elucidate the active struggles entailed in constructing narratives as well as aspects of experience which are excluded in the process. Because narrative methodologies explicitly engage interviewees in telling stories about their lives, interviewees are more likely to focus on aspects of experience which are readily narrativized – i.e. those which 'fit' with normative modes of life. The risk of narrative analysis is that researchers fall into the trap of reproducing a convenient fiction: the idea that experience is predominantly lived as a narrative, or that elements of experience that are represented in people's narratives are necessarily the most important ones for researchers to understand. In contrast, memory workers are faced with questions, not only about the difficulties of representing experience, but about whether it can always be represented (Gillies et al., 2004; Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006).

Psychodynamic approaches

Contemporary psychological research is marked by a debate between the relative merits of psychoanalytic accounts of experience on the one hand, and discursive or narrative accounts on the other (e.g. Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1998). But seen historically, the opposition between these two camps starts to dissolve. Freud was deeply interested in the role interpretation plays in the construction of experience. Any genealogy of qualitative research methods, which either interrogate or interpret experience, would have to include the historical

moment in which psychoanalysis emerged (Steele, 1985). Moreover – although Freud did not do this – it is possible to consider the mechanisms of repression as socially and historically constituted, and constantly shifting (Billig, 1997, 1999). Billig demystifies repression by rereading it as a dialogic, discursive process and opening new possibilities for interrogating its form and function.

From this perspective, memory work can be understood as a means of interrogating the socially constituted pathways of remembering, forgetting and repression. It affords a space to examine the gaps in language and discourse which constrain people's efforts to make sense of and re-interpret experience. Addressing these gaps and enabling new interpretations plays an important role in opening up new possibilities for action. It also points towards the common ground between memory work and psychodynamic approaches to data analysis. According to Freud (1915/1964a, 1915/1964b) suppression and repression are particular forms of forgetting in which painful or threatening material, although 'forgotten', remain either in the preconscious or the unconscious. Retrieving such painful memories is difficult and psychoanalysis offers a powerful set of tools for 'looking awry' at experience (Frosh, 1997). If repression occurs in discourse, it is possible to see memory work as offering its own tools for questioning how clichéd articulations of experience can serve to exclude alternate interpretations.

Some 'forgotten' memories within the Australian memory-work group discussed earlier were retrieved, remembered and reappraised (Crawford et al., 1992). In the reappraisal, the past was laid bare and elucidated from the perspective of people's present contexts. The process was often somewhat indirect. For example, Ann first wrote the following account, in which she describes a memory from her student days at university:

Ann

She was a second year student sitting in a statistics class in psychology ... The lecturer used the

blackboard extensively to do all the calculations. The example was of some rats that had been experimented on. The nerve in both legs had been severed experimentally and on one leg electrical stimulation had been used to activate the muscle in the absence of the nerve ... During the class the lecturer from time to time made an arithmetic error. Ann felt quite irritated and pointed out where he had gone wrong. She reacted in an obnoxious manner ... [On her way home] she thought 'how could I have been so unkind to him' ... and she started thinking about Freud and his theories of the unconscious. She felt that there was something underlying her behaviour that she didn't quite understand ... She was thinking of something else when suddenly she realized why she had been so uncharacteristically rude. She made the connection between the rat experiment and something that had happened to her in childhood.

This memory triggered an earlier memory – a memory which until now had been forgotten in the sense of having been pushed aside:

After she came out of hospital after having polio she wore a heavy iron calliper on her left leg from hip to foot ... When she was almost twelve years old, her mother began to take her three times a week to a masseur who administered electrical stimulation ... He massaged her leg from hip to toe both outside and inside. She was naked with a facecloth draped over her private parts. Every now and then he used the stimulator to stimulate her genitals, saying things like 'this is the most important part of your body. The energy comes from here'.

In their discussion of remembering and forgetting, Crawford et al. (1992) concluded that some forms of forgetting, akin to suppression or repression, occur because there is no meaning available to make sense of the event; there is no discourse, no language to articulate what had occurred. In a note made at the time of writing the above memory, the memory worker said 'even though I have thought of it on many occasions, I have never labelled it as child sexual assault. It never occurred to me in the context of child sexual experiences. But it does now'.

In this example, repression is the denial of the idea of sexuality; the failure to file this memory away under the heading of sexual experience. At the time of this event, it was not understood as a sexual episode

and did not enter into the construction of the sexual self, at least at a conscious level. This is the sense in which the memory was forgotten or repressed. The repression might be explained in classic psychoanalytic terms but any explanation is enhanced by recognizing the absence or lack of a child sexual assault discourse at the occurrence of the event. Hence, as with memory (as discussed above), repression can be understood as a collective process.

BEFORE EMBARKING ON MEMORY WORK ...

Memory work entails distinct ethical challenges for researchers and research groups. Firstly, the requirement to write accounts of the past can serve to exclude potential participants. The prospect of writing can be daunting for people who lack confidence in their literacy skills. A group may decide to use other means to spark discussion of their experience, such as artwork (as mentioned above; Gillies et al., 2005) or by speaking about specific experiences as opposed to writing them down.

Secondly, working as a group can pose real difficulties for memory workers. Theorizing and planning to undertake a collective analysis and actually practising it may be two very different things, and, arguably, neither the theoretical nor practical challenges of working with group dynamics have been adequately explored by memory workers to date (Stephenson, 2003). It is worth repeating that memory workers do not understand 'collective' to mean homogeneous, and difference within the group is valued as fuelling the collective analysis. However, as long as the importance of 'collectivity' is understood as a means of countering the individualistic tendencies of much psychological explanation, incommensurable differences which emerge in the group always risk being cast as evidence of individualism (i.e. a political and theoretical problem for memory workers) or worse, individual inadequacies. We argue that memory workers have much to benefit

from engaging with attempts to rethink the social-individual binary which pervades psychological thinking (e.g. Henriques et al., 1998; Stephenson, in press). Rather than value collectivity for its role in enabling unity of action and response, we suggest that the potency of collectivity stems from its role in the production of *singularity*. Undertaking collective analysis, then, involves working with irreducible differences which 'can be extended close to another, so as to obtain a connection' (Deleuze, 1991: 94). Here, collectivity is an occasion in which individuation occurs and the play of singularity gives rise to new *modes* of being (Virno, 2004).

A third, and related, challenge involved in memory work stems from the tensions arising from working with experience whilst being continually invited to break with a familiar and commonsense way of discussing, exchanging and responding to others' experiences. In everyday life it is common to use subjective experience as a means of *representing* selves. Yet, memory workers are enjoined in the effort to work with experience as *nonpersonal* traces of social or discursive processes of subjectification. Now, familiar modes of relating, like empathizing, can re-introduce questions about the interiority which is being represented, blocking attempts to move beyond the self. The theoretical rationale for this continuous attempt to move beyond selves rests on the importance of straining and disrupting the empty 'tyranny of the subjective' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) in order to open possibilities for developing new modes of being. In practice, this is not a move which everyone wants or needs to take at all times.

This point is starkly evident if we consider the concerns of a group of HIV-positive men who started doing memory work soon after the introduction of ART. At this time, many of these memory workers were subjected, not only to severe personal difficulties stemming from managing treatment regimens, but also to a marked shift in public discourses pertaining to living with HIV: suddenly HIV was being discussed as

chronic illness and HIV-positive individuals were being positioned as 'lucky'. But this discourse did not fit with their experiences. Moreover, many felt that HIV-positive people were being newly excluded from public discussion. In response, their political concern was to reinsert their experiences into public consciousness by representing themselves. Clearly, self- or group-representation can be an effective strategy for intervention in many situations (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006). And, although memory work has been developed as a tool for a different mode of intervention (i.e. through transformation as opposed to representation) we would argue that the memory-work groups are likely to continually encounter moments where individuals (or the entire group) are personally or politically invested in representing themselves. At a practical level, we suggest that memory workers allow this tension between representation and transformation to play out in the group discussions. For instance, whilst some groups try to avoid lapsing into representation by writing *and* speaking about themselves as 'he' or 'she', in the research we have done memory workers embody both strategies as they shift between the 'he' or 'she' subject positions in the written accounts and the 'I' of the group discussion (Stephenson et al., 1996). Keeping both strategies in play enables memory workers, based on their situated understanding of the personal or political relevance of representation as and when it arises, to decide whether the analysis can or should move beyond it. Clearly, we have no easy recipe for working with this tension. However, we would suggest that prior to embarking on any collective analysis, memory workers need to understand the method's particular emphasis on intervention through transformation, and to discuss the potential value of this approach in the context of their own field of inquiry. Such discussions can be informed by situating this tension between representation and transformation in long-standing debates over the role of experience in socio-political change – debates to which we now turn.

CONCLUSIONS

Memory work is a method for interrogating experience. But there is much debate over what experience is, and how it can best be used in research on subjectivity. There has been a broad turn to experience on the part of social and cultural researchers over the past four decades. Recognition of the importance of experience can be traced to early cultural studies work (e.g. Hoggart's (1957) *The Uses of Literacy*). The political project of cultural studies involved contesting cultural elitism by working on social histories of the lived experience of ordinary people. Culturalists argued that experience can only be researched as it is lived in the everyday (that is, it cannot be approached from a transcendent or outside perspective). Importantly, experience is understood as more than a product of modes of domination, it also contains the seeds of resistance (e.g. Williams, 1980). Clearly, memory work draws on this tradition: the Haug collective (1987: 42) were interested in 'experience as [the] lived practice ... of a self constructed identity ... [as something] structured by expectations, norms and values ... [which] still contains an element of resistance, a germ of oppositional cultural activity'. But, they devised a method which is open to being adapted and used by researchers who follow the critique of culturalism.

Structuralists and poststructuralists critiqued culturalism on several counts. Most importantly, they rejected its foundational approach to experience; that is, they disputed the idea that knowledge grounded in lived experience somehow offers a more authentic way of knowing the world. For example, Althusser (1971) argued that the real conditions of our lives are not necessarily represented in the conscious meanings we ascribe to experience; hence any attempt to represent experience is bound to overlook important elements of socio-political change. More recently, Scott (1993) has contended that approaching experience as inherently meaningful inevitably forecloses attempts to understand difference as socially

and historically produced. This critique poses a serious challenge to researchers who are interested in elucidating the processes through which subjectivity is constructed: experience may not be the best point of departure at all (e.g. Rose, 1996).

Despite their insights, because they overlook the importance of experience in people's struggles to engage in political action, structuralist and poststructuralist accounts offer a limited view of how socio-political change actually occurs (Hall, 1981). Instead of grappling with the contradictory and complex role of experience in socio-political change, experience is often jettisoned altogether. This unresolved tension over the meaning and relevance of experience continues to be a highly productive force in the field of cultural studies (e.g. Clifford, 2000; Sandywell, 2004; Seigworth and Gardiner, 2004). We want to propose, firstly that this is an important debate to which psychologists can contribute, and secondly that memory work could provide a way of doing this.

The account we have given of memory work suggests that Haug and others did not ignore the tension between culturalists and structuralist/poststructuralist approaches to experience, between representing and transforming experience. In contrast to the broader, humanist turn evident in much qualitative psychological research, they did not take the foundationalist approach to experience, i.e. the approach to which Hamerton (see Mulvey et al., 2000) alludes as she tackles the problem of 'honouring' each group member's experience. As discussed above, in memory-work experience is not put forward to be affirmed. Haug (1992) argued that empathy gets in the way of understanding. Whilst this may seem cold-hearted, the risk of empathy is that it frequently produces sentimentality in place of the effort to explore experiences which *challenge* the world as we know it (Bennett, 2003). Contrary to structuralist/poststructuralist repudiations of experience, memory workers take experience as a point of departure, but in so doing they also counter culturalist approaches to experience. Experience is not a foundation

(for example, of identity or subjectivity) but the problem to be explained, the matter to be questioned. Importantly, the answers to this problem do not lie in the experience itself, nor in the accounts memory workers write about their experiences. This is why memory work does not promise that the application of the right analytical techniques will deliver good analyses of the memories. Crucially, memory-work analysis hinges on what the collective can *bring* to the accounts: their readings of experience, their engagement with relevant theories and bodies of research, their ideas about political strategies and tactics, their capacity to imagine other ways of being, and their commitment to try to communicate and work on the production of new modes of appropriation. That is, instead of pursuing purity of method – or 'methodolatry' (Chamberlain, 1999) – the analytic work involves developing a set of tools with which people can *intervene* in the socio-political problems on which they are working (Smith, 1987). Hence, the process of analysis is open and always in need of further developments.

In this chapter we have located the kind of collective analysis entailed in doing memory work in relation to social psychological approaches to memory and to researching experience. We have been particularly concerned to emphasize the political rationale for the Haug collective (1987) original development of this method. Together, our description of the method and examination of the ways in which it has been taken up and used to address a wide array of psychological questions, reveal memory work's ongoing potency as a means of interrogating and intervening in the inner workings of power relations. Memory work is one of many methods available to psychologists interested in exploring the social or discursive construction of experience, and – with its emphasis on written language, on working as a collective and on moving beyond representing experience – it entails distinct ethical challenges. These challenges are worth exploring, we argue, for researchers who are interested in engaging in broader debates in

the humanities and social sciences over the problem of researching experience with the aim of developing new tactics for political intervention by refusing and transforming existing subject positions or modes of being.

NOTES

1 World Health Organization rehydration mixture counteracts the dehydrating side-effects of one of the drugs commonly prescribed as part of combination therapy.

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Narrative Psychology

David Hiles and Ivo Čermák

INTRODUCTION

In terms of qualitative methods in psychology, narrative inquiry can be seen to be very much the new kid on the block. Narrative psychology, as a field of study with its own identity, has been around for little more than two decades. While narrative methods of inquiry have enjoyed wide application in the other social and human sciences, and in literary and cultural studies, they have only begun to be taken seriously very recently in psychology.

In this chapter, we briefly outline how the field has developed, stressing the significance that a narrative approach to psychology can offer. We will then set out a case not only for a cross-fertilization with other disciplines, but also for developing an approach to narrative research that is firmly rooted within a psychological perspective. We call this *narrative oriented inquiry* (NOI). We then set out a model of NOI, and demonstrate NOI in action by working through an example. We conclude by considering some of the critical issues that NOI poses.

THE NARRATIVE TURN IN PSYCHOLOGY

While the narrative turn is very recent, an interest in ‘story’ does have a relatively long history in psychology. For example, a long narrative tradition can be found in the study of personality, life-span development, biography and case study. Stern (1910) stressed the importance of dealing with personal biographies which he argued were crucial to understanding the unity of personality. Allport (1937) emphasized a narrative study of the individual using personal documents as a source of information for the study of personality, and Murray (1938) claimed that the narrative case study had crucial importance for development of both medicine and psychology. Two other pioneers in this area, Bühler (1933) and Dollard (1935), are noted for their use of life history as the preferred method of psychological research.

In addition, the psychodynamic perspective recognized the crucial role played by narrative. Sigmund Freud saw how the stories that clients brought to therapy could

reveal the hidden depths of personality. He stressed the subtle detection of what was 'not-narrated', as well as the connections with cultural stories or meta-stories. Another pioneer, Alfred Adler, discussed the importance of the life scenario and life-scripts, and C. G. Jung put his own emphasis upon narrative in the form of symbol and myth.

An explicit narrative perspective upon Freud's work has more recently been taken up by Spence (1982, 1986) and Schafer (1983, 1992). Spence argues for a psychoanalytic practice that is less concerned with historical truth, and more with personal truth. Personal truth relies upon the construction of a narrative truth. Narratives do not only record facts and events but also offer the means for constructing meaning out of the chaos of lived experience. Spence (1982: 2) argues that it was Freud who made us aware of the persuasive power of a coherent narrative: 'there seems no doubt but that a well-constructed story possesses a kind of narrative truth that is real and immediate and carries an important significance for the process of therapeutic change'.

Schafer's concept of truth is close to Spence's conception. Schafer (1992: xiv–xv) expresses this as follows:

It is especially important to emphasize that narrative is not an alternative to truth or reality, rather, it is the mode in which, inevitably, truth and reality are presented. We have only versions of the true and the real. Narratively unmediated, definitive access to truth and reality cannot be demonstrated. In this respect, therefore, there can be no absolute foundation on which observer or thinker stands; each must choose his or her narrative.

It is important to note that these issues raised by Spence and Schafer are not restricted merely to psychoanalytic theory and practice, but have radical implications for the discipline of psychology in general. Indeed, we would argue that they seriously question its very foundations.

Murmurings of what can now be seen as a 'paradigmatic breakthrough' can be traced through the work of White (1973), Mink (1978), Chatman (1978) and Ricoeur (1979,

1983, 1984, 1985), leading to the landmark publication: *On Narrative* (Mitchell, 1981). However, if we are to put a date to what has been called the narrative turn in psychology, then it is 1986. Following a symposium in the summer of 1983, Theodore Sarbin put together an edited book with contributions from leading researchers in the field, entitled: *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct* (Sarbin, 1986).

Sarbin possibly goes further than anyone else in establishing the foundations for the new field of narrative psychology. Identifying what he saw as an epistemological crisis in his own field of social psychology, Sarbin used Pepper's (1942) notion of 'root metaphor' – i.e. a commonsense analogy – in order to offer a rethinking of psychology. Previous root metaphors adopted in psychology included: machines (*mechanism*), and whole/parts (*organicism*), but Sarbin argued that narrative, especially as a model of contextualism, could serve as a radically new root metaphor for psychology. In effect, he was arguing that to have any success in understanding human action, a completely new approach, closer to the way in which historical events are explained and understood, was needed.

In the same year, 1986, two other significant texts were published: Bruner's (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* and Mishler's (1986a) *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. This was then quickly followed by the publication of Polkinghorne's (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* and Bruner's (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Bruner, Mishler and Polkinghorne, who had all contributed chapters to Sarbin's original text, were adding their own seminal contributions to the field. The narrative turn was established.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN PSYCHOLOGY

It is our view that this new area of psychology is not concerned simply with what might

be seen as a sub-topic within social psychology, or an issue on the fringes of the discipline, but represents a particularly significant development for the entire discipline.

It is important to realize that narrative is not simply a literary genre, or merely a form of human discourse, but is a basic property of the human mind, rather aptly described by Hardy (1977: 12) 'as a primary act of mind transferred to art from life'. Events do not present themselves as stories, but it is the experience of an event that becomes a story. Ricoeur (1987: 429) stresses that a story is 'always preceded by a narrative intelligence that issues from [a human] creative intelligence'. And, Bruner (1990: 51) expresses the same idea in terms of narrative having 'a dual landscape – events and actions in a putative real world occur concurrently with mental events in the consciousness of the protagonists'.

Bruner (1990: 67) remarks that narrative thinking has clear advantages in the everyday world, and must be regarded as 'one of the crowning achievements of human development'. He proposes a distinction between narrative reasoning and rational thinking, each a primary mode of thought, arguing for these to be seen as: 'two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality. The two (though complementary) are irreducible to one another' (Bruner, 1986: 11).

In similar vein, Polkinghorne (1988) defines narrative as a fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into a contextualized and integrated whole. Narrative is essential to the meaning-making process, such that events and actions can be understood despite the fact that the 'reasons' for them are not fully known. He points out that narratives have powerful properties:

facts only partly determine the particular scheme to be used in their organization, and more than one scheme can fit the same facts: several narratives can organize the same facts into stories and thereby give the facts different significance and meaning.

Polkinghorne (1988: 181)

It is in this remark by Polkinghorne that the astonishing power of narrative thinking is revealed: several narratives (perhaps an infinite number of narratives) can organize the same facts into stories!

In summary, narrative plays a crucial role in almost every human activity. Narratives dominate human discourse, and are foundational to the cultural processes that organize and structure human action and experience. They offer a sense-making process that is fundamental to understanding human reality. Narratives enable human experiences to be seen as socially positioned and culturally grounded. Human experiences are rendered as part of a shared version of reality, which can easily reproduce itself. Moreover, narratives are not merely accounts of experience, they are performative, offering frames for human action. They offer pragmatic and persuasive responses to deal with life's events.

There are very many areas of psychology to which these ideas are finding application, and we can only sample a few of these here.

One of the claims that is repeatedly being made for the function of narrative is that it has a primary role in the construction and maintenance of self-identity (Gergen and Gergen, 1983; Ricoeur, 1987; Shotter and Gergen, 1989; Kerby, 1991; Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992; Schafer, 1992; Lee, 1993; Linde, 1993; McAdams, 1993; Crossley, 2000; Ochs and Capps, 2001; Burr, 2003; Fireman, McVay and Flanagan, 2003; McAdams, Josselson and Lieblich, 2006). Using our narrative intelligence, we choose what matters to us, we participate in the construction of our own identities. Through the stories that we construct we establish our identity positions. It would seem then, that we are simply the assembled stories that we tell about ourselves, and the stories that are told about us by others. It follows that we have the power to renegotiate our identity by altering these stories. Moreover, narrative seems to be in a unique position to promote human empowerment, and to challenge oppression, unnecessary suffering, and discrimination.

Narrative inquiry is making a major contribution to the study of human cognition

(e.g. Mink, 1978; Bruner, 1986, 1987, 1990; Murray, 1995; Edwards, 1997). The underlying claim here is that the human ability to think narratively is crucial to our everyday understanding of reality. For example, Stern (2004) has proposed that the 'present moment' is experienced as a *lived story*, and Hiles (2005) offers a distinction between discursive and contingent narratives. Contingent narratives are stories that we generate, consciously or unconsciously, in order to organize our immediate perception of events. These are the building blocks of a narrative mode of thinking that is fundamental to our construction of reality. Such narratives facilitate our memory of events, forming the basis for later shared discursive accounts. Indeed, the study of narrative memory is a field in its own right, drawing upon script theory and autobiographic memory, amongst others (Schank and Abelson, 1977; Mandler, 1984; Wagenaar, 1986; Schank, 1990; Linde, 1993; Neisser and Fivush, 1994; Freeman, 1999).

A further area of application is in health psychology (Kleinman, 1988; Radley, 1993, 1999a, 1999b; Frank, 1995; Murray, 1997, 1999). There is a growing interest in taking a narrative approach to illness and medical practice (cf. Greenhalgh and Hurwitz, 1998; Mattingly and Garro, 2000). There is possibly no greater challenge to our sense-making processes than how we are able to give meaning to illness, particularly life-threatening illness. For example, Mattingly and Garro stress how personal illness narratives are more concerned with verisimilitude rather than verifiability – the function of narrative strategies is to convey believability, or plausibility, rather than a historical truth. Illness narratives need to be seen as resourceful improvisations, offering opportunities to reframe experience and construct revised identities.

As a final application, we will mention the field of psychotherapy and counselling, especially family therapy (White and Epston, 1990; Neimeyer and Mahoney, 1995; Eron and Lund, 1996; Freedman and Combs, 1996; McLeod, 1997; Monk, Winslade, Crockett and Epston, 1997; Payne, 2000; Angus and

McLeod, 2004). The perspective here is less on the interpretive skills of the therapist and more on the narrative resources of the client. The role of the therapist is seen as a facilitator of narrative thinking. Freedman and Combs (1996: 16) write that 'we discovered that as people began to inhabit and live out these alternative stories ... [they] could live out new self-images, new possibilities for relationship, and for the future'. And Neimeyer (1995: 3) sums up the basic idea of his narrative approach as follows: 'psychotherapy can be viewed as a kind of collaboration in the construction and reconstruction of meaning ... that will continue long after therapy ends'. Narrative therapy is to be considered as an opportunity for reframing experience – what might be described as an arena for re-biography and narrative reconstruction. Furthermore, therapy is seen as an opportunity for problem dissolving, and for personal exploration and experimentation.

In summary, it is because narrative is fundamental to our understanding of the human mind, *and* because narrative dominates human discourse, *and* because narrative is foundational to the processes that organize and structure human experience and action, that the application of narrative methods of research has the potential for such very wide application.

NARRATIVE ORIENTED INQUIRY (NOI)

When research participants are asked to talk about themselves, about their experiences, or to explore some aspect of their life, they invariably use a *narrative* mode of organization, i.e. participants will provide accounts that inevitably take on a story structure. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews particularly encourage a narrative mode of discourse. But narrative research is more than an extension of discourse analysis: it is a field in its own right. Consequently, these narratives warrant study in their own right, and this has led to the recent emergence of the approach to research that we call *narrative oriented inquiry* (NOI).

NOI stresses that narrative is not merely a distinct form of qualitative data or a particular approach to data analysis, but that it is a methodological approach in its own right, which requires appreciation of the subtle paradigm assumptions involved, and a method of data collection called a *narrative interview* (Mishler, 1986a, 1999). The position being adopted is that interviews do not have to be seen as an 'interrogation', but can be seen as a mutual exchange of views (Kvale, 1996), and as a site for the co-production of narratives (Silverman, 2001). Indeed, Mishler (1986a) argues that interviews should be studied as speech events, and that narratives simply reflect one of the crucial means of knowledge production that goes on in our everyday lives.

Invariably, it is the nature of the research question that will point to the particular approach to interviewing that needs to be employed. For example, if the research question draws upon a paradigm that sees narratives as a participative activity in which a person can author (and re-author) their own meaning-making activities, their lived experience, their understandings of reality, and their own place in that reality, then a narrative style of interviewing recommends itself.

The narrative interview can take the form of a very open invitation – '*Tell me about your life ... your up-bringing ...*', or can involve a more topic-oriented style of open questioning – '*How did you get into this type of work? ... Tell me about your recovery from illness ... How did you come to be diagnosed? ...*' The first of these could be called the biographical interview and the second the topic-focused interview, but there are many variations that can be used.

The growing interest in the narrative field has led to a very wide variety of approaches to the interpretation and examination of narrative data. Pioneers of narrative analysis include Labov and Waletzky (1967), Mishler (1986a), Gee (1991), Riessman (1993), Czarniawska (1998), leading to a proliferation which Mishler (1995: 88) describes as 'a current state of near-anarchy'.

In his attempt to bring some order to the field, Mishler (1995: 89–90) offers a provisional typology with a focus upon: (1) representation, particularly the tension between the actual temporal order of events/episodes and their order of presentation as re-told; (2) the linguistic and narrative strategies used by different genres to achieve structure and coherence; and (3) the cultural, social and psychological contexts and functions of stories.

The model of NOI offers an approach to narrative research that is firmly rooted within a psychological perspective, reflecting Mishler's (1995: 117) concern that there is no 'singular or best way to define and study narrative', and that we need to 'open up the exploration of what we may learn from other approaches as we pursue our own particular one'.

The challenges for NOI

There are many challenges to developing a systematic approach to narrative inquiry in psychology, and we see the following as the most pressing issues.

Firstly, there is the need to develop an approach to narrative inquiry that is distinctive, while honouring its roots. Narrative inquiry does have its roots in a social constructionist perspective, but it does also entail a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive view that incorporates both a rich description of the socio-cultural (discursive) environment and the participatory and creative inner world of lived experience. In this respect, narrative data always carries a 'double signature', i.e. social constructionist and phenomenological. To this end, NOI sets out to combine a situated-occasioned action perspective together with a view of the individual as actively and creatively engaged in processes of meaning-making, organization and agency.

Furthermore, the events that are narrated are placed in a double context. On the one hand, the re-told events are placed within their *story* context, i.e. within the context of the 'whole story'. While on the other

hand, there is the *discursive* context of the situated-occasion of this re-telling of the story. Narrative context must always be seen as articulated twice. An important part of the analysis of a story is then the description and understanding of how this double-contextualizing process is operating. The problem here is that we are only at the very beginning of understanding how context works, anyway.

A second challenge involves ensuring that the entire inquiry process is open to critical and systematic reflexivity. Reflexivity is much more than an inspection of the potential sources of bias in a study, and must begin with the conscious examination of the paradigm assumptions, selection of research strategies, selection of participants, and decisions made in collecting the data, conducting the interviews, and in analysing the data and interpreting the findings. Reflexivity highlights the fact that the researcher has a participatory role in the inquiry, is part of the situation, the discursive context and the phenomenon under study. Hence, reflexivity can be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process. The NOI model is designed to offer a framework for just this. Reflexivity understood in this way, demands transparency, and we will return to this issue at the end of the chapter.

A third challenge for NOI is that narrative inquiry is far from being confined to only psychology, and one of the pressing challenges is for psychology to integrate with narrative research methods, insights and expertise in the sociological, educational, clinical, and biographical fields, generating a multidisciplinary perspective. A related challenge is the recognition of narrative inquiry as having the potential to provide links within our still all too fragmented discipline. Narrative provides a common theme that cuts across psychodynamic, cognitive, social, humanistic, transpersonal and integral psychology – in terms of both research and practice. Indeed, in this respect, we might be so bold as to suggest that, following on from the discursive turn which has been called the second cognitive revolution, narrative

psychology might represent a *third* cognitive revolution.

NOI in action

The focus that we want to take in this section is on the practical issues raised by narrative inquiry. Our emphasis is upon research with personal narratives, especially concerned with the collection and analysis of data from narrative interviews. However, in principle this can be adapted to other kinds of narratives as well, e.g. autobiography, diaries, conversational, therapeutic narratives, etc.

There is an expanding literature, in the wider social and human sciences, offering a variety of approaches to collecting and analysing narrative data, e.g. Riessman (1993), Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Wortham (2001), Czarniawska (2004), Elliott (2005), etc. Many of these have much to commend them, but the problem is that narrative data analysis can range from the more straightforward collection of stories to be categorized and classified (into genres, etc.), through a more in-depth analysis of stories (e.g. breaking them down into their underlying themes, or in an attempt to reconstruct the 'original event'), to a more closely focused micro-analysis of the narrative sense-making process and the psychosocial context within which this takes place.

What we have developed is a model of NOI that draws upon psychologically focused approaches to narrative inquiry, and crucially embraces both the data collection process as well as a range of data analysis approaches. We stress that NOI must begin with a narrative approach to data collection that is reflected in the research question, the research design and strategy for interviewing. The model of NOI is essentially a dynamic framework for good practice. It is not intended to be exhaustive and definitive, but is explicitly inclusive and pluralistic. The version presented here offers the essential components for sound narrative research, but it needs to be noted that this is still work-in-progress.

The model

The model that we will consider is illustrated in Figure 9.1. A key feature of the model is the need to step back a little and take a broader point of view of NOI from start to finish.

NOI starts with a *research question*. With the research question in mind, a *narrative interview guide* (NIG) is then set up, and participants are selected.

The *narrative interview* (Mishler, 1986a, 1986b) requires audio recording to generate an *audio text*, which is then transcribed deleting personal identifiers as necessary. It is with the *raw transcript* that data analysis begins. This transcript needs to be read through several times (*reading 1, 2, 3, ...*). The purpose of the persistent engagement with the written transcript is to build up a picture of the context, and the story as a whole. There may be a continuing need to return to the audio text to clarify details for the raw transcript.

Narrative analysis proceeds by first breaking the text down into segments. Some approaches advocate presenting the transcript simply as numbered lines. The problem with this is that lines are arbitrary. Since narratives are basically a sequence of episodes, or events, we prefer setting out the transcript as a numbered sequence of segments, a segment being roughly a self-contained episode, or 'move', in the telling of the story. In turn, the text can be broken down further into specific units of analysis determined by the particular analytic strategy being used. This is not fool-proof, but is relatively straightforward and transparent. The text is then arranged down the left-hand of each page with a very wide margin to the right where notes and annotations can be made. It is this that we call the *working transcript*.

Analysis then proceeds by adopting a number of interpretive perspectives. We will consider just six here, but in principle others can be added. These six perspectives emerge from the integration of three key sources. The first of these uses Herman and Vervaeck's (2001) distinction between 'bounded' and 'unbounded' motifs in narrative discourse.

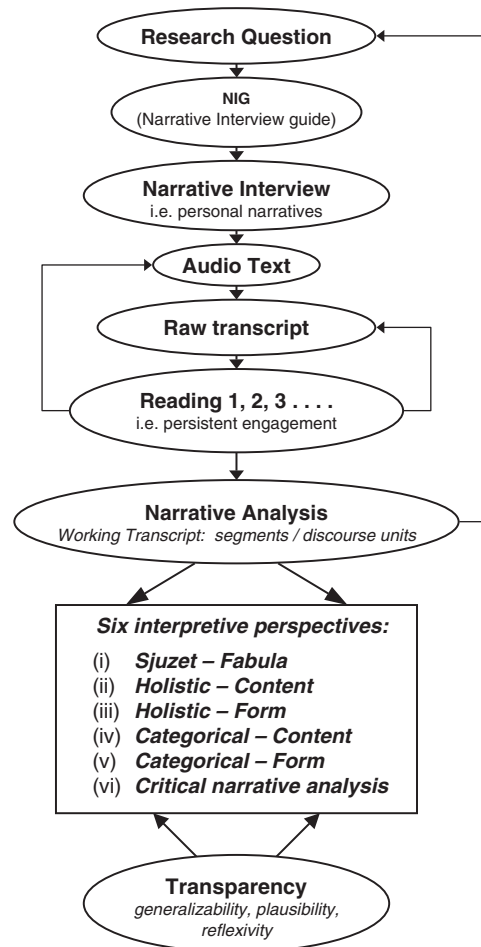


Figure 9.1 Narrative oriented inquiry (NOI): a model

This perspective in effect distinguishes *fabula* from *sjuzet* (pronounced *soo-tzay*), a distinction made by the Russian Formalists, but can be dated back to Aristotle's *Poetics*. The *fabula* is the 'content' of a story, i.e. the original events as they might actually have occurred. This is in contrast to the *sjuzet* which is the 'form' of the narrative, i.e. the window onto the events offered in the re-telling of the story.

In literary theory, a further distinction can be made within the *sjuzet* – between plot and mode of narration. But this need not concern us here, since in narrative inquiry these are confounded within the participant being interviewed.

The second key source, which we regard as possibly the most comprehensive approach to narrative analysis available, is Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998). Their approach to narrative data analysis offers four interpretive perspectives, based upon the recognition of two underlying dimensions: *Holistic–Categorical* (i.e. the unit of analysis is the whole story vs. the themes/categories that make up the story), and *Content–Form* (i.e. the story-account itself vs. how the story is re-told). Combining these two dimensions, they derive four approaches to analysis: *Holistic–Content*, *Holistic–Form*, *Categorical–Content* and *Categorical–Form*. These constitute perspectives (ii) to (v) in our model. Each of these four approaches may be connected to different types of research question, different modes of text, and different sample size. The point is that these approaches can be used singularly, or in any combination, drawing upon the initial analysis into *sjuzet–fabula*, and feeding into further interpretive approaches.

The third key source is Emerson and Frosh (2004: 9), who offer the approach of critical narrative analysis which they stress is ‘sensitive to subject meaning-making, social processes and the interpretation of these in the construction of personal narratives around “breaches” between individuals and their social contexts’. This then becomes the sixth interpretive perspective that we have incorporated into our model of NOI.

The final element of the model is the concept of *transparency*, but we will leave a discussion of this to the final section of the chapter. What follows can only be an outline of NOI in action, and it should be noted that a close reading of Herman and Vervaeck (2001), Lieblich et al. (1998) and Emerson and Frosh (2004) is considered indispensable.

To illustrate NOI in action we will, within the space available, discuss one example, Hanka’s story (see Box 9.1), drawing upon each interpretive perspective in turn. The extract is taken from a longer interview, which was part of a large scale project into women’s experience of surviving breast cancer in the Czech Republic (Chrz, Čermák

and Plachá, 2006). The basic research question for the study was *How are women able to cope with breast cancer?* The original interview was tape-recorded, transcribed first into Czech, and then translated carefully into English for our present purposes. A working transcript was first produced by breaking the raw interview material down into a sequence of segments, i.e. episodes/events/moments or movements/asides/emphasis. These are then numbered consecutively, and include all utterances of both the interviewer and interviewee. It should be noted that no tidying-up of the narrative is employed (something that is in complete contrast to many other approaches to narrative analysis that recommend tidying-up the narrative to leave only the core narrative to be analysed). Of course, this working transcript is itself an interpretive process, and this must not be overlooked in subsequent analytical work. Nevertheless, it is fairly straightforward and transparent, and greatly facilitates all further analysis. Our focus here is only upon segments 12 to 26 in Hanka’s story.

(i) *Sjuzet–fabula*

The first interpretive perspective involves dividing the working transcript into *sjuzet* and *fabula* (i.e. by convention we underline the *sjuzet* in the working transcript). We are concerned here with an issue that is fairly well known (but is not that well understood!). The point is that stories are made up of two inter-related and inter-penetrating parts: i.e. *what* is being re-told (the *fabula*), and *how* it is being re-told (the *sjuzet*). It is our view that from a psychological perspective both of these need to be analysed very closely, but this is often overlooked in practice. The analysis hangs upon Herman and Vervaeck’s (2001: 46) crucial distinction between ‘bounded’ and ‘unbounded’ motifs in narrative data. The *fabula* consists of bounded motifs that are fixed by the story being re-told, while the *sjuzet* consists of unbounded motifs, defined as not essential to the story but determining how the story is being re-told. In practice, this interpretive analysis involves first identifying the

BOX 9.1 Narrative Text Example: Extract from Hanka's story

(Working transcript of part of a longer interview, broken down into segments/episodes, with *sjuzet* underlined)

- 1 *Tell me, please, about your experience with breast cancer. ...*
- 12 The tumour was terribly huge, but the doctor I came to just told me the diagnosis and that it seemed I would have to have an operation done and that I should be prepared for surgery, since this one was very big, and that he would offer me a reducing chemotherapy.
- 13 And I just – when he uttered the word chemotherapy, that it was so terrifying for me, and he was quite himself – and he probably estimated me quite well, since he started quite rashly with me: [he said] 'Why are you going crazy, what? Chemotherapy? I went through it myself four years ago and I am here. And it will be okay, just your hair will fall out.' I say: 'The hair isn't at all important to me.'
- 14 I was terrified by this, since in fact a year before the illness my friend died of lung cancer. She attended chemotherapy as well as the radiation and so it was, cancer equals death. I didn't know anybody who has survived.
- 15 Well, so it was quite horrible, but somehow – as I entered the treatment, I was lucky with people who were there, who were still in the process of the illness. So I suddenly saw, that they talk about it as about a flu [laughter], somehow, well. And I had the advantage, that I had people around me, who wanted to talk about it again and again, and me as well.
- 16 So I really talked out of it – well, everything was going on successfully [sigh], and then also the chemotherapies were quite okay. It is true, that then with the operation, after the four chemotherapies it was little bit more difficult, my health had got much worse, because the operation got me really down, that the strength – there was not enough of it, really.
- 17 But on the other hand – I just had a friend, who has a huge family and they set off for the whole summer, so when I was at the end with all those chemos, they took me for a vacation to their private cottage, with their granddaughters, I don't know with all the people [laughter]. I was with them probably two weeks and was going without the wig, and then
- 18 – however then another blow came [laughter], when I was to go for the radiation, so then somehow – an oncologist told me in the hall, in a terrible way, that I have somehow the metastases in my lungs, and that I should not keep much hope, well [bitter laughter].
- 19 *She told you that in this manner?*
- 20 In the hall, well, it really made me mad, really horribly, since it was really crazy for me.
- 21 Fortunately my oncologist, to whom she sent me later, that they had done again two other CTs, everything was getting confirmed, that I really have some huge tumour in the lungs and that these are probably metastases, since it was on the other side than the breast and everything.
- 22 So I just said goodbye to life [sigh, crying], really, I just – had it hard,
- 23 and he promised me, that we would try to find somebody, if he could operate on me. Because – that the results from the blood, that it doesn't really look like, but that there really is something in the lungs, so they would try somebody – and that I should not push him forward, since it would take two or three weeks.
- 24 Well, so that was the period when I just [huh] came to the conclusion somehow, that nothing worse can happen to me, than that I could die, well. And that so many of my dearest ones had died, that – just, that I might meet them somewhere, or whatever. So this was somehow quite good, that a person can really reach the bottom and then it was only rising,
- 25 since finally I got to the operation, the doctor was so gorgeous [laughter], he just told me, that – he described everything what he will do to me, that it would not be so terrible, that the lung operation was really horrible, that [laughter] he even prepared me for the fact, that it would hurt.
- 26 But I was telling him over and over, that I really would stand anything, that I did not feel like dying since I felt like nothing was wrong with me. That I was somehow breathing okay and so and that it makes no sense to me that people who had sick lungs, that they could not talk or so [laughter].

sjuzet, i.e. single words, phrases and sometimes entire segments that are concerned with emphasis, reflection, asides, interruptions, remarks, and various expressions representing the sequence/causality/significance of events being related in the story. The point is that stories are not simply related as events, but are re-told in a particular way, in a particular sequence, from a particular point of view. The participant (as narrator) 'positions' themselves with respect to these events, and this positioning is coded not simply in the selection of the story (i.e. content), but in the sjuzet, in the particular way in which it is being re-told.

So, the first stage of analysis is to underline these unbounded motifs. This always takes several readings, ending up with something like the text in Box 9.1. The result is a transcript in which the sjuzet seems to bracket the fabula. Indeed, a good test of this phase of analysis is to read through the non-underlined text, ignoring the sjuzet entirely. The fabula will then read as a simple coherent story, albeit rather 'flat' in presentation. It is worth remembering that the key feature of narrative text is the tension between sjuzet and fabula. Therefore, we do not recommend simply analysing these separately, but recommend using this basic division to help create the appropriate focus for further analysis.

It can be seen from Hanka's story that the sjuzet consists mostly of remarks and emphasis with words like: *so, well, since, because, that, just, really, somehow, fortunately*, with phrases starting with words like: *but, however*, and with extralinguistic expressions: *sighs, huh's, laughter, crying*, etc. It should also be clear that two crucial segments in the telling of the story (Segs 14 and 24), consist of reflections expressed mostly as sjuzet. This type of analysis is not without its difficulties, with some words and phrases seeming to fall into both sjuzet and fabula, but the overall result is usually quite convincing, and is transparent. It must be noted that this separation of sjuzet from fabula, is just a first step in separating *form* and *content*, and by no means exhausts this distinction. For example, part of the form of a narrative is embedded in

the content, i.e. in the sequencing of events as a plot structure, and in the complexity and coherence employed. Nevertheless, this type of analysis is a necessary first step before re-integration at a later stage of the analysis. The obvious techniques that can be used to analyse the fabula are content and genre analysis, see (ii) and (iv) below. But the analysis of sjuzet is possibly much more challenging. In Hanka's story, there is a strong impression that Hanka's identity is crucially being positioned as a victim and survivor of cancer in the *unbounded* features of the narrative space that she creates.

The point is that in narrative analysis we must focus on both the *what* and the *how* of the re-telling, upon both the story that is being told as well as the way in which it is being re-told. This does confront us with some of the more subtle points involved in narrative data analysis, and serves to make the point that this area is in need of considerable, radical development. See (v) and (vi) below for two perspectives that begin to tackle this.

(ii) *The holistic-content perspective*

We now turn to the first of the modes of narrative analysis outlined by Lieblich et al. (1998) which aims to create a holistic-content picture of Hanka's story, and involves exploring and establishing links and associations within the entire story. The emphasis here is upon the fabula, although not at the expense of the sjuzet. Lieblich et al. offer two versions of this approach, firstly by identifying a broad perspective of the general theme as in a case study, and secondly, by exploring how a specific segment of the text can shed light on the story as a whole. The approach we will take to Hanka's story is a variation on the second of these, identifying the turning points in her story, and formulating a core narrative.

The procedure for a holistic reading of the text set out by Lieblich et al. (1998: 62–3) is as follows:

- 1 read the material without any special attention until a pattern emerges;
- 2 put the first impression from this kind of reading into a written form, note contradictory episodes,

- unusual parts of the story, or any feature that is disharmonic towards a coherent story, etc.;
- 3 choose a special focus of content or themes in the story as a whole, i.e. delineate a space for themes which occur in the text in a repetitive way that is meaningful within the whole story;
 - 4 mark the various themes, read them separately and repeatedly; and
 - 5 keep track of the result in several ways, e.g. themes appearing for the first time, crossover between themes, context, the main theme, marginal themes, contradictory contents, etc.

In order to do justice to this type of analysis it is necessary to place this within the context of the full interview. Having been divorced, Hanka (age 51) feels lonely in a huge apartment and in her life. Her children have grown up and left home. Hanka tries to be a person who is needed, she starts her own business and this adds to her stress levels. The diagnosis of breast cancer brings about separation from her partner and represents the first *turning point* in the story.

Hanka fears death because, for her, chemotherapy is synonymous with a hopeless fight. The doctor confronts her with his own experience, and calms her down. Crisis deepens by the discovery of the carcinoma in her lungs. Operation and treatment weaken her stamina, she finds support in a self-help group, a friend, and the friend's family. She receives inconsiderate information about the metastasis. She resolves to fight the cancer thanks to the empathic reaction of her oncologist. This is the second *turning point* which enables Hanka to bounce back towards an active life. Mortality and death are accepted, balanced against the hope of encountering dead loved ones. Not only in illness, but even in death there is acceptance of an opening of a new space in interpersonal relationships. Cancer is understood as reconciliation with one's fate.

While several major themes can be found in Hanka's story (see the discussion of *Categorical-Content* analysis below), the approach here seeks to identify the core narrative, i.e. a theme that is vivid, permeating the entire text, and is meaningful. What emerge in Hanka's story are the notions of

hardiness, stamina, of desire for life, best summed up in the core theme of '*finding inner life-strength in the face of death*'. This main theme is especially reflected in segments 14/15 and segments 24/25/26.

(iii) *The holistic-form perspective*

The focus of this perspective is on the form of the story rather than on its content. With the focus here on the fabula (i.e. on the *plot* rather than the fine detail of the *sjuzet*), consideration is given to the narrative typology, to narrative progression, and narrative cohesion (Lieblich et al., 1998: 88).

A classic typology of narrative is *romance*, *comedy*, *tragedy* and *satire*, i.e. narrative structures affirming the social order, breaking/restoring the social order, loss of the social order, and cynical challenge to social order, respectively. Hanka's story is basically a romance (note that 'romance' is used here in its technical sense).

Gergen and Gergen (1988) argue that every story is characterized by its plot. Stories can progress towards the present moment in the teller's life, or can diverge from it. Plot analysis in its simplest form identifies three basic life-course patterns – progression, regression and steady, which in turn can be combined into more complex plots (Čermák, 2004).

In literary terms, a cohesive story is a well-constructed story in terms of continuity, coherence and universality, and this can be used also with respect to life story. Nevertheless, we need to try to avoid evaluation, and instead focus upon how the story as a whole works in creating its meaning. Of course, both *sjuzet* and *fabula* each have their role in this.

The configuration of Hanka's experience with cancer can be characterized in a simplified way. The overall progress of Hanka's story is U-shaped. The story descends to the bottom, from which the happier turn upward starts, with movement from loneliness and separation towards integration into the community. The happy resolution is emphasized repeatedly in the narration. The confrontation with the proximity of death (Seg. 24 – '*that nothing worse can happen to me, than*

that I could die')) is the key moment of this narrative configuration (Chrz et al., 2006).

The U-shape is the striking configuration of Hanka's story, and this finding is in accord with Frye (1957) who proposes that the basic structuring principles of the narrative imagination is formed mainly by structures of desire. This U-shape demonstrates this specific phase of Hanka's life (the fight with cancer, and turning point in the course of illness), representing the underlying dynamic of the story as a whole.

(iv) The categorical–content perspective

This approach to narrative analysis involves breaking the text down into relatively self-contained areas of content, and submitting each to thematic analysis. This is basically equivalent to content analysis (see Riessman, 1993). Lieblich et al. (1998: 112–14) outline four stages involved in this approach:

- 1 formulation of a research question which enables the selection of a subtext that becomes the focus of analysis;
- 2 definition of the subcategories/themes running through the text, these might either emerge from the text in a grounded-theory manner, or may be predefined by theory;
- 3 the units of analysis, i.e. utterances, phrases, episodes can then be assigned to these categories; and
- 4 conclusions can then be drawn from the results.

Applying this to Hanka's narrative, the process involves concentrating on regularities in the text, and identifying meaning-bearing utterances pertinent to the original research question. Units of analysis are then assigned to these subcategories. A summary of this analysis is presented in Box 9.2.

In the research from which Hanka's narrative has been taken (Chrz et al., 2006), a major theme that was identified was the category, *agency*, to which all of the subcategories contribute. In Hanka's case, two further major themes were identified, these are *spheres of influence* (within which subcategories 1, 3, 5 can be placed), and *responsibility* (within which subcategories 2, 4, 6, 7 can be placed).

BOX 9.2 Hanka: Categorical–Content Analysis

Subcategory (1): fear of death

[Seg. 13] Unit of analysis: 'when he uttered the word chemotherapy, that it was so terrifying for me'.

Subcategory (2): closeness to people with a similar story

[Seg. 15] Unit of analysis: 'I was lucky with people who were there, who were still in the process of the illness'.

Subcategory(3): loss of physical strength

[Seg. 16] Unit of analysis: 'the operation got me really down, that the strength – there was not enough of it, really'.

Subcategory (4): social support

[Seg. 17] Unit of analysis: 'I just had a friend, who has a huge family and they set off for the whole summer, so when I was at the end with all those chemos, they took me for a vacation to their private cottage'.

Subcategory (5): second blow of fate

[Seg. 18] Unit of analysis: 'however then another blow came (laughter)... that I have somehow the metastases in my lungs'.

Subcategory (6): acceptance of the illness

[Seg. 24] Unit of analysis: 'that nothing worse can happen to me, than that I could die, well'.

Subcategory (7): finding inner life strength

[Seg. 26] Unit of analysis: 'I really would stand anything, that I did not feel like dying since I felt like nothing was wrong with me'.

Hanka's agency is expressed in her story-telling by the way in which she tries to make sense of what has happened to her. Her story represents the subtle aspects of control vs. contingency involved in this sense-making process. In her story, fortunate circumstances and a change of her attitude (the turning point) bring the story to the happy ending, which can be conceived as Hanka's coping strategy.

These themes fit well with Frank's (1995) proposal that a person's reaction to illness can fall into three basic configurations: restitution, chaos and quest narrative. According to Frank, the chaos narrative and quest narrative are two possible ways of picturing contingency in human life. In the chaos narrative the basic contingency involves the negation of any expectations and rules. It is not welcomed and is perceived as something undesired. By contrast the quest narrative involves facing up to suffering, acceptance of the illness, and searching for the way to make use out of it. Hanka's story can be seen as a quest narrative; she opens herself to the crisis and accepts the unpredictability and absence of control, including the ultimate contingency of human mortality (Seg. 24 – *'that nothing worse can happen to me, than that I could die'*), a contingency that prefigures the 'happy moment' leading to 'the happy ending' in her story.

(v) *The categorical-form perspective*

This fourth approach outlined by Lieblich et al. (1998) focuses upon the formal aspects of the narrative, specifically including the *sujet*. This begins by choosing a category or subtext for analysis, and then carefully exploring the linguistic features and plot devices that offer emphasis and style in re-telling the story. Such features might include: adverbs (e.g. *suddenly*), mental verbs (e.g. *I thought*), denotations of time and place, past/present/future forms of verbs, passive and active verbs, intensifiers (e.g. *really*, *very*), disruptions of chronological and causal progression, repetitions, etc. (see Lieblich et al., 1998: 156).

We will focus upon just two of the features of Hanka's story-telling: her use of direct speech and the extra-linguistic components. These both serve to strengthen the emotional impact of the events recounted, giving immediacy and authenticity to the re-telling.

The use of direct speech occurs in Seg. 13, where the physician's words have the impact of promoting a change in Hanka's agency, reflected in her directly reported response. She draws up her 'inner strength', leading to gradual acceptance of her illness, and accepting responsibility for the active 'fight' with it. It should be noted that in the working transcript (Box 9.1) the start of this direct speech is marked by the imputed notation [*he said*], used merely as a cue for this type of analysis.

While a more thorough analysis would be appropriate, briefly, extra-linguistic components, such as laughter, a sigh, or crying, indicate features in the telling which could refer to difficult, still un-integrated, experience:

Seg. 22 – *'So I just said goodbye to life [sigh, crying], really, I just – had it hard',*

or may reflect an attempt to cope with a difficult experience, or realization:

Seg. 26 – *'That I was somehow breathing okay and so that it makes no sense to me that people who had sick lungs, that they could talk or so [laughter]'.*

(vi) *Critical narrative analysis*

Each of the five previous types of analysis brings a subtly different perspective to understanding narrative research, and it should also be evident that there are many interpretive overlaps as well. This should not be seen as a problem, but rather as a strength in our approach. And yet, there is still something missing from this framework. This could be characterized as the functionality of Hanka's story. What sort of account of her life is Hanka offering? How does Hanka position herself with respect to her illness, and the series of events that unfold?

To this end, we include a sixth perspective, best exemplified in the work of Emerson and

Frosh (2004) (see Chapter 7). They call their approach critical narrative analysis, which they characterize as psychosocial, embracing: 'the critical gains of discourse analysis... but combining it with a focus on the active constructing processes through which individual subjects attempt to account for their lives' (Emerson and Frosh, 2004: 7).

The approach involves a microanalysis of both *sjuzet* and *fabula* (but with considerable emphasis on the *sjuzet*), and is probably best used only after the previous interpretive perspectives have been used. Using this approach, we find that three critical themes in Hanka's story seem to stand out. Hanka positions herself with respect to:

- 1 experience of the things that are happening to me, e.g. Seg. 18 – '*another blow*,' Seg. 24 – '*that nothing worse can happen to me, than that I could die*';
- 2 resources I can draw upon – medical intervention, people around me, family of a friend, insight and reflection, my own inner strength, e.g. Seg. 12 – '*he would offer me a reducing chemotherapy*', Seg. 15 – '*And I had the advantage, that I had people around me*', Seg. 17 – '*I don't know with all the people*', Seg. 26 – '*I really would stand anything*';
- 3 my relations with medical staff, e.g. Seg. 13 – '*he probably estimated me quite well*', Seg. 13 – '*he started quite rashly with me*', Seg. 18 – '*an oncologist told me in the hall*', Seg. 21 – '*fortunately my oncologist*', Seg. 25 – '*doctor was so gorgeous*'.

Invited to tell her story, Hanka describes vividly the ups and downs (or, more accurately, the downs and ups) of her experience of illness. She positions herself with respect to her own body and the difficult procedures she must endure. But ultimately, and remarkably, she positions herself as in control of her own fate, whatever happens.

She positively positions herself with respect to the support and resources she is offered, which not only includes the medical attention she receives, but being especially lucky with people who want to talk and talk and who give her space to talk as well, and with her friends and their families who can

accept her without a wig. She positions herself positively towards the emerging inner strength that she is discovering.

She positions herself ambivalently towards the medical staff who treat her, who bring her good and bad news, but who also can be rash and harsh, supportive and attentive, unkind and unthoughtful, who can make and keep their promises, and who can look gorgeous while listening to her telling something over and over again.

The agency and responsibility that Hanka achieves in her fight with cancer, the way she finds inner strength in the face of death, are acted out and made sense of through the respective identity positions that she adopts in her story.

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR NOI

Just three critical issues will be discussed here. There is the need, firstly, to do justice to the full range of narrative phenomena that might be studied; secondly, to acknowledge the complexities and challenges of interpretive analysis; and thirdly, to achieve transparency in the methods used.

A major issue for NOI is in attempting to do justice to the full breadth of narrative phenomena. The types of narrative available to study are disturbingly wide: oral vs. written, fictional vs. historical/personal accounts, life-story vs. isolated events, crafted vs. spontaneous, public vs. private, mediated vs. intersubjective, etc. Narratives can arise within the context of interview, conversation, family, organization, clinical encounter, and always within the context of the signifying practices of a wider culture. Moreover, for each type of narrative and each context, the range of possible research questions will rise exponentially. In these respects, NOI sets out a framework within which to deal with this wide diversity of data, but there are very many details still to flesh out.

There are also critical issues concerned with the collection and analysis of narrative data. The narrative research interview has variously been described as involving

'the joint construction of meaning' (Mishler, 1986a), or 'a shared participation in a matrix of signification' (Josselson and Lieblich, 2001). A reasonable claim is that data from a narrative interview has obvious face validity, but there may be concerns with establishing its authenticity. NOI is deeply rooted within the hermeneutic tradition, and just as an interview involves the joint construction of meaning, so the same applies to the interpretative process that is involved in data analysis. Whatever interpretations the research findings offer, they necessarily must be a joint product of both the participant, as data supplier, and the researcher, as data analyser. This is inescapable, and is a simple fact of life for any qualitative researcher. There is a serious obstacle here for many researchers brought up in the positivist tradition, an obstacle that for many will be insurmountable. However, it is worth noting that this matter is no different to our everyday meaning-making, e.g. interpreting each others' behaviour. So, if we do get by in our everyday encounters, then why cannot we find suitable criteria for 'getting by' in our research? This is not an attempt to trivialize the issue. In fact, we cannot dismiss this problem, nor are we in a position to set out these criteria once and for all. But we do need to take this problem very seriously. Indeed, it is our belief that with some patience, and with a rigorous commitment to staying close to the data, a confidence in our procedures will emerge.

Finally, we would like to stress the critical importance of the notion of *transparency*. This is the need to be clear and open about the methods used, and the assumptions being made – which we argue should be recognized as the basic requirement of all qualitative research. Our point is that transparency is the overriding concern in laying the groundwork for the *critical evaluation* needed in writing up research. Methods of inquiry, data collection and analysis, if they are to be clear enough for others to replicate, must be transparent. Note that the emphasis here is on the *procedures* being replicable, and not the findings as such – this is quite

intentional and is an important difference between qualitative and quantitative inquiry. The rigour of NOI relies on establishing transparency. This means that not only must we be clear to others about what we have done and what we have found, but we must also be clear to ourselves, at every step, and at every stage, about what it is that we are doing. The critical issue for NOI is to make its procedures transparent.

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Phenomenological Psychology

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is fairly well known that it is difficult to give a univocal definition of phenomenological philosophy that is comprehensive enough to include its varied interpretations. The same is true when phenomenological thought, or methods, are applied to psychology. Since the major phenomenological philosophers differ significantly among themselves, it should not be surprising that different strategies emerge when psychologists seeking to ground their work in phenomenological philosophy use different thinkers as their primary source. In another place (A. Giorgi, in press a), the first author of this chapter identified the various types of phenomenological methods being used in psychology in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The types that were identified were: (1) Goethean pre-philosophical experimental phenomenology, (2) grass-roots phenomenology, (3) interpretive phenomenology, (4) descriptive pre-transcendental Husserlian phenomenology, and (5) Husserlian phenomenology based on a return from the transcendental. However, here we can only cover in a schematic way what was covered in more detail in the

article (A. Giorgi, in press a) referred to previously.

Goethean pre-philosophical experimental phenomenological tradition

The beginner of this line of research was Johann Goethe (1749–1832), the noted poet and humanist, who came up with a theory of color vision quite different from Newton's. He was succeeded by the physiologists J.E. Purkinje (1787–1869), Johannes Müller (1801–1858) and Ewald Hering (1834–1918). Hering also proposed a theory of color vision that differed from that of Helmholtz, and their debate, which in certain ways paralleled the dispute between Goethe and Newton, continued into the twentieth century (Turner, 1994).

The next two figures are Carl Stumpf (1848–1936) and G. E. Müller (1850–1934), both of whom were open to phenomenology in different ways. It was during the first decade of the twentieth century that according to Boring (1950: 367) 'phenomenology was in the air' in Germany. Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) published his *Logical*

Investigations in 1900; the Würzburg school was conducting studies on thinking and the 'imageless thought' controversy emerged; and there were two phenomenological groups in existence at this time (roughly 1904–1914): the Göttingen Circle and the Munich Circle (Spiegelberg, 1982). Three of Müller's students conducted phenomenological experimental work: Erich Jaensch (1883–1940), for a while; David Katz (1884–1953) and Edgar Rubin (1886–1951) more persistently. Rubin initiated the Copenhagen School of phenomenology and a second generation of Danish phenomenological-experimental researchers were Edgar Tranekjaer-Rasmussen (1900–1994), Franz From (1914–1998) and Ib Moustgaard (1926–1997).

Perhaps the most well-known form of phenomenological experimental research was conducted by the Gestalt psychologists although they never explicitly used the term as a label for their work. These were Max Wertheimer (1880–1943); Kurt Koffka (1886–1941); and Wolfgang Köhler (1887–1967) and all of them ended their careers in the USA because of Nazism. One Gestaltist who did not emigrate was Wolfgang Metzger (1899–1979) and he suggested that his successors were not in Germany but in northern Italy (personal communication). The Italian holistic approach was begun by Vittorio Benussi (1878–1927) but it was carried on by Cesare Musatti (1897–1989), Fabio Metelli (1907–1987), Gaetano Kanizsa (1913–1993) and subsequently by Paulo Bozzi (1930–2003) and Giovanni Vicario.

Thus a line of experimental phenomenology can be drawn from Goethe through Gestalt psychology to Vicario. To be sure, Goethe never used the term, nor did Hering, and the sense in which phenomenology was understood is not consistent throughout all this lineage, but there are some common denominators. They were all concerned with how the 'givens' were experienced and precise observation and description were important tasks for all of them. Holistic and unprejudiced attitudes were also common factors. It seems that the term 'descriptive

method' was used early on and finally it got to be called the 'phenomenological method' (Katz, 1930; Stern, 1930). The lectures of Husserl in the first decade of the twentieth century probably played a role in this switch of names, but the influence of Stumpf was also a factor.

'Grass-roots' phenomenology

This term usually refers to the phenomenological movement that emerged in the USA independent of the tradition we have just covered and generally independent of the European philosophical context. The initiator of this movement was Donald Snygg (1904–1967), and he came up with the term 'phenomenological' based on the recommendation of his professor. What Snygg (1941) meant by this term is that the viewpoint of the behavior or experiencer was primary, as opposed to the researcher's objective perspective as in traditional behavioristic psychology. He wanted to explore the phenomenal field of the individual, which he characterized as 'the world of naïve, immediate experience in which each individual lives, the everyday situation of self and surroundings which the unsophisticated person takes to be real' (Snygg, 1941: 415).

Then Snygg came into contact with Arthur Combs (1912–1999), who had been exposed to Rogers' non-directive counseling theories, and when he came across Snygg's 1941 article referred to above, Combs (1999) suggested that they work out the implications of the phenomenological system for psychology. The result was a book by Snygg and Combs (1949) entitled *Individual Behavior*. Combs came out with a second edition of the book (Combs and Snygg, 1959) and in this new edition the term 'perceptual' replaced that of 'phenomenological.' The third edition included new collaborators with Combs, Anne and Fred Richards (1976), and it was called *Perceptual Psychology: A Humanistic Approach to the Study of Persons*. Thus, the original perspective interested in the phenomenal field joined forces with

the humanistic psychology movement and became integrated with it.

However, this grass-roots movement, while strongly interested in research, did not develop a specifically phenomenological method. That is because Snygg and Combs tried to insert their new perspective into the standard objectivistic framework that they were critiquing. For example, while the authors recognized the limits of introspection, they spoke about access to the inner world of others through inferences rather than intuitions, and tried to legitimate their inferences in standard, objective ways (Combs et al., 1976: 366–88). Cloonan (1995) has detailed the development of phenomenological psychological research in America in a thorough way.

Interpretive phenomenology

The phenomenological philosophy that was begun by Husserl was intended as a descriptive enterprise. When Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Husserl's student, reinterpreted the phenomenological project, he argued that the phenomenological method was basically interpretive. Both Husserl and Heidegger agree that both description and interpretation are legitimate methods, but they disagree with respect to which is primary. Husserl, from an epistemological perspective, states that description is primary and that interpretation is a special type of description. Heidegger, from an ontological perspective, declares that interpretation is primary and that description is a special type of interpretation. The differences in priorities relate to their respective starting points.

Because Heidegger (1962) emphasized Dasein rather than consciousness, and Dasein is the place where the question of being arises and its task is to interpret the meaning of being, Heidegger advocates an interpretive methodology, which converges with the tradition of hermeneutics. Subsequently, Heidegger's student Gadamer (1900–2002) reinforced the interpretive tradition in his major work, *Truth and Method* (Gadamer, 1986). Because of his focus on the

question of being, Heidegger did not employ the Husserlian phenomenological reduction (to be discussed in the next section), which is a necessary part of Husserl's phenomenology. Heidegger (1982: 21) writes:

Being is to be laid hold of and made our theme ... Apprehension of being, ontological investigation, always turns, at first and necessarily, to some being; but then in a precise way, it is led away from that being and led back to its being. We call this basic component of the phenomenological method – the leading back or re-duction of investigative vision from a naively apprehended being to being – phenomenological reduction. We are thus adopting a central term of Husserl's phenomenology in its literal wording though not in its substantive intent.

The quotation shows that there is a type of reduction in Heidegger, but it thematizes being rather than consciousness. To follow that reduction, however, would mean that the researcher would be conducting an ontological investigation.

Psychologists who follow the Heideggerian interpretation of phenomenology follow what is called the interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenological method, and these methods are grounded in the thought of early Heidegger or Gadamer. An example of this approach is the book edited by Packer and Addison (1989a). It is dedicated to hermeneutic research in psychology, but the chapters in it are quite diverse and do not all follow the same procedures. The guiding theme of the editors, however, is the hermeneutic method as articulated by early Heidegger. Based upon the circularity of understanding as described by Heidegger, according to Packer and Addison (1989b), the method requires one to enter into the hermeneutic circle in the proper way and to use the 'fore-knowledge' of the phenomenon that one has in order to determine a proper perspective with which to approach the phenomenon. The appropriate perspective does not come automatically, nor necessarily easily. One must constantly consult the text and other possible theoretical approaches in order to find an appropriate angle with which to do an analysis. Once the explicit awareness of the phenomenon to be studied is arrived at, and the angle of approach settled, the analysis

itself is a dialectical process of articulating and clarifying the meanings that emerge from the analysis, and it is incumbent upon the researcher to demonstrate their relevance. As Packer (1989: 117) states, 'the goal to which interpretive inquiry is ultimately directed is not just one of mirroring reality in a descriptive account, but of changing it for the better in some way.' Of course, what 'better' means depends very much upon the nature of the phenomenon being investigated, the circumstances surrounding it and, of course, the results of the research.

A researcher who appropriates Gadamer into his research procedures, although not exclusively, is Max van Manen (1990). Actually, van Manen tries to integrate the contributions of Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer in his praxis, but the differences between Husserl and the other two, in our judgment, are too great to be overcome. Thus, van Manen (1990: 180) writes as follows concerning 'hermeneutic phenomenology':

Hermeneutic phenomenology tries to be attentive to both terms of its methodology: it is a descriptive (phenomenological) methodology because it wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves; it is an interpretive (hermeneutic) methodology because it claims that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomena. The implied contradiction may be resolved if one acknowledges that the (phenomenological) 'facts' of lived experience are always already meaningfully (hermeneutically) experienced. Moreover, even the 'facts' of lived experience need to be captured in language (the human science text) and this is inevitably an interpretive process.

The difficulty here is that van Manen does not follow Husserl's thought strictly. He speaks of the 'facts' of lived experience rather than their meanings, which can be accessed by an act of reflection. For Husserl, a meaning is the determinate relationship between an act of consciousness and its object which the intentional relationship establishes. Moreover, if there are no 'uninterpreted phenomena,' how can his method 'let the things speak for themselves'? He also assumes that if a meaning has been grasped, then an act of interpretation has taken place. But that is not Husserl's

position. Finally, van Manen asserts that if a lived experience has to be captured in language, then it inevitably has to be interpreted. However, that is not Husserl's theory of description. We feel that van Manen would have been better off not trying to straddle the descriptive and interpretive positions but should have stayed consistently with the interpretive phenomenological view, which ultimately is his position.

Another quasi-contradiction in van Manen is his attitude toward method. He (van Manen, 1990: 3) writes that he 'hope[s] to show that there is a way to deal with methodological concerns that is decidedly unmethodological in a purely prescriptive or technocratic sense.' It is true that 'a method' is not genuinely reducible to a technique. But van Manen also wants to conduct research systematically, for he writes: 'Human science is a systematic study of human experience' (1990: 168). At the same time he proclaims that 'there is no research design or blueprint to follow' (1990: 167). His anti-methodological stance is derived partly from Gadamer, who wants to claim access to truth free from methodological concerns, and also by the example of some of the members of the Utrecht School of phenomenology. However, this is not true of all followers of hermeneutic phenomenology, since Packer and Addison (1989b) explicitly argue against Gadamer's anti-methodical position.

In this context we should also mention the work of Smith (1996), Smith and Osborn (2003) and Eatough and Smith (2007: Chapter 11 of this volume) who propose a phenomenological-interpretive strategy. This strategy is more interpretive than phenomenological, especially with respect to methodological issues. Smith and Osborn (2003: 66) state that what they are offering is 'not a prescriptive methodology. It is a way of doing IPA (interpretive phenomenological analysis) that has worked for us and our students, but it is there to be adapted by researchers who will have their own personal way of working.' Thus, they are offering something like an adaptable praxis just as therapists practice individualized procedures

even though they may align themselves with a certain school, such as psychoanalytic or cognitive-behavioral. This attitude is reaffirmed by Eatough and Smith in Chapter 11 of this volume. Thus, what they propose is not so much a method, which has some unalterable procedures as an approach or a perspective.

Eatough and Smith contrast their approach with our method and state that while we seek the general structure of phenomena they seek idiographic information about individuals. However, it could be argued that this confuses methods of research with goals. We could just as easily concentrate on the experience or behavior of an individual and seek the essence of certain selected idiographic experiences. Husserl (1983) states that essences can be derived from universal phenomena or particular individuals.

Although there are still many differences among practitioners of hermeneutic phenomenology, they base their work on respected philosophers and attempt to draw out scientific methodical and practical implications of the ideas encountered in philosophical works of thinkers such as Heidegger (1962), Gadamer (1986), Ricoeur (1976, 1981), Dilthey (1977), and several others.

Descriptive pre-transcendental Husserlian phenomenology

One version of this approach was initiated and developed by the first author of this chapter, based upon the thought of Husserl (1970, 1983) and Merleau-Ponty (1962). It was a task thrust upon him and eagerly accepted, in the following manner.

The first author's background was in experimental psychology, specifically psychophysics and research methodology, and he was invited to join the psychology department at Duquesne University in order to develop research methods that would be more compatible with the unique orientation of the psychology department, which was existential-phenomenological. The doctoral program began in September 1962, at the time that Giorgi joined the department and its

conception was due to the forward-looking vision of a Dutchman, Adrian van Kaam, who, aware of the changing philosophical scene in Europe, thought that psychology could benefit by concentrating on the new ideas in phenomenological thought. Most of the staff were clinicians and Giorgi was brought in to teach research methods but also, specifically, to develop research procedures that would be more compatible with the existential-phenomenological frame of reference adopted by the department.

At that time, phenomenological philosophy was fairly well established, so Giorgi concentrated upon the work of Husserl, the founder of phenomenological philosophy in the modern sense of the term. Husserl (1983) articulated a philosophical phenomenological method, but at the level of scientific practice, one could not follow his steps exactly because such a strict following of Husserl would result in a philosophical analysis rather than a scientific, psychological one. Merleau-Ponty (1962) also articulated steps of a method based upon Husserl, and after a careful reading of these two works, based upon his research background, Giorgi introduced modifications in the steps of the philosophical method so that scientific psychological results could be forthcoming if one applied the method to descriptive data. There is only space here to give a brief description of the method, but a fuller account is available in other sources (see Giorgi, 1997, in press b; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003a, 2003b). The basic steps of the method are (see Box 10.1 for a summary): (1) one obtains a concrete description of a phenomenon as lived through by a person, either directly described or by interview, and before analyzing the description, the researcher assumes the phenomenological attitude, a psychological perspective towards the data, and one is mindfully sensitive to the type of phenomenon being researched. Then, within that complex attitude, the researcher reads the entire description to establish a sense of familiarity with it. The complex attitude is maintained throughout the description. (2) Once a sense of the whole has been established, the researcher goes back to

BOX 10.1 A Guide to the Phenomenological Method

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Now, several contextual points should be clarified. We have mentioned above that the researcher had to assume the phenomenological attitude. The research participants who write the concrete descriptions do it from the perspective of the natural attitude or Lifeworld perspective. The natural attitude is the attitude of everyday life. It is the common sense attitude we all have as we live

our daily lives doing the ordinary things we do. To assume the phenomenological attitude means two things: (1) The researcher must bracket all past knowledge about the phenomenon being researched so that he or she can be freshly present to the current instance of it and (2) the researcher does not posit the phenomenon he or she is experiencing to be real (even if it is) but merely considers it to be a presence to the experiencing person. Strictly speaking, it is a phenomenon for the experiencer but not necessarily a reality in the world. Consequently, all epistemological claims made by the researcher relate to the experiential realm of the experiencer and not to the reality aspect of the given. Thus, the specialized phenomenological attitude is very different from the natural attitude. Readers should be aware that the Lifeworld concept has several other meanings within a philosophical phenomenological context besides the one we have thematized, but the others are not relevant to the present concerns.

Now, we have stated at the outset that the phenomenological reduction being used in this psychological context is a pre-transcendental one. The reduction that Husserl speaks about for his philosophical method is a transcendental reduction.

The difference is significant. For Husserl, to assume a transcendental perspective means to view what is given from a non-human perspective. Transcendental consciousness is a universal form of essential consciousness that would belong to every type of being that participated in conscious reality. Pre-transcendental consciousness implies a specifically human mode of being conscious, which is appropriate for investigating the psychology of human persons. That is, while the object or event being experienced is considered merely as something present to the experiencer, the subjectivity or consciousness that is the base of the experience is understood to be existing and related to the world. The transcendental perspective does not posit a real, existing subjectivity as the source of its acts.

Perhaps, in passing, we should note the work of two other former Duquesne students who have written on method in pre-transcendental ways. These are Colaizzi (1978) and Hycner (1985) and they tend to follow a more generic phenomenological approach, taking some elements from Husserl, some from Heidegger and some steps are the result of their own inventions. Both researchers include some deviations from orthodox procedures but they relate more to strategies of research than to phenomenological principles so we will not pursue these issues further here.

Clark Moustakas (1994) is another psychologist who has independently also described a method for psychological analyses based upon a Husserlian perspective. However, there are many differences between Moustakas's interpretation of Husserlian phenomenology and ours but these differences cannot be detailed here. It seems that the differences are to a large part due to the fact that Moustakas has let his understanding of heuristic research, a research procedure that Moustakas (1990) had developed earlier, influence his understanding of phenomenology. In addition, Moustakas (1994: 60–1) is not true to Husserl's understanding of transcendental phenomenology when he retains the term 'transcendental' for

his phenomenological psychological method because, in Husserl, the term does not refer to human consciousness.

The return from the transcendental

This is a perspective that is theoretically plausible but difficult to do and, to our knowledge, only attempted once. Another former Duquesne student, Larry Davidson, thematized this possibility in his doctoral dissertation (Davidson, 1989). Later, with a colleague (Davidson and Cosgrove, 1991, 2002), an attempt was made to carry out the analysis of what was theoretically outlined. Basically, this approach accepts the transcendental perspective that Husserl articulated, which is a level of an essential, intersubjective, non-human consciousness that is founding with respect to human, psychological consciousness. It is a field of intersubjective consciousness larger than any individual human consciousness and specific forms of human consciousness emerge from it. As Davidson and Cosgrove (2002: 159) say, 'Following the performance of the transcendental reduction the psychic is understood to be a self-objectification of a transcendental subjectivity.' The idea, of course, comes from Husserl, but it provides a perspective from which one can view a psychological phenomenon from outside of it.

There are many other interesting aspects of the transcendental perspective that the authors relate to the practice of psychology but we have to limit ourselves to the issue of method here. The authors (Davidson and Cosgrove, 2002: 143) describe four steps to their transcendental descriptive approach (slightly reordered by us): they have asked the participant to describe certain experiences she has had, and then,

- (1) (the descriptions) were seen from the perspective of the Lifeworld rather than as being in the natural attitude as they were obtained; (2) then, the phenomenological–psychological reduction was applied so that the data could be seen as belonging to the personal attitude of the participant; (3) the researcher then assumes the transcendental phenomenological reduction and analyzes data from

that perspective; and (4) the researcher returns to the positivity of the data to reclaim psychology as a worldly, but no longer naïve, discipline.

The first two steps are similar, but not identical, to our first two steps, and the latter two described by Davidson and Cosgrove (2002) are additional.

In principle, we agree with the transcendental perspective but have hesitated to carry it out because of the lack of clarity related to a pure transcendental analysis as well as the ambiguity concerning the delineation, in practice, between psychological subjectivity and transcendental subjectivity. For example, while the theoretical articulation of the transcendental perspective by the authors is clear, one wonders if in the analysis the authors have gone beyond the human intersubjective world. The transcendental perspective, if intersubjective, is nevertheless beyond the human intersubjective level. The authors trace the constitutional achievements back to familial, social, and cultural factors, and thus beyond the personal, but it is not clear that the humanness has been transcended. Still, the authors ought to be commended for attempting to implement the most radical Husserlian position.

A second point nevertheless has to be made. It seems that the authors dismiss pre-transcendental analyses too quickly. They (Davidson and Cosgrove, 2002: 144) state that 'Without a domain of the transcendental to which to refer, psychology will always assume that intentional constitution is a psychological function.' They certainly make this claim for 'existential-hermeneutic' types of phenomenological psychology, but it is not clear whether they would include our type of descriptive pre-transcendental analyses. In any case, it would be erroneous to include our method under their objection because it is clear from many descriptions of phenomena that references to meanings beyond the psychological subject providing the description are clearly ascertainable. For example, in the description by the participant who was a guest in a San Francisco home of her friend, reported by A. Giorgi (1985: 62–4),

the participant clearly expressed meanings that did not originate in her. So much of her experience had to do with how she was brought up and what her expectations were concerning how to behave like a good guest. These expressed meanings had familial, social, and cultural sources and no claim was made that they originated in her. What was not done, however, was to trace the expressed meanings back to their transcendental origins. Thus, the pre-transcendental method did not commit the error the authors referred to; it was incomplete rather than erroneous. The authors took their example from a clinical situation, but research procedures are perhaps more cautious. Our view, therefore, is that the pre-transcendental and transcendental methods are complementary. One can do significant research with the pre-transcendental method, but for radical grounding and legitimation, the transcendental perspective is essential.

One last caution. The authors stress the constituting activity of the transcendental 'I,' but in our view, the psychological subject also can constitute meanings and these should not be overlooked. True, the psychological subject is the self-objectification of transcendental subjectivity, but it is a constituted subjectivity that is still capable of constituting. It is both constituted and constituting.

THE MEANINGS OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

Having reviewed the different manifestations of the term 'phenomenology' as applied to methods we shall now try to summarize our findings. The different senses of phenomenology are as follows.

Goethean pre-philosophical phenomenology

The basic standard we shall use for characterizing these phenomenologies will be the philosophy of Edmund Husserl and that of Martin Heidegger. Since Goethe practiced a type of phenomenology prior to either

philosophy and he was not interested in developing a philosophy based on his work, we shall call it pre-philosophical. However, Goethe was interested in clarifying and articulating a sound empirical science and that is why some of his strategies could be adopted by physiologists and experimental psychologists. Thus, his phenomenology, and those of his successors, can be characterized by:

- 1 Careful, unprejudiced observation of many aspects and variations of a given phenomenon followed by non-reductionistic and detailed descriptions.
- 2 The approach is directed toward the 'given' in a non-speculative, non-hypothetical, non-theoretical way in the sense that theory might take off from the given to cover over gaps or lacunae in what was 'given.'
- 3 The approach is intuitive in the sense that the description is limited to what is given experientially to consciousness and the presence can be non-sensorial. Goethe believed that the basic phenomenon could be holistically intuited and this intuition was to guide subsequent analyses and experiments.

Thus the approach here is descriptive and not interpretive and while there is no formal reduction, there are what Gurwitsch (1964) called 'incipient reductions' within the Gestalt approach.

'Grass-roots' phenomenology

The 'grass-roots' phenomenological tradition is perhaps the most naïve and underdeveloped of the five traditions we have identified. The basic claim for the 'phenomenological' label is the fact that the goal of the research is to understand the situation of the other as the other experiences it. In other words, the experiential world of the other is the theme of the research. There is not a consistent method with this group, nor a consistent approach. It seems that any approach – from objectivistic to interpretive – is permissible. It would seem that with this group the term 'experiential' should suffice, since simply trying to understand the world of the other would not

be sufficient in and of itself to warrant the label 'phenomenological.' How that world is studied matters.

Interpretive phenomenology

Interpretive phenomenologists grounded in philosophy do have a legitimate claim to the title 'phenomenology.' Heidegger understood Husserl well but deliberately deviated from his line of thinking, especially the transcendental consciousness perspective. Actually, Heidegger also assumes a transcendental viewpoint but the reference for his perspective is Dasein or 'Being-there,' his term for subjectivity, rather than 'pure consciousness.' Since in this perspective there is no stance that is free of the world, the Heideggerian version of the phenomenological method is interpretive. This is not the place to get into the relative merits of description and interpretation, but the descriptive method articulated in the next section does follow hermeneutic criteria and the hermeneutic method has many key descriptive moments (Giorgi, 1992, 2000). However, the two methods cannot be collapsed into one. It is more a matter of ascertaining the conditions in which each method should be preferred.

Descriptive pre-transcendental Husserlian phenomenology

Insofar as Husserl was the founder of phenomenology in the modern sense and this method is directly founded on Husserl's ideas, it can be considered phenomenological in a strong sense of the term. Husserl (1977) also explicitly acknowledged a pre-transcendental version of his method.

Phenomenology in this sense includes all of the characteristics of the Goethean tradition (careful observation, unprejudiced description, use of intuition, etc.) plus the use of the phenomenological-psychological reduction. The use of that reduction means that whatever is experientially given to the experiencer is considered to be a phenomenon, merely a presence without affirming that what is present really exists the way

it is present, but the subjectivity undergoing the experience is considered to be an actually existing psychological subject engaged with the world. In this interpretation, if there is no psychological–phenomenological reduction fully and correctly understood, then the procedures cannot be considered to be phenomenological. Equally important is the use of the method of imaginative variation in order to get essential structures of experience.

Phenomenology implying return to positivity

This method is also an equally strong version of Husserlian phenomenology and more consistently complete than the previous one in the sense that a philosophical step is included in the method. Here phenomenology means that an explicitly transcendental step has to be included, and the difficult step of returning from the transcendental perspective has to be accomplished. Davidson's (1989) theoretical breakthrough concerning the relationship between phenomenology and psychology based upon Husserl's entire corpus helped the articulation of the steps to be taken in this approach. Consequently, the sense of phenomenology with this method includes the transcendental perspective and the method cannot be practiced without utilizing the transcendental phenomenological reduction.

Of the five versions of phenomenological method that we have traced, it is apparent that the 'grass-roots' tradition is the least phenomenological and perhaps it would be better if the term 'phenomenological' was not used at all in this tradition. Perhaps the term 'experiential' would be better, since the basic interest is in the personal experiences of the other and generally in not reifying such experiences. But without a specific method and without further guidelines concerning how to analyze the experiences of the other in a grounded way, the perspective is more of a delineation of a topic rather than a full-fledged scientific approach.

The Goethean tradition and the interpretive tradition, it seems to us, do qualify for the

term 'phenomenological.' The experimental tradition did not try to be philosophical but it clearly dealt with 'phenomena' and it even anticipated some of the philosophical concepts. In addition, their prescriptions and experiments indicate a sense of systematization and theoretical discipline that is proper for scientific research. The interpretive tradition in relation to phenomenology began with Heidegger, who began as a phenomenologist, even though he may have ended up beyond it. However, those who follow him seem to depend on early Heidegger for their sources and so there is a legitimate phenomenological basis for the label. The same is true if one followed Ricoeur, Gadamer, and even Dilthey. It does not diminish the phenomenological input even if all of these thinkers merged their phenomenological concerns with the pre-existing hermeneutic tradition.

Finally, the pre-transcendental and transcendental phenomenological methods are both derivations based on the writings of Husserl and so are clearly strongly phenomenological. We see them as complementary efforts. The pre-transcendental method stays closer to the psychological phenomena but lacks complete grounding. The transcendental method is well grounded, but it tends to take in a lot more than just the psychological in order to uncover the psychological. Also, the borderline between the transcendental and the psychological has to be better understood. But it is a method with great potential.

SOME APPLICATIONS OF THE METHOD AND ITS LIMITS

The descriptive phenomenological method is applicable whenever an experience can be described. Since the number of experiences that can be described is almost infinite, the method's application is practically almost limitless. Sometimes it is applied to traditional psychological research topics such as learning (Giorgi, 1967; Colaizzi, 1971); thinking (Aanstoos, 1985); perception (Wertz, 1986); therapy (B. Giorgi 1998;

Giorgi and Gallegos, 2005); etc. Sometimes the topics emerge from difficulties encountered in the Lifeworld. So Stevick (1971) studied teenage anger, Halling (1983) the perception of a significant other, Wertz (1985) being criminally victimized, Cloonan (1971) everyday decision making and Freeman (1992) the experience of helping another person. It is impossible to describe all of the phenomena studied by this method during the approximate half-century that it has been in use; however, to give some examples, Day (2004) studied the experience of bulimia, Stowell (1997) the experience of precognitive dreams, Toussulis (1995) the lived experience of faith, Reinders (1991) artistic creativity, Phillips (1966) problem solving, Reed-Barnett (1988) dreams and Hemphill (1990) the experience of upward mobility on the part of executive females.

In each case mentioned above, concrete, detailed descriptions were obtained by the researcher, mostly by interview, and then the method described earlier was applied to the transcribed data. With this method, 100% of the data has to be analyzed because any prior elimination of the data would have to be based upon a prejudice or a non-analytic decision.

To give a more detailed example of research, B. Giorgi (1998) conducted a study of the therapeutic process where clients were asked to describe their experience of a transformative time of their lives, a pivotal moment in therapy. The pivotal moment was interpreted to be a figural moment that stood out for them regardless of the actual amount of time it took for them to live it. For the clients in this study, the transformative experience was lived as a chain of events that led to a shift in how they understood themselves, a change in 'the truth' about themselves and their world. The core of this transformative experience constituted a moment when a change in basic assumptions about self, others and the world was fully appropriated and put into action.

Within the context of safety in the therapeutic relationship, the entire process basically takes place in three phases. The first

phase is a discovery and connection to the assumptions that the client holds, the second phase is the emergence of the possibility that those assumptions could be wrong and the third phase is the replacement of the old assumptions with new assumptions about self and the world. To give an example of the initial phase, P#2 initially avoided the issue that her life was extraordinarily restricted and limited. She lived with her mother and basically had no adult life of her own but did not acknowledge the degree of resentment she felt for her mother. Her attitude then was:

I could never say that I'm not a happy person. I always said that I'm very satisfied and very happy ... I was very unhappy and I was very bitter and because I lived with my mother and I had lived with my mother all my life, all my life. So, I began to tell in my therapy sessions. I began to express things ... I began to face the reality of my unhappiness and my bitterness towards being with my mother all the time...

The second phase was a period of opening up to the possibility that what had so far been experienced as 'the way things are' might actually not be 'the truth.'

To help the client break away from the assumption that she had no right to lead her own life, the therapist suggested she go on a trip without her mother. At first the idea seemed impossible:

Well, my heart sank to my feet because I just knew that I couldn't do any- thing like that ... I mean, that was like saying you need to cut your arm off or take out your eye. I mean that was for me at that point, it was something that was from another world.

Gradually this impossibility changed to a possibility:

And here I am, I'm a woman with a grown son and, and, I'm afraid to tell my mother, you know. That tells you the extent of my helplessness ... I began to say, 'damn it! Why can't I have some fun?'

The final stage, the core of the transformative experience, was taking action: I went to the travel agency and my knees were literally shaking, but I was doing ... I mean, I felt like it was kind of exciting but yet I felt like a criminal, that I was doing this terrible thing to mom ... she started crying and ... And then all of a sudden I felt anger ... I said 'I need

a vacation and I want to go by myself. I feel stifled. I feel that I can't breathe' ... And so after that, I just felt sort of free ... So I went ... and I had a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful time. And I could hardly wait ... to make plans for my next trip. And so that was my first big big change in my life after all my life never daring to ... it was really really a break-through for me and it was really the end of my mother's iron hand and domination over me ...

Once the client had defied the old assumption that she must sacrifice herself to please her mother, her relationship both to herself, to her mother and the world had permanently shifted:

I had to learn to do things that I wanted to do and I began to learn how to say no to a lot of things that I was doing at work ...

There are two primary limitations of the descriptive phenomenological method. The first is that if a phenomenon or experience cannot be described, then it cannot be analyzed and it is imaginable that there are such experiences. Certain bodily experiences come to mind as well as certain traumatic or overwhelming experiences. However, it should be pointed out that the method does not depend upon self-report. It is possible that others can describe the behavior of an individual in a research situation and one could still come up with the structure of the behavior. It is important to realize this point because of the availability of video tapes. The meaning units would then consist of gestures or behaviors rather than words.

The second limitation is that the method is very labor intensive and it takes time and effort to complete it. There is probably no alternative to this characteristic because it requires dwelling with the data in order for intuitions to arise. However, our belief is that time generously invested in analyzing data produces significant results. The truth does not always lend itself to efficient methods.

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Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Virginia Eatough and Jonathan A. Smith

INTRODUCTION

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is concerned with the detailed examination of individual lived experience and how individuals make sense of that experience. These two commitments point to IPA's joint theoretical underpinnings in phenomenology and hermeneutics. An exploration of these theoretical approaches and IPA's particular relationship to them forms the first part of this chapter.

After that we will consider the distinctive features of IPA by examining it in comparison with Giorgi's empirical phenomenological psychology and highlighting the importance of idiography and cognition to IPA. The chapter will discuss the particular reading it has of these two constructs and then consider IPA's connection with two other important contemporary concerns: social constructionism and narrative. We hope thereby to make clear the distinctive theoretical perspective IPA is offering.

The chapter will then move to a review of work that has been done using IPA, pointing to patterns emerging in how the research is conducted and in what has been found. IPA is an approach to research guided by a particular world-view and epistemology. It is not simply a methodology as such. However producing a valuable IPA report or paper does depend on how it is conducted. We will discuss in some detail issues related to two critical aspects of this process: getting good data from the participant and then doing an insightful analysis of that data. Finally we will offer some thoughts on the future of IPA.

THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF IPA

IPA has a long and a short history. Although it was only articulated as a specific approach to qualitative research in the mid-1990s (Smith, J.A., 1994, 1996), it connects with much longer intellectual currents in phenomenology and hermeneutics

and with a quiet and neglected concern in psychology with subjective experience and personal accounts (James, 1890; Allport, 1953). Indeed a key motivation for the development of IPA was the articulation of a qualitative approach to psychology which was grounded in psychology.

Phenomenology describes both a philosophical approach and a range of research methods. Phenomenology is concerned with the way things appear to us in experience; the reality that we live is an experiential one and it is experienced through practical engagements with things and others in the world, and it is inherently meaningful. Husserl's rallying call 'To the things themselves' (*Zu den Sachen*) expresses the phenomenological intention to describe how the world is formed and experienced through conscious acts.

As important as the 'things themselves' is Heidegger's proposal that a human being is a *Dasein*, which literally means 'being there' but is most often referred to as 'Being-in-the-world' (Spinelli, 1989: 108). This Being-in-the-world dissolves the Cartesian dualism of person/world, subject/object, mind/body and so on because individuals are Being-in-the-world with things and with others. *Dasein* should not be thought of as some vast web of interconnected and interrelated discrete entities, connections and functions. This entanglement and enmeshment is more akin to a fabric than it is a web. As Merleau-Ponty (1945/2004: xii) puts it, 'Man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself'.

The body is central to this notion of 'interweaving' (what Husserl calls *Verflechtung*); your body unfolds for you a world which is particular to you and different from the world which is disclosed through your friend's body. IPA, with its starting point in the unique intersubjective experiences of the individual inevitably attends to the body as it is lived and experienced. All of this is not to neglect the fact that the lifeworld of the individual is socially and historically contingent and contextually bounded.

The question remains, however, how does the researcher go about studying a *Dasein*,

a human existence, because it cannot be approached directly; attempts to reflect on what 'is' inevitably distorts the phenomenon (Moran, 2000: 223). Inevitably, to study the individual life is to do so *through* a lens of cultural and socio-historical meanings. All we can do is examine what Heidegger calls the 'factual' existence, which means the experiences which appear to the individual in her/his own way:

'factual' (*faktisch*) and 'facticity' (*die Faktizität*) ... express the particular, concrete, inescapably contingent, yet worldly, involved aspect of human existence in contrast to the 'factual' nature of inanimate existence.

Moran (2000: 223)

Thus, Heidegger is proposing a 'hermeneutics of factual life', which resonates with contemporary qualitative researchers who are keen to establish a mode of psychological inquiry which holds that reality for people is an experiential one. IPA explicitly attends to a 'hermeneutics of factual life' through a method which asserts that events and objects which we are directed towards are to be understood by investigating how they are experienced and given meaning by the individual.

IPA is also influenced by hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation, which began with a concern with the interpretation of biblical texts but which grew to establish a more general concern with the process of interpretation (Palmer, 1969; Packer and Addison, 1989). Dilthey argued that hermeneutics should become the method for the human sciences, and its goal was understanding (*Verstehen*): lived experience (*Erlebnis*) was to be the focus of investigation; the account or text was the objectification of lived experience; and understanding was the moment when 'life understands itself' (Dilthey, 1976). Dilthey wanted to get as close as possible to the other's experience. These ideas influenced Heidegger's thinking around hermeneutics; hermeneutics is not simply a method, rather the very nature of Being-in-the-world is hermeneutic. Our relationship with the world is a hermeneutic

one which operates within a 'hermeneutic circle':

The 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein – that is, in the understanding which interprets. An entity for which, as Being-in-the-world, its Being is itself an issue, has, ontologically, a circular structure.

Heidegger (1962/2004: 195)

Our understanding of an event or object is always mediated by an already existing knowledge accrued from experience though access to that knowledge can itself be complicated (Smith, 2007). And while this understanding is constrained by cultural context, because human being is self-interpreting, the hermeneutic circle opens up rather than closes down the possibilities for new understandings.

IPA is not alone in attempting to operationalize a hermeneutic phenomenology. Van Manen's (2003) starting point is the everyday commonplace experience of the person, a person who is purposive and directed towards meaning making. In particular, his work emphasizes the importance of interpretive reflection for attending to the taken-for-granted aspects of lived experience in order that we can 'become more fully who we are' (Van Manen, 2003: 12). Van Manen is also particularly interested in the expressive force of writing as part of this project. He points out that the hermeneutic phenomenological approach with its emphasis on understanding human beings in the totality of their life world has particular implications for professions within education, nursing, medicine and so on. This approach is exemplified in Benner et al.'s writings and reflections on nursing practice which are also strongly influenced by Heideggerian theory (see Benner, 1994).

Ashworth (2003) draws attention to how early experimental psychology defined itself as the science of experience and was concerned with discerning the relationship between the inner world of consciousness and that of the external world.

Notwithstanding this auspicious start, it is largely the case that psychology has neglected the study of experience. This neglect has led Spinelli to claim that psychology has lost its metaphorical 'soul' and its original purpose (Spinelli, 1989: 184). He argues that if the aim of psychology is to understand human beings then its starting point has to be the study of experience.

For IPA, like other phenomenological approaches, there is nothing more fundamental than experience and the primary concern is uncovering/expressing/illuminating individual subjective experience. Experience is subjective because what we experience is a phenomenal rather than a direct reality. We 'stretch forth into the world' (Spinelli, 1989: 12) connecting with events, objects and people in the context of how they appear to us. Often, researchers use the term *lived experience* to encompass the embodied, socio-culturally and historically situated person who inhabits an intentionally interpreted and meaningfully lived world. IPA attends to all aspects of this lived experience, from the individual's wishes, desires, feelings, motivations, belief systems through to how these manifest themselves or not in behaviour and action. Whatever phenomenon is being studied, the emphasis is on 'what is it like to be experiencing this or that for this particular person'. This focus on individual lived experience necessitates approaching the phenomenon under investigation from the personal perspective; taking the standpoint of the conscious, thinking, unreflective/reflective, feeling person. For more on the intellectual underpinnings of IPA see Smith (1996, 2004) and Smith, Flowers and Larkin (in preparation).

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF IPA IN PSYCHOLOGY

By considering IPA in relation to a number of cognate approaches and positions, we hope to make clear its distinctive contribution to psychology.

IPA and Giorgi's empirical phenomenological psychology

Giorgi (1985, 1994, 2000) points to the unique nature of psychological reality arguing that to understand this nature requires a rigorous set of procedures rooted in phenomenological philosophy as an alternative philosophy of science. To this end Giorgi has developed a particular Husserlian phenomenological method that emphasizes description and is concerned with discerning the psychological essence of a given phenomenon.

Like Giorgi, IPA investigates and illuminates lived experience using careful and systematic procedures as well as having a commitment to developing methods appropriate for the human sciences. Nevertheless, whilst recognizing the value of rich experiential description and that the *descriptive attitude* can be something to aim for, IPA is not attempting a pure Husserlian phenomenological psychology. Rather IPA draws on a range of phenomenological positions and has as much affinity with hermeneutic phenomenology through Heidegger and Gadamer as it does with Husserl. IPA therefore emphasizes the interpretative features of analysis. However there seems some convergence with Giorgi (1997) in that the type of interpretation we have in mind is one following from a close attending to the presented phenomenon rather than one imported from outside (Smith, 2004).

Whilst recognizing the myriad variations within lived experience, Giorgi's approach is more concerned with expressing the relationship between these variations so that an integrated defined picture of a particular phenomenon can be built up. In contrast IPA is as interested in the diversity and variability of human experience and is therefore, in practice, concerned with the micro analysis of convergence and divergence within a small set of accounts. In this sense IPA is more modest in its scope than Giorgi's phenomenology.

Another way of describing this distinction is in terms of general structure

and idiography. The goal of Giorgi's method is to establish the general structure of the phenomenon:

The structure is gained by going over the last transformations of meaning units and attempts to determine what constituents are typically essential in order to account for the concrete experiences reported.

Giorgi and Giorgi (2003: 45)

While the approach starts with the account from an individual, that account is usually seen as one instantiation of a more general phenomenon and comparing accounts to establish the common features underlying the differences is the aim.

IPA takes a complementary but rather different stance. One might say IPA has a more microscopic lens arising from its idiographic commitment, emphasizing the way in which the study of how psychological meanings are constituted can be very usefully pursued through the detailed examination of unique individual lives. Comparing cases is also usually (though not always) part of the process but the comparison tends to be fine-grained, illustrating the different textures and nuances within related personal accounts. The idiographic emphasis in IPA is taken up in the next section.

Idiography

Allport (1940) noted the decline of the idiographic perspective, the lack of interest in the individual case, and the increasing neglect of experience in psychology. A focus on all three, he proposed, would help to redress the limitations of psychology's preoccupation with actuarial predictions. He concluded that psychology was becoming the province of 'one-sided tests of method' (Allport, 1940: 17) arguing for the necessity of studying phenomena from the point of view of the participant, and for the act of understanding. Unfortunately, in spite of Allport's cautionary words, the use of the idiographic approach and the single person case study continues to be neglected within social psychology (Smith, 1993, 2004).

In contrast to the nomothetic principles underlying most psychological empirical work, IPA is resolutely idiographic, focusing on the particular rather than the universal. This implies a shift in focus from establishing causal laws to a concern with understanding meaning in the individual life. For IPA, however, these two ways of acquiring knowledge do not require an either/or stance. Rather, it argues for (a) the intensive examination of the individual in her/his own right as an intrinsic part of psychology's remit and (b) that the logical route to universal laws and structures is an idiographic – nomothetic one, as indicated by Harré:

I would want to argue for a social science ... which bases itself upon an essentially intensive design, and which works from an idiographic basis. Nevertheless such a science is aimed always at a cautious climb up the ladder of generality, seeking for universal structures but reaching them only by a painful, step by step approach.

Harré (1979: 137)

On a practical level, IPA studies express their commitment to idiographic designs by the use of single person case studies (e.g. Smith, 1991; Smith, Michie, Allanson and Elwy, 2000; Bramley and Eatough, 2005) as well as doing full justice to each individual in a study before attempting cross case analysis at within and between levels. There are two key advantages of carrying out a single person case study. First, a great deal is learnt about that particular person and their lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. It is also possible to focus on connections between different aspects of the participant's account. Warnock (1987) makes the valuable and insightful point that probing deeper into the particular also takes us nearer to the universal. The study of the individual can illuminate and affirm 'the centrality of certain general themes in the lives of all particular individuals' (Evans, 1993: 8), bringing the researcher closer to noteworthy aspects of the general by connecting the individual unique life with a common humanity.

Idiographic methods explicitly address the subjective and interpersonal involvedness of

human emotion, thought and action, and the messy and chaotic aspects of human life, in the hope of getting a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The holistic nature of the single person case study allows what Mischler (1984) called 'the voice of the lifeworld' to become visible. Thus, the case is a portrayal of the person's ways-of-being-in-the-world.

Cognition

Whilst IPA is critical of many of the dominant methodological and epistemological assumptions of the discipline, it challenges these from within by taking an interrogative stance to both its own findings and the extant psychological literature. For example, it shares Bruner's (1990) regret that the cognitive revolution led to a cognitive psychology of information processing rather than a psychology whose core concern was meaning making as originally envisaged.

Thus IPA questions and disputes how cognition has been conceptualized. For example, it has pointed to how emotion theorists have reduced the often messy and turbulent process of making sense of emotional experience to the internal cognitive activity of hypothesized causal relationships (Eatough and Smith, *in press*).

Cognition, broadly speaking, is a vital aspect of human existence for phenomenological thinkers. For instance, Husserl was concerned with 'the experiences in which something comes to be grasped as known' (Moran, 2000: 108). From the perspective of IPA, cognitions are not isolated separate functions but an aspect of Being-in-the-world. IPA, like cognitive psychology gives cognition a central role, but its way of construing is very different. It is more akin to how some artificial intelligence theorists drawing on phenomenology talk of structural couplings in which 'Thinking is not detached reflection but part of our basic attitude to the world' (Mingers, 2001: 110).

Smith (1996) has pointed to how both social cognition and IPA share a concern with unravelling the relationship between

what people think (cognition), say (account) and do (behaviour). Both epistemologically and methodologically this concern manifests itself differently, but even so, the engagement has led to a body of empirical qualitative studies with wider ramifications for social policy (e.g. Flowers, Smith, Sheeran and Beail, 1997; Flowers, Duncan and Knusson, 2003). Interestingly, IPA's alliance with phenomenological psychology and the phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophy traditions make it a potentially useful contributor to recent trends in cognitive neuroscience and the study of consciousness (Chalmers, 1995; Gallagher, 1997, 2004).

IPA, social constructionism and discursive psychology

IPA endorses social constructionism's claim that sociocultural and historical processes are central to how we experience and understand our lives, including the stories we tell about these lives. It agrees that language is important to this enterprise and that our sense of self (at least in part) emerges from the never-ending flow of intersubjective communication. However, IPA's particular form of social constructionism owes more to symbolic interactionism than to the poststructuralist thought which influences most of discursive psychology. It sits at what might be called the light end of the social constructionist continuum maintaining that seeing the individual's lifeworld merely as a linguistic and discursive construction does not speak to the empirical realities of people's lived experiences and their sense of self.

Symbolic interactionists such as Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969) espouse a particular image of human beings as creative agents who through their intersubjective interpretative activity construct their social worlds. Not only do people have a hand in constituting (as opposed to constructing) their social worlds, they are creatively involved in the development of a sense of self through the interpretative action which takes place between people. Reflexivity is crucial, with

Mead (1934: 226) arguing that: 'There is nothing odd about a product of a given process contributing to, or becoming an essential factor in the further development of that process'.

This way of thinking emphasizes the subjective meaning making of the person, a person who makes possible the life that is lived. IPA takes this to mean that reality for human beings is a reality that they are inextricably bound up with (Hacking, 1999), that they have a hand in despite limitations imposed by material and biological conditions and social and linguistic processes. This is possible, in part, by appropriating, refiguring and discarding the linguistic conventions and discursive practices of one's culture.

Similarly, IPA recognizes the action oriented nature of talk and that people negotiate and aim to achieve interpersonal objectives in their conversations, and that reality is both contingent upon and constrained by the language of one's culture. Therefore it shares some ground with discursive psychology (Willig, 2003). However, IPA suggests that this represents only a partial account of what people are doing when they communicate. For IPA the lived life with its many vicissitudes is much more than historically situated linguistic interactions between people.

If we consider emotion: even if emotions and emotionality are discursive acts which can be analysed 'something like conversations' (Harré and Gillett, 1994: 154), they are not simply language games and/or an effect of discourse. Missing from such accounts are the private, psychologically forceful, rich and often indefinable aspects of emotional life. As Chodorow (1999: 165) points out: 'even emotion words and emotional concepts must have individual resonance and personal meaning'. She goes on to say:

That thoughts and feelings are entangled and that thoughts are thought in culturally specific languages – these ideas do not mean that there is no private feeling or that any particular thought has only a public cultural meaning. Culturally recognizable thoughts or emotion terms can also be entwined in a web of thought-infused feelings and

feeling-infused thoughts experienced by an individual as she creates her own psychic life within a set of interpersonal and cultural relations

Chodorow (1999: 166)

Our telling of the events in one's life has personal relevance and an ongoing significance for the individual concerned (Smith, 1996). We propose that when people tell stories of their lives, they are doing more than drawing on the culturally available stock of meanings. People may want to achieve a whole host of things with their talk such as save face, persuade and rationalize, but there is almost always more at stake and which transcends the specific local interaction. Rosenwald (1992: 269) poignantly notes: 'If a life is no more than a story and a story is governed only by the situation in which it is told, then one cannot declare a situation unlivable or a life damaged'. Amongst other things it seems to us that our personal accounts are also concerned with human potential and development, with *making* our lives by connecting the past with the present and future; they are 'imaginative enterprises' (Reissman, 1992: 232).

It seems to us that IPA does have the potential for fertile links with Foucauldian discourse analysis (Willig, 2003), sharing a concern with how discursive constructions are implicated in the experiences of the individual. For example, in our work on the lived experience of anger, one of the participants talked about both bottling up and venting her anger suggesting she was a *container* which was unstable and explosive. We suggested that this symbolization is derived from the hydraulic model of emotion which has dominated both popular and scientific discourses throughout the last century. This model supposes that our emotions are beyond our control, that they are 'discharge processes' that inflict themselves upon the individual. We think of being driven by our anger and of our anger being out of control, metaphors which are imbued with passivity. We argued that for the participant this view of anger constructed her as a passive agent and influenced the way she thought about, experienced and

acted upon her anger. Our concern was with how this particular construction was lived and experienced by the individual.

IPA and narrative

Although the primary concern of IPA is with how reality appears to the individual, it is possible for analyses to integrate and develop this focus by drawing explicitly on other ways of thinking within qualitative research. In particular, IPA seems to have a natural affinity with the various forms of narrative analysis. First, IPA prioritizes the meaning making interpretative activity of the person and as Bruner (1987: 13) states narrative is an 'interpretive feat'. Second, he points out that we should not only be concerned with how a narrative is constructed but we should attend to how 'it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality' (Bruner, 1991: 6). Thus Bruner's narrative emphasizes what is also IPA's primary concern – how the world is experienced – and not simply that we are tellers of stories.

In our analysis of one woman's accounts of anger and aggression, we included an examination of how counselling sessions had begun to disrupt longstanding narratives of biochemical agents as having causal explanation (Eatough and Smith, 2006a). We were struck by how this woman appeared caught up in a struggle to *re-story* her life (Gergen, 1999: 172). This reconstructive function is a key aspect of many counselling and psychotherapeutic approaches. The underlying principle is a narrative one; clients are encouraged to re-interpret their lived experiences so that their lives become more livable. Indeed, Jacobs (1986: 5) suggests that one aim of counselling is to investigate the past so that 'it can be faced, renegotiated and in some respects even relived "but with a new ending"'.

WHAT DOES IPA RESEARCH LOOK LIKE?

IPA has produced a growing corpus of research studies since its inception in the

mid-1990s. Consequently IPA researchers have begun to critically reflect on its development and propose ways the approach can be taken forward. A number of epistemological and methodological themes can be discerned which we now turn to.

Recent reviews (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005; Brocki and Wearden, 2006) confirm that IPA is well established in health psychology and is growing in the areas of clinical, counselling and social psychology. IPA speaks clearly to health psychology's rapidly increasing focus on understanding how people perceive and make sense of their lived experiences of illness, for example, understanding the meaning of bodily changes for first time mothers-to-be (Johnson, Burrows and Williamson, 2004).

In addition, Brocki and Wearden point to how documenting people's illness narratives can serve an important learning function about the lived experiences of others. IPA's emphasis on perceptions and cognitions speaks to the cognitivist influence within social psychology and it has been suggested that IPA can be seen as a bridge between discursive psychology and mainstream social cognition research. As discussed earlier, IPA rethinks cognition giving it a phenomenological slant believing it to be one aspect of Being-in-the-world. Finally, the work of other IPA researchers crosses subdisciplinary boundaries such as developmental, social, applied and political (e.g. Flowers et al.'s (1997) work on gay men's narratives of unprotected sex).

So, are certain themes emerging from the corpus of published work? Typically, IPA studies explore existential matters of considerable importance for the participant. These matters are often transformative, bringing change and demanding reflection and (re)interpretation for the individuals concerned. As a result, it is possible to glean patterns within the studies: a concern with identity and a sense of self, a focus on participants' meaning making and interpretation, and an attention to bodily feeling within lived experience. Significant events and topics have an inevitable effect on the sense of

self and IPA's detailed fine-grained analyses of individual lived experiences enable these effects to come to the fore.

Smith (2004) has drawn attention to how identity may emerge as a key organizing principle for qualitative research more generally and this is for a reason; namely that it lies at the heart of psychology. Thus it can be argued that IPA is attempting to put the heart back into (and alongside the head in) psychology.

Similarly, IPA's concern with how participants impose meaning on events in their lives generates questions which can tap into 'hot cognition' – those matters in a person's life which are burning, emotive and dilemmatic or those involving 'cool cognition' – involving longer-term reflection across the life course.

Finally, some IPA studies attend to bodily experience asking 'what is it like' in relation to a range of topics e.g. emotion. Merleau-Ponty (1945/2004) proposed that the body is inextricably caught up with our sense of self, our lifeworld, and our relations with others: simply put, we are our bodies. Although psychologists have always recognized a role for the body in their investigations, typically the focus has been on neurophysiological patterns and mechanisms. IPA analyses draw attention to the lived existential body and how it communicates *felt* meaning to others.

IPA is deeply committed to the idiographic method and this inevitably has consequences for sample size. Brocki and Wearden (2006) note that number of participants range from one to thirty with the norm being towards the lower end, and that a clearer articulation for smaller sample sizes is emerging. For example, keeping sample size small and homogeneous and interviewing participants several times (e.g. Clare, 2002, 2003 interviewed twelve participants (six couples) twice resulting in 48 transcripts) is a strategy that retains IPA's idiographic emphasis whilst embedding any emerging patterns in a rich and detailed context. Clearly, a number of factors determine sample size: practical restrictions, the richness of individual cases and the strength of commitment to a case-by-case approach (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Nonetheless, IPA

studies do not want to lose sight of the particularities of individual lives, emphasizing that convergences and divergences across these lives are more compelling when they emerge from a case-by-case approach. And although IPA wants to retain its flexible, non-prescriptive stance with respect to methodological issues such as sample size and strategy, form of data collection and so on, it is increasingly confident in its promotion of studies with $N = 1$ as having a central place in qualitative psychological approaches (Smith, 2004).

CURRENT ISSUES IN DOING IPA

As a relatively recent approach, IPA is still establishing itself. As the corpus of IPA studies grows there is scope for reflection on patterns in methodology, topic and concept. Box 11.1 is a summary of current practice in doing IPA. Here we consider two issues which are 'live' for IPA researchers: what happens in the interview and what levels there are in interpretation. A crucial aspect of doing IPA is attending to talk and text in a sustained and detailed way. So our discussion

of the issues will also be a demonstration of the practice of IPA in its own right.

IPA and the interview

Interviewing is one of the most powerful and widely used tools of the qualitative researcher. A range of interview styles are possible and a range of terms are adopted for those styles (e.g. structured, semi-structured or unstructured). However, as with much else in qualitative research, there is considerable variability in how different writers use such definitions and how they work in practice. There is also lively debate about the importance of interviews for qualitative research in psychology (see special section on interviewing, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2005).

There is no a priori requirement for IPA to use the interview and Smith (2004, 2005) has encouraged more use of other data collection methods such as diaries and personal accounts in IPA work. However it remains the case that the interview is by far the most common way of collecting data in IPA and for good reason – the real-time interaction with the participant gives major flexibility for

BOX 11.1 The Methodological Practice of IPA

- Research questions are directed towards aspects of lived experience
- The idiographic commitment encourages the study of small homogenous samples
- Semi-structured interviews are the exemplary data collection method for IPA
- Other methods include diaries, unstructured life history interviews
- Data collection is dialogical with the participant taking a significant role in determining what is said
- Analysis is an iterative inductive process, beginning with several close detailed readings to provide a holistic perspective, noting points of interest and significance
- Step-by-step analysis then proceeds to the description of analytic themes and their interconnections, taking care always to preserve a link back to the original account
- Analysis continues into the writing-up stage and finishes with a narrative of both participant's and researcher's meaning making of the topic under investigation
- Ideally the final narrative should move between levels of interpretation: from rich description through to abstract and more conceptual interpretations

For detailed guidance on conducting an IPA study, see Smith and Osborn (2003).

the researcher in facilitating the participant in exploring their lived experience.

IPA is usually described as using semi-structured interviews, these falling between structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are standardized, inflexible and predetermined in nature (Fontana and Frey, 2000). As such, this form of interviewing emulates the psychological experiment with its emphasis on control, reliability and speed (Smith, 1995). At the other end of the spectrum, what we mean by unstructured interviewing is that which is open-ended, in depth, but begins with no more than one pre-conceived question for the participant: 'Tell me about x'.

Semi-structured interviews sit somewhere between the two. The researcher develops a set of questions which are used to guide, not dictate, the course of the interview and if participants open up novel and interesting areas of inquiry these are pursued. In this sense, participants are viewed as experiential experts of the topic under investigation (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Finding something which challenges previous assumptions leads the receptive researcher to generate and develop interpretations which accommodate and bring to light the unexpected. Thus, the aim is to facilitate the giving and making of an account in a sensitive and empathic manner, recognizing that the interview constitutes a human-to-human relationship (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

In fact, getting the balance right between employing the schedule and probing spontaneously is difficult and demanding and requires considerable skill. Novice researchers tend to be concerned about making sure they follow the schedule correctly. This can be for a number of reasons: they have worked hard to construct it and feel some ownership of the topic; this is more consistent with most of the rest of their training in psychological methods; going off script demands a form of personal engagement which requires confidence and experience.

But for IPA it is important that the interviewer does allow the participant a strong say in where the interview goes, otherwise

it jeopardizes the phenomenological endeavour. An appropriate metaphor for the IPA researcher is a traveller who:

wanders along with local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation as 'wandering together with'.

Kvale (1996: 4)

So in practice, IPA interviews while starting with structure in the form of an interview schedule can in fact veer towards what may appear like an unstructured format as researchers emphasize the participants as story-tellers rather than respondents. This perspective is consonant with the biographical-interpretive method (Rosenthal and Bar-On, 1992; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

So what are IPA interviews actually like in practice? Here we want to explore this a little more. Here is a short extract from an interview from our project on women's anger and aggression. The interview was conducted by the first author. We are examining it as an illustration of how an IPA interview is a synthesis of structure, participant lead and narrative. The question on the interview schedule was 'Can you tell me what the word anger means to you?'

V: So if I asked you what the word anger means to you ...

P: Anger means red. When I'm angry I go red, I but the thing is I know I'm going to lose it one of these days because like I said I don't want nobody hurting Alex and Matthew. So it's like going back to the sister thing, nobody hurts them two, it's like a teacher, Alex took a picture into school one day and they had a supply teacher for the day. And the teacher because he got it out in a workplace, this supply teacher she ripped the picture up and he had drawn it so hard and it had took all his time. So then again I seen the red. I went *red* I was really ready to go round to get the neck ... I just could have argued with the head teacher but I thought if she was really there I would have gone for her.

The interviewer adapts the schedule question so it works in the context of the interview at this point. The participant's response to the question is to anchor it in a story of an actual event which gradually unfolds as she answers. The interviewer realizes this is important to the experience of the participant and therefore follows it up rather than moving to the next question on the schedule:

V: Did you have, did you say anything to the head teacher?

P: I says you don't carry on like this, nobody has the right to rip a little boy's, take it off him, keep it till the end of the day. You don't have the right to rip it up not after it took so many hours ... But it's anything when they hurt them. I don't want them hurt, that's why I think I wrap them up in cotton wool too much.

The participant ended this particular story by making a more general statement about how her anger is often a response to a real or imagined perception of her children being hurt. Again therefore this is recognized by the interviewer as crucial and was followed up, even though this appears to be taking the interview further away from the schedule:

V: What about if somebody hurts you, do you get angry?

P: No, I don't get angry anymore I feel sorry for myself ... Before I had Alex and Matthew I could be angry for days ... But now I find, you can't do that when you've got kids now so you have to, I don't know find a new way of dealing with it I guess ...

V: Yeah, other women have said how children have been a real change.

P: It's, it's like they saved me in a way.

So, a question which began by asking about the meaning anger had for the participant elicited a rich description of the emotional experience and an actual event in which anger happened. This led to an unanticipated question concerning the relationship between feelings of hurt for her self and being angry which in turn resulted in a conversation

about behavioural change in light of having children.

So the interview was dynamic and moved away from the schedule to pursue the participant's narrative. Thus, the inductive nature of open questions and participant led interviews which characterize IPA studies, can take the researcher into surprising and unanticipated arenas. Finding something which challenges previous assumptions leads the receptive researcher, subsequently, to generate and develop interpretations which accommodate and bring to light the unexpected.

Doing this type of interviewing is demanding. It requires skills very different from those which dominate the syllabus of a psychology degree. Constructing a clear interview schedule is important as it offers the interviewer mental maps – virtual ways to navigate through an interview. But the interview is an interaction in real-time, a dialogue between that which was prepared in advance and that which is unanticipated. Learning to be able to move away from the script to follow the participant as he/she moves deeper into their personal experience is something that, while difficult, is at the heart of doing IPA well.

Levels of interpretation

Doing IPA involves navigating between different levels of interpretation as one engages deeply with texts of participants' personal experience (Smith, 2004). For example, interpretation can be more descriptive and empathic, trying to 'stand in the shoes of' the participants, or it can be more critical and probe the accounts in ways which participants might be unwilling or unable to do themselves. The former aims to produce rich experiential descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation whilst the more heavily hermeneutic levels involve the researcher building an alternative coherent narrative from the messy sense-making of the participant, a messiness that is often only revealed when the researcher moves deeper into the analysis. However at each level

of interpretation, the account from the participant is the starting point, is privileged as the source for the interpretative activity which occurs. This sort of interpretative work requires sustained immersion in the data, pushing for more fine-grained analysis and at the same time attempting to keep interpretative order.

To illustrate this fluidity, we present a small amount of data, again from our study of the subjective experience of anger (Eatough and Smith, 2006b). In this first extract, the participant Marilyn is describing what anger feels like for her:

It's an emotion that I can't control ... how I actually physically feel is like trembling, very hot and emotionally really tearful and actually physically, not physically, just picturing in my mind what I'm going to do like the split second before and then I'll do it ... I could be sitting here I'm getting mad and I can picture in my mind that I'm going to swipe all these ornaments and then just that split second as it's gone to my head I just do it. It's like, it's weird.

Marilyn is describing the bodily feelings which are part of her anger experience. The trembling and heat her body feels suggests intensity and is accompanied by crying. There is a sense of time slowing down and then speeding up in that moment before she swipes the ornaments. Thus, her anger can be said to escalate. And as the interview continues, escalation, intensity and temporal distortion emerge as key features of Marilyn's anger:

I can feel myself getting hotter and hotter and it's like I feel my blood pressure boiling and I can feel my face going up red and just hate, hate anything anybody that's in my way. I don't know, I sometimes go a bit blank as well, you know, I can't remember a lot of what I've said or done.

These features allow us to build the first interpretative level – a 'thick description', a detailed phenomenological reading of Marilyn's experience of anger. Marilyn's portrayal of what her anger feels like describes an intensely felt emotion which is depicted through images of boiling heat, rage and the

colour red. Typically what begins as talk escalates into actual acts of aggression. She experiences her anger as an altered state. The emotion overwhelms her bodily and cognitively.

However, the iterative nature and sustained immersion in the data of an IPA means that the interpretative levels acquire more depth as the researcher begins interrogating the participant's sense making (Eatough and Smith, 2006a). For example, Marilyn attempts to make sense of her anger and aggression by making causal attributions:

It's awful but I mean that's all hormones as well which explains away a lot of my moods and aggression and that. But I mean I don't know whether I mean I have got a lot of hang ups about my family but I think a lot of it is hormonal my aggression and things like that.

The researcher can do two things here; be more or less accepting of what the participant says, at a summary level, or reflect in a more speculative and critically probing manner. So, it is possible to accept Marilyn's claim that hormones are responsible for her anger and point to how it negates alternative understandings. Alternatively, one can question the robustness of her hormonal explanation in the light of what she says about her family.

It is possible to push the analysis further. And the level of interpretation becomes more abstract and conceptual the researcher cautiously begins to think more about, and theorize the data. For example, as the analysis progressed it became evident that Marilyn did not simply have 'hang-ups' about her family; she had a troublesome and painful relationship with her mother and its pervasive presence within the data brought considerable interpretative power to bear on our understanding of her anger.

Marilyn described a relationship defined by feelings of rejection and separateness:

My mum was always with my brother, he was always you know, he was the lad and my mum used to be like, say that I used to look like my dad and she didn't like my dad so I always thought she didn't like me. It was that type of relationship, not close at all.

Marilyn draws attention to how she felt her mother preferred her brother to her. Looking carefully at the first sentence, at its simplest level this indicates Marilyn's belief that her brother was her mother's favourite. However, we can reflect further on her use of the word *with* and offer a tentative reading that mother and brother have a shared identity that excludes Marilyn and places her outside. To give support to this interpretation, we look for substantiation elsewhere in the data. And in this case it is not hard to find:

She was always my brother [sic]. I mean my brother could never do anything wrong but I think that was because she was in two minds whether he was my stepfather's. She, I think she'd been having an affair with him and I think she might have thought he was my stepfather's and not my real dad's. She used to always compare me to my dad in my ways and my looks and my actions and that and it just wasn't, but I mean there was never any affection. I mean I can't remember ever her putting her arm around me and kissing me. My stepdad he used to, but my mum never. My dad was very loving, I remember that, he really was.

The opening sentence carries tremendous symbolic force; her mother and brother do not simply have a close bond, rather it is as if they have psychologically merged for Marilyn into 'one' person. This corroborates the shared identity reading and at the same time pushes the interpretation further: the identification between mother and brother appears to be experienced by Marilyn as not simply shared but actually merged.

Symmetrically, Marilyn and her father have become 'one', and it is a 'one' that is hated by her mother. From Marilyn's perspective, there is a clear division between herself and her father who looked and behaved the same (the old family); and her mother, brother and stepfather (the new family). It is not clear when Marilyn first became aware that her brother might only be her stepbrother but whenever the suspicion arose it offered an explanation for the perceived rejection. But having an explanation does not ease Marilyn's pain; rather mother and brother and stepfather become identified in a way that Marilyn cannot be part of. They form

a nexus which amplifies Marilyn's sense of separateness.

In summary, we are engaging in a sustained but deepening interpretative reading here. The analysis begins with an empathic sharing of the feeling of anger and aggression for Marilyn and with her attempts at keeping a coherent and acceptable etiological explanation. Our analysis stays with Marilyn as she talks more about her mother's relationship with her. But as we proceed our analysis begins to take on a more interpretative stance. We are not disputing Marilyn's words but are doing more psychological thinking about them. We finish with an analysis which while grounded in her words is actually several steps abstracted from them. We are suggesting that Marilyn's anger and aggression are in part a reaction to her trying to make meaning out of her familial experience. We see her as experiencing a brutalized, isolating and polarized relational pattern – a privileged merging of mother and son with a new partner for the mother versus an outsider grouping of father and daughter.

So the analysis has moved through a series of levels, each attending closely to the participant's personal experience but, step by step, taking us to a more interpretative stance. So that ultimately we are able to construct an account about Marilyn's anger and aggression which is both (a) stimulated by and grounded in her own experience and sense making and (b) offering a deeper hermeneutic reading and indeed one which may be rather different from the one she might offer herself. We would want to argue this dual reading is indeed the hallmark of a good interpretative phenomenological analysis.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF IPA

IPA has grown pretty rapidly in a relatively short space of time. So how might it develop in the future? Here we will offer some thoughts on some of the issues which could engage those working in, and thinking about, IPA in, say, the next five years.

There is now a corpus of IPA studies on a wide range of topics and some useful reviews of the work are beginning to emerge (Reid et al., 2005; Brocki and Wearden, 2006). However the emphasis of the reviews so far has been methodological. We would expect, as the corpus grows to see more substantive reviews – examining: what findings are emerging in particular topic areas; what patterns can be seen across related areas; how this is beginning to contribute to a shift in how topics are seen in the mainstream.

We have a particular interest in the case for the case study and its facilitation of hermeneutic analysis as illustrated in the previous section. We would hope to see more of this work happening in the future.

Interestingly what is actually involved in interpretation, critical to IPA but also to qualitative psychology as a whole is, we would argue, a pretty neglected or undeveloped area. Work in hermeneutic theory has largely been focused on other disciplines; yet it is central to qualitative inquiry in psychology and, it can be argued, psychology is particularly well placed to engage with this question because interpretation is first and foremost a psychological activity. We think this could form a very fruitful area for IPA work and see Smith (2007) for more discussion on this.

Finally there are the beginnings of a useful dialogue between IPA and other non-phenomenological approaches to qualitative inquiry. For example, examining how discursive constructions become caught up in the lived experiences of individuals has led to work which integrates Foucauldian discourse analysis with IPA (Duncan, Hart, Scoular and Bigrigg, 2001). Similarly, other researchers are exploring how qualitative research might benefit from combining IPA with other compatible analytic approaches such as narrative analysis (Eatough and Smith, in preparation), psychoanalysis (Stuart Smith, in preparation) and cultural psychology (Shaw et al., 2004). We welcome these dialogues. We would argue that the reason they are beginning to happen is because IPA has endeavoured to be open to connections with other work and non prescriptive in its procedures and

guidance. However it is important that in such exchanges the spirit of IPA is retained. Thus we can foresee the forging of both empirical and theoretical connections with other qualitative approaches but these need to be on the basis of recognition of the core of IPA. And that core is a commitment to the importance of sustained engagement with individual personal lived experience and the individual's attempts to make sense of that personal lived experience.

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Social Representations

Uwe Flick and Juliet Foster

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception and elaboration by Moscovici (1961, 1963) over 45 years ago, the theory of social representations has become an important framework for researchers all over the world. 'Social Representations' is neither a label for a methodological approach nor for a method. The term 'Social Representations' denominates a research perspective, which originates from social psychology, but in the meantime has also been adopted in other areas of research. The initial study of social representations (Moscovici, 1961) was a quantitative content analysis of the press combined with a representative survey, and a more experimental tradition of studying social representations has developed, too. However, very early, a qualitative tradition of social representations research began with Herzlich's (1968/1973) study of representations of health, based on interviews with a smaller but focused sample. Thus the research perspective of social representations is not necessarily linked to qualitative research, but for many issues studied from this perspective, qualitative research is more appropriate than other

approaches. At the same time, the theory of social representations can be a fruitful framework for conceptualizing and doing qualitative research in psychology. Accordingly, it is not a methodologically prescriptive theory, and, while intentional, the theory's methodological polytheism has been criticized (Jahoda, 1988): certainly, as Bauer and Gaskell (1999) point out, there is little guidance for any researcher on the implications of the theory for empirical research (see, however, Bauer and Gaskell, 1999; Breakwell and Canter, 1993; Flick, 2001; Wagner and Hayes, 2005). Given this fluidity in the application of the theory, many researchers do employ the theory in more quantitative studies (Moscovici (1988) and Wagner and Hayes (2005) cite several examples of experimental studies using the theory). However, it is our contention that there is an important reciprocal relationship between qualitative research and social representations theory, in that both have a lot to gain from one another.

In this chapter we will firstly highlight some of the main points of the theory, and its historical context, in relation to qualitative research. We will then move on to consider the methodological implications of

the theory, focusing in particular on some of the benefits afforded by the theory from a methodological point of view, and providing some examples from our own work and that of other researchers in the area. Finally, we will consider some of the challenges for the qualitative researcher using social representations theory that are still to be addressed, and draw some tentative conclusions for the future.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theory of social representations was a response to what has been termed the 'crisis' in social psychology (Farr, 1996), when theorists struggled to determine what the focus of study within the discipline was, and, perhaps more importantly, what it should be (Moscovici, 1972). It represented an attempt to take the 'social' seriously once again, moving away from the more individualistic focus of, for example, attitude theory (Jaspars and Fraser, 1984), while at the same time not ignoring the 'psychic phenomena' of the individual (Moscovici, 1998: 214). Drawing upon a number of concepts, including Durkheim's (1898) notion of the collective representation (Farr, 1998), and the work of Lévy-Bruhl, Piaget and Vygotsky (Moscovici, 1998), Moscovici sought to elaborate a social psychology of knowledge (Duveen, 2000), a theory that takes common sense understanding seriously (Moscovici and Marková, 1998), considering its development and elaboration in social contexts, and its purpose in everyday life.

Numerous excellent, and more comprehensive, descriptions of the theory have been published in the last 40 years (e.g. Moscovici, 1973, 1984a, 1988; Farr, 1987; Purkhardt, 1993; Jovchelovitch, 1996; Marková, 1996; Duveen, 2000). However, it is important here to consider certain key features of the theory that make it of particular relevance to researchers using qualitative methods. In particular, we will focus on issues of meaning and social context in theory and research.

Meaning and interpretation are often said to lie at the heart of qualitative research (Bauer, Gaskell and Allum, 2000; Flick, 2006). They are also concepts that are central to social representations theory: the theory maintains that common sense or lay understandings are all too often denigrated and seen as inferior to other forms of knowledge, such as scientific or expert knowledge (Foster, 2003b). Instead of seeking to place common sense understanding in a hierarchy of knowledge, social representations theory takes as its starting point the notion that common sense knowledge provides social groups with ways of understanding the world around them, and of communicating about it (Moscovici, 1973). Through the twin cognitive processes of anchoring and objectification (Moscovici, 1984a), individuals within a social group can make sense of unfamiliar concepts, by associating them with existing ideas and images.

Definition of social representations

Moscovici (1998: 243) has given a definition which follows a constructionist trajectory in stating:

what defines a social representation. If this meaning should be pregnant, it must be that it corresponds to a certain recurrent and comprehensive model of images, beliefs and symbolic behaviours. Envisaged in this way, *statically*, representations appear similar to *theories* which order around a theme (mental illnesses are contagious, people are what they eat, etc.) a series of propositions which enable things or persons to be classified, their characters described, their feelings and actions to be explained, and so on. Further, the 'theory' contains a series of examples which illustrate concretely the values which introduce a hierarchy and their corresponding models of action... In fact, from the dynamic point of view social representations appear as a 'network' of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together, and therefore more mobile and fluid than theories. It seems that we cannot get rid of the impression that we have an 'encyclopaedia' of such ideas, metaphors and images which are connected one to another according to the necessity of the kernels, the *core beliefs* ... stored separately in our collective memory and around which these networks form.

There are two crucial points within the way that the theory deals with this process of meaning making, both of which emphasize the artificiality and indeed futility of trying to differentiate between the individual and the social (Moscovici, 1973, 1998). Firstly, representing is a social process, that is undertaken by individuals within a social group, in order to create and maintain a shared 'code' (Moscovici, 1973: xiii). Representations are not created anew, or as an individual enterprise: rather, they are represented, as members of social groups draw on existing, socially shared stocks of knowledge. Secondly, social representations, once developed and elaborated, come to constitute our reality: they are the ways in which we come to order and understand the world, and can become taken for granted. We cease to see them as the way we represent and understand a concept, and begin to see them *as* the concept itself (Marková, 1996); as such we are socialized by our representations (Moscovici and Hewstone, 1983). However, while representations develop and exist against a background of historically constrained social knowledge (Rose et al., 1995), they are created and sustained by a thinking society (Moscovici, 1988), thereby balancing the influence of the individual and the social.

The social nature of social representations theory becomes even clearer when we consider the role of the social group within the theory. Moscovici moved on from Durkheim's theory of collective representations in elaborating his ideas because of a conviction that in an increasingly fractionated and diverse society, few collective representations, shared by the whole of society, could survive¹. Instead, different social groups could draw on their own histories and understanding to create representations that differed from one another. It is for this reason that Bauer and Gaskell (1999) maintain that research into social representations must study particular 'natural groups', that is, individuals who share a common project with regards to a representational object. Moscovici's work on the representations of psychoanalysis held

by three different groups (Catholics, urban liberals, communists) (Moscovici, 1961) provides the perfect example here: Catholic ideas of psychoanalysis drew on the image of confession to understand the psychoanalytic session, differing, therefore, from communist ideas and so on. This recognition of, and indeed celebration of, the multiplicity of perspectives and voices within a society is another aspect that social representations theory shares with many approaches within qualitative research. The researcher using social representations theory seeks to elicit, examine and understand this multiplicity of perspectives in their own social context. This is also important because representations do not merely exist within the heads of the individuals who subscribe to them, or within the conversations that members of a social group might have: instead, they are exhibited, reinforced and developed in our social surroundings, in architecture, in routines and practices and in social structures such as 'clans, churches, social movements, families, clubs etc.' (Moscovici, 1998: 216). Qualitative approaches allow a closer consideration of this multiplicity of factors involved in social life, and in social understanding.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

What, then, are the implications for doing qualitative research if we adopt the perspective of social representations theory? As already mentioned, a variety of methods, both qualitative and quantitative, have been employed. However, we argue that certain qualitative methods are more appropriate in many cases of social representations research, although, as is universally the case, choice of methods must be driven by, and grounded in the research questions (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000; Flick, 2006).

Moscovici has made several important points regarding methodology and social representations that are of relevance here: firstly, early on in his elaboration of the concerns

that led him to develop the theory of social representations he highlighted the problems of an over-reliance on student populations in psychological research, and pointed out that social psychological research was often too focused on a particular group in terms of nationality, class, age and political leanings (Moscovici, 1972). He has also voiced concerns regarding the possibility of studying representations, in all their richness and complexity, in laboratory experiments (Moscovici and Marková, 1998). Instead, he draws attention to the value of observation (Moscovici, 1984a, 1988), and of studying conversation in its social context. In conversation with Ivana Marková, (Moscovici and Marková, 1998) he maintains that creativity in research is crucial, especially for the development of a field. Indeed, one need not confine oneself as a researcher to the work and methods associated with a particular field: other subjects, art and literature might have a lot to impart to any researcher (Moscovici, 1972). Some studies of social representations have indeed drawn upon both these areas in more detail (e.g. Chombart de Lauwe (1971) on representations of childhood in literature and De Rosa (1987) on mental illness in art).

Methodological rules for studying social representations

Moscovici (1984a) has also suggested some methodological rules for studying social representations. Although it can be assumed that it was not qualitative research that guided his own research interests, these suggestions can be easily linked to the methodological discussions in qualitative research.

The suggestion refers to the genesis of social representations and that any study should take this into account: 'when studying a representation, we should always try to discover the unfamiliar feature which motivated it and which it has absorbed. But it is particularly important that the development of such a feature be observed from the moment it emerges in the social sphere' (Moscovici, 1984a: 28). This rule can be applied in different ways. The first way is to use participant

observation in order to analyse the process of making a new phenomenon familiar and of integrating it into daily practices or routines. If this is inappropriate, given that many phenomena already exist and their relevance and meaning have already been established, this programmatic suggests that a social representations study should retrace, at least retrospectively, the emergence and influence of a theory, a cultural object, etc. This first procedure can be actualized by asking (a certain group of) people to tell the story of a phenomenon or their version of this story to achieve thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the object of interest.

Furthermore Moscovici (1984a: 52–9) formulates

'four methodological principles: (a) to obtain material from samples of conversations normally exchanged in society ... (b) to consider social representations as a means of re-creating reality ... (c) that the character of social representations is revealed especially in times of crisis and upheaval, when a group or its image are undergoing a change ... (d) that the people who elaborate such representations be seen as something akin to amateur 'scholars' and the groups they form as modern-day equivalents to those societies of amateur scholars that existed about a century ago'.

The first principle here suggests the use of methods of conversation analysis (Heritage, 1985) to study the social representations or to conduct open interviews or focus groups (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996). In both cases ways of creating a specific image of an object can be revealed. In this context, it is important to state that a lot of discourses among people that are most significant for dealing with a certain cultural object in a society, and for the social representations linked to it, no longer take place in locally and physically limited interactions but in symbolic contexts. For example this is the case in certain professions, where members share a common background of theories and professional socialisation, but do not communicate regularly in face-to-face conversations. Despite this they share common social representations that have socially important effects for handling objects and problems in a society.

So, if we want to study ‘the unceasing babble’ (Moscovici, 1984b) that produces, changes and exchanges social representations, natural groups become less important compared to symbolic groups, whose members are not in a direct communication with one another but who influence the genesis and development of representations in society through their symbolic membership of such groups. Here it becomes difficult to apply the discourse analyses Moscovici suggests. An alternative way is to try to simulate and stimulate such a discourse in interviews, and thus to approach the ways with which members deal with the issue under study.

Social representations and discourse analysis: historical debates and the need for coexistence

In the 1980s, in the UK especially, a linguistic or discursive turn in (social) psychology (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987, 1998; Harré, 1998) could be observed. This turn led to criticism of the concept of social representations (e.g. Potter and Litton, 1985; McKinlay and Potter, 1987). In this context, psychology was focused on what people are talking about or on texts of such discourse. In the programmatic rejection of studying cognition and in emphasizing discourse, the aspects of knowledge, its social distribution and construction are neglected. Similarly, little attention is paid to the notion that there is something like thinking, and a subjective social construction of realities through thinking about phenomena before, after and parallel to talking about them. In focussing on everyday discourse instead of studying knowledge in a strict cognitive way, discursive psychology and social representations research hold in common the rejection of cognitive psychology as a dominant or exclusive model for social psychology or as major approach to social phenomena. On the programmatic level, social representation theorists have focussed on interactions and the ‘unceasing babble’, in which social representations are produced and transformed. Social representations theory as a research programme

has always tried to integrate the study of knowledge and the study of social practices. Thus, discursive psychology may be seen as a part of the wider programme of studying social knowledge and practices as formulated in social representations theory. Social representations theory shares with discursive psychology its critical stance against social cognition research but avoids its shortcomings regarding knowledge and thinking. In its research, social representations theory complements knowledge and thinking as inner realities with discourse and communication as outer realities. This is completed by studying social representations as objects. In this way, studying social representations arrives at a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena than focusing purely on discourse or cognition alone allows. Thus, looking back on the debates of the 1980s (see also Voelklein and Howarth (2005) for a recent review) we can see them as debates more or less relevant for the English discussions but with not much impact in social representations research in other language and cultural contexts. If we turn to what has developed since we can see two research programmes in psychology with similar aims – to provide alternative views on how people (and societies) think and communicate about specific topics. Both focus on some sorts of knowledge – representations or discourse – both are interested in understanding how a society, certain parts of it, or (some of) its members act and react to, think, reflect and talk about a specific issue, topic or process. Both are, not exclusively but increasingly, using qualitative research for answering their research questions empirically. And finally, both have become parts of the family of approaches using qualitative research in psychology.

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN
STUDYING SOCIAL
REPRESENTATIONS**

Qualitative methods more generally are used to discover how people deal with certain

issues in everyday life or institutional practices. Instead of starting from theories and testing them, 'sensitising concepts' are required for approaching the contexts to be studied. In contrast to a widespread misunderstanding, these concepts are indeed influenced by prior theoretical knowledge. But here, theories are developed from empirical studies. Knowledge and practices are studied as *local* knowledge and practices (Geertz, 1983). Research in psychology, in particular, is often seen as lacking in relevance to everyday life in that it does not pay sufficient attention to describing the facts of a case. Instead of this, studying subjective meanings and mundane experience and practices is recommended, as is focusing on narratives (Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1987), discourses (Harré, 1998) and social forms of knowledge in local or group specific diversities (like social representations; Moscovici, 1961, 1998).

Collecting qualitative data for a social representations study

Although qualitative research as a field is in the process of constant proliferation, we can identify several common features of qualitative research (see Flick, 2006 for more details). Qualitative research is (or should be) driven by the idea of the appropriateness of methods and theories to the issues under study, thus leading to the variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research.

Certain qualitative methods may be especially useful to researchers using social representations theory. In particular focus groups and narrative interviews might be pertinent to the study of representations in everyday conversation; ethnographic work might also be of particular relevance in terms of examining representations in their social context, as they are evoked, elicited and developed (Duveen and Lloyd, 1993). Ethnography can examine the way that representations are shot through everyday life not only in conversation, but also in our material surroundings and social routines. It might also be

an important way of bringing to the fore representations that are taken for granted, or if there is an unconscious element to representation (Käes, 1984; Joffe, 1996): in Jodelet's (1991) study of the representations of madness in a small French community that took in patients from the local psychiatric hospital as 'lodgers', respondents denied the idea that mental illness was contagious in any way in interview, yet Jodelet was able to observe the rituals of separation that governed their lives, as they washed the crockery and laundry of the lodgers separately from their own, suggesting a continuing fear of contagion through bodily fluids.

Considering the socially shared and constructed aspect of social representations is key to all of these methods. However, it could be argued that these more idiographic methods only allow us to examine the way that social representations are presented and developed microgenetically, that is, within the social interaction of individuals as they communicate with one another (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). Other aspects of the development of social representations must also be considered: representations are generated through sociogenesis, that is the development, transformation and diffusion of knowledge within wider society (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990); the media, for example, play a significant role in this process and many social representations studies incorporate an analysis of the representations presented in newspapers, television and so on (Farr, 1993); research involving analysis of representations on the internet is also increasingly common, and important (Bauer and Gaskell, 1999). A third process of social representations, ontogenesis, is the means through which individuals take on and re-construct representations as they develop and participate in social life (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). In order to consider this aspect of representational work, longitudinal studies (Bauer and Gaskell, 1999) or developmental studies of children (Lloyd and Duveen, 1992) might be particularly useful.

Triangulation in the study of social representations

Several of these examples already highlight the fruitfulness of using different methods in one study of social representations. Such a triangulation (Flick, 1992, 2004a,b, 2007) can rely on independent methods such as participant observation and document analysis, as in the case of Jodelet (1991). As mentioned above, in this study Jodelet used qualitative methods to analyse the existing representations of mental illness and the mentally ill in a village in France in which families hosted expatriates as 'lodgers'. In order to find out how these representations influenced daily life in this village, Jodelet used anthropological and ethnographic methods. The study lasted four years and included the following methodological steps (for more details, see Jodelet, 1991: 18–19):

- Participant observation at all places (streets, cafés, shops, households, and where patients work) in which mental illness becomes visible and topical in the field under study.
- Reconstructions of the history of the 'Family Colony' through interviews with witnesses and analysis of documents about this historical development.
- Interviews with professionals ('visiting nurses'), who support the patients in the families and with the families who are hosting patients.
- Findings from these sources were used to develop a comprehensive questionnaire in order to survey attitudes towards different aspects of the lodging and care for the patients in the family.
- This survey was followed again by intensive interviews with a representative sample of the population who had answered the questionnaire. These interviews aimed to deepen and validate the survey results.

Another example is the study of Lloyd and Duveen (1992), who used ethnographic methods, mainly participant observation, in school classrooms in order to study gender identities of primary school children. They mainly employed unsystematic observations in classrooms of two schools of different types in order to develop interviews and more directed forms of observation.

Observations and field notes focused on three areas:

- 1 Classroom interaction, in the context of activity organized by children and by adults through which children expressed their gender identities.
- 2 Talk about gender in the classroom, in which children usually commented on the gender arrangements visible in their activity while adults employed gender to organize activity.
- 3 Institutional representations of gender offered in concerts, assemblies and exhibitions, organized by the schools for children and parents, and also representations of gender expressed in official school and local authority publications (Lloyd and Duveen, 1992: 44).

The authors showed how the social ascription and distribution of gender roles in the classrooms influences social categorisation in the conduct of the class, group formation, handling of certain objects (toys, puppets, cars), the shaping of activities, the use of spaces (specific areas of the classroom, allocations and reservations of corners for boys or girls) and behavioural styles, and is expressed through these at the same time.

Triangulation may also combine different methodological approaches within one method, such as question–answer sequences and narratives in the episodic interview, as in the examples of Flick, Fischer, Walter and Schwartz (2002) and Flick, Fischer, Neuber, Walter and Schwartz (2003). Triangulation can include several qualitative methods – as in these examples – or qualitative and quantitative methods as in Bauer and Gaskell (1999). Qualitative research using different methodological approaches focuses on different aspects of social representations. Firstly, the contents of existing representations are identified and analysed: What do people – or a specific group of people – know and think about a specific issue – for example inhabitants in a rural village about mental illness at a given moment? Secondly, the social distribution of representations is analysed: what are the differences in the existing knowledge and thinking about an issue that can be identified and to which social differences can they be linked? Mostly, social groups are

distinguished and differences between their knowledge and thinking about the issue are demonstrated. Alternatively, different representations of an issue are found and groups are identified who hold them. Sperber (1985) coined the term of analysing the 'epidemiology of representations' for such a study, but here the focus is on the content and social distribution (sharing and rejection of knowledge), and less on the frequencies or statistical distribution of knowledge. A third focus is the development of the existing representations – through studying documents Jodelet (1991) was able to show how the concepts of mental ill health or madness have developed over the years in the specific context of her study. In our study on the use of health concepts by health professionals (Flick et al., 2003) for example we studied (1) how the professionals conceptualize issues like health, health promotion and prevention. This was addressed by asking for subjective definitions of these issues. (2) We were interested in how these conceptualizations differed between two groups of professionals – general practitioners and home care nurses – and from those that could be found in lay populations. (3) Two aspects were analysed by using the professionals' narratives given as part of the interviews: how they used these concepts in their day-to-day practices with their clients and how their concepts have changed over the years of professional practice. (4) By analysing training plans and curriculum documents from the period in which our participants underwent their training, we identified the relevance of these issues as part of university and professional education for these groups and linked this to the subjective assessments we received from our participants about their training. The more general representation of the issues in the profession was finally (5) studied by analysing their coverage in professional journals in these fields. For this, content analyses of printed media were added. All in all, such a triangulation may identify contents, differences, distributions, developments and contexts of a social representation. In such a project, we no longer focus on the social

representation of something in the whole of society as Moscovici did in his study on psychoanalysis in France (1961). Rather specific parts of a society are identified – as relevant for the research question of the study – and the representations held in these parts of the society are studied in greater detail and differentiation. For these purposes, the use of qualitative methods and especially of multiple qualitative methods has become increasingly important in the study of social representations.

Analysing qualitative data in a social representations study

Some of what has been said on the subject of the collection of qualitative data similarly applies to data analysis in a social representations study. In concrete terms, which specific methods should be regarded as appropriate and used for analysing the data depends on what is being studied. However, we should distinguish here between the concrete procedures (or methods), which are applied to the analysis of fragments of data (see the later part of this chapter for examples) and the analytic attitude taken in using them. If we take the suggestions for analysing qualitative data made by Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), we find different procedures for how to code the data collected from interviews, focus groups or participant observation. These procedures go from a more open and exploratory approach (open coding) to more focused ones intending to give the data and analysis more structure (axial and selective coding). These techniques can in principle be useful for breaking down the data (as was the intention in Strauss's works) in a social representations study, too. However, the analytic attitude of Strauss and his colleagues is to develop a theory of an issue, which has, up to that point, not been understood, explained and theorized in a satisfying way. A prominent example is interaction with and about people dying in hospitals (Glaser and Strauss, 1965). In pursuing this aim, there are normally no a-priori assumptions about groups (in a field or a society), nor

the idea that there are differences in the representations of that issue to be found through comparing the different groups. Thus the intention of a grounded theory study is to develop a concept and a theory around this concept from the empirical material. In a social representations study, the intention is to show that there are differences between social groups in what they know about a specific issue – in the representations of this issue they hold. Sometimes this is focused on one specific group, which is implicitly or explicitly opposed to other groups that are not studied. For example we compare the representations of health and ageing for two groups (doctors and nurses) and the comparison of both is intended to show the social quality of such a representation. Or we pick a specific group – e.g. homeless adolescents – and analyse their representations of health and compare the results with what is known from other studies about other groups' representations of that issue, for example average adolescents.

The difference on a methodological level, which we should keep in mind, is the analytic attitude: Data analysis (and often previously data collection) in a social representations study is driven by a comparative perspective with a focus on different social groups – families and lodgers in the case of Jodelet (1991), girls and boys in Duveen and Lloyd (1993) for example. This comparative perspective makes it more difficult to apply, for example, the analytic procedures suggested for grounded theory research, which do not imply such group related comparisons. Therefore, modifications seem necessary in some cases. Instead of theoretical coding in the sense of Strauss, Flick (2006) therefore suggests the use of thematic coding in social representations studies. In the interpretation of the material, thematic coding is applied as a multistage procedure with respect to the comparability of the analyses. The first step addresses the cases – for example interviewees coming from different groups – involved, which are interpreted in a series of case studies. As a preliminary orientation, a short description of each case will be

produced, which is continuously rechecked and modified if necessary during the further interpretation of the case. This case description includes several elements. The first is a statement which is typical of the interview – the motto of the case. A short description should include information about the person with regard to the research question (e.g. age, profession, number of children, whatever is relevant to the issue under study). Finally, the central topics mentioned by the interviewee concerning the research issue are summarized. After finishing the case analysis, this case profile forms part of the results, perhaps in a revised form. Then – and different from Strauss's (1987) procedure – a deepening analysis of the single case, which pursues several aims, should be carried out. The meaningful relations in the way the respective person deals with the topic of the study are to be preserved, which is why a case study is done for all cases. In the analysis, a system of categories is developed for the single case. In the further elaboration of this system of categories (similar to Strauss), first open and then selective coding is applied. Selective coding here aims less at developing a grounded core category across all cases than at generating thematic domains and categories for the single case first. After the first case analyses, the developed categories and thematic domains linked to the single cases should be cross checked. A thematic structure results from this cross check, which forms the basis for the analysis of further cases, in order to increase their comparability. The result of this process is a case-oriented display of the way the case specifically deals with the issue of the study, including constant topics (e.g. strangeness of technology), which can be found in the viewpoints across different domains of everyday life (e.g. work, leisure, household).

The developed thematic structure also serves for comparing cases and groups, i.e. for elaborating correspondences and differences between the various groups in the study. Thus, the social distribution of perspectives on the issue under study are analysed and assessed. After the case analyses

have shown, for example, that the subjective definition of technology is an essential thematic domain for understanding technological change, it is then possible to compare the definitions of technology and the related coding from all cases. From this comparison, it is possible to link the data analysis more closely to the concept of social representation, not only to study the contents of representations, but also their differences and distribution across social groups and contexts.

This analytic attitude should be taken into account, when importing analytic techniques from other approaches and it should lead to modifications if necessary. Of course, the modification discussed here as an example should only be seen as an example, other modifications may be more useful depending on what the research question is.

The role of the researcher

Although it has not always been the case, the role of the researcher can, and should, also be acknowledged and explored by social representations theory (Howarth, Foster and Dorrer, 2004). Given the multiplicity of perspectives within society, and the way that our representations shape our identities (Duveen, 2001), it is impossible for the researcher to step outside his or her own representations when engaging in any research. Instead, these representations must be acknowledged and examined in an attempt to ensure that differences between researcher and participant representations are openly recognized (Howarth, 2002). Indeed, from a social representations perspective, such divergence between researcher and participant perspective can in itself become an important research tool, in that it brings taken for granted knowledge to the fore, and challenges assumptions and accepted definitions on all sides. Moscovici (1988) discusses the way that certain representations can become more obvious when they come into contact with one another. In keeping with many ethnographic approaches, then, it is useful for the researcher to present him or herself as a learner in the research situation (Howarth

et al., 2004), interested in the perspective of the Other, but also capable of bringing novel interpretations to the situation, to be openly and fully discussed with participants.

Using qualitative methods for studying social representations step-by-step

In summarizing the last points discussed above, we can identify several steps to using qualitative methods in studying social representations as in Box 12.1.

THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN STUDYING SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS: SOME EXAMPLES

At this point, it is perhaps most instructive to discuss some concrete examples of qualitative work that has employed the theory of social representations as its theoretical and methodological perspective in order to illustrate some of the points made above.

Social representations of health and illness

Health and illness have been an issue in the field of social representations research right from the beginning, as the study of Herzlich (1968/1973) shows. Herzlich interviewed 80 people from social groups differing in education and profession about their ideas of health and illness. Any claim about the representativeness of this sample was given up in favour of more flexibility and depth in collecting the data through open-ended interviews. Different from Moscovici (1961), the aim of following the passage of one specific theory through society was abandoned. In fact, no one theory is used as starting point, nor is the passage of parts of the theory reconstructed through media analyses. Instead, the study focused on the subjective aspects of the genesis and meaning of social representations.

The most impressive results this study produced are comprised in two typologies, one

BOX 12.1 Using Qualitative Methods for Studying Social Representations Step-by-Step

(Flick, 2006; Foster, 2007)

- 1 Identify an issue for your study
- 2 Develop a research question for your study
- 3 Define the issue the social representations of which you want to study
- 4 Who or what are expected to be the carriers of the social representations?
 - (a) Mostly: which groups are to be expected to hold potentially different representations of that issue?
 - (b) Sometimes: which objects (documents, cultural products) represent that issue?
- 5 Create a research design which adopts a comparative perspective (on different groups for example)
- 6 Sampling should aim to find members of the groups mentioned above
- 7 Select a method, or a combination of methods, for data collection which is able to address the parts of a social representation to be studied: forms of knowledge in a (for example episodic) interview; practices in participant observation; interactions in focus groups, etc.
- 8 Choose a method for analysing the data which is able to encompass the analytic attitude of social representations, or modify an existing technique for that purpose
- 9 Write up your analysis with the focus on showing the differences in the representations among the groups
- 10 Reflect on your own role in studying this issue and in relation to the people and fields you have studied.

of everyday conceptions of health and one of such concepts of illness (see Table 12.1)

There has been a considerable amount of research in the tradition of this study, in which similar types of health and illness representations have been found. Much of the research in this field focuses on the 'normal population': what are the representations of health and illness of different groups in the normal population; how are they distributed across these groups? A different approach is to study social representations from the edges: to identify specific groups and to study the representations of health and illness held by them. Two examples of this will be given.

Flick et al. (2002, 2003) and Flick, Walter, Fischer, Neuber and Schwartz (2004)

interviewed health professionals to examine their representations of health (and of ageing). The background of this study was a shift of the theoretical orientation on the level of sciences and health politics. This shift went from illness and curing to health and health promotion and especially to prevention. The research question of this study is: how far did health professionals in their day-to-day practice and in their knowledge adopt this shift, how do they represent health and health promotion as a part or orientation of their professional work? A general representation of these issues could be found and many statements were made about how these concepts orient the practical works of health system protagonists – those to whom people with general or specific health problems first turn. Analysing the obstacles and problems preventing these protagonists from making health orientation, prevention and health promotion leitmotifs for their work – at all or to a greater extent was a second step. Reasons for this problem were located by the participants in their training, in the

Table 12.1 Typology of health and illness representations

<i>Health conceptions</i>	<i>Illness conceptions</i>
Health-in-a-vacuum	Illness as destructive
Reserve of health	Illness as liberator
Equilibrium	Illness as occupation

Source: (Herzlich, 1973)

framework conditions of the health system and so on. So, it was possible to analyse representations of possible (and impossible) changes in the health services in the context of a wider orientation of (New) Public Health.

In an ongoing project (Flick and Röhnsch, 2006, 2007), health concepts and practices of homeless adolescents are studied. Here, we apply our theoretical framework and methodological approach to a group of people on the fringes of our society and analyse how they are concerned with health as an issue and a problem and how they use the resources of the health system when they face health problems. We also see the barriers they are confronted with when searching for support in the health system and which informal and formal networks they use instead or in addition. Again, we find how the discourse about health, health promotion and prevention is represented in a specific group – somehow at the other end of a range compared to the participants in our former study. Such studies stand in the tradition of Herzlich who in her research demonstrated the way that concepts like health and illness are used by the interviewees to interpret their own relations to society and the environment: 'Health and illness thus appear as a mode of interpretation of society by the individual, and as a mode of relation of the individual to society' (Herzlich, 1973: 139).

Social representations of mental ill health

Foster (2001, 2003a, 2007) examined the way that clients of the mental health services understand mental health and illness, a topic somewhat overlooked until recently (Rogers, Pilgrim and Lacey, 1993). The theory of social representations provided a useful way of framing the study for a number of reasons.

Firstly, as already highlighted, it is a theory that does not seek to denigrate common sense understanding, but rather seeks to understand it in context, and to consider the purposes that it serves for those that

subscribe to it. It does not start out from the notion that some forms of knowledge are more valuable than others, or seek to organize forms of knowledge in any kind of hierarchy. This is a particularly useful point when considering knowledge held by groups who have traditionally been stigmatized and devalued in society, as holders of what Foucault (1980) terms subjugated knowledge. This is perhaps especially the case in issues of mental health, but it has also been argued that within issues of health in general, with their focus on the biomedical, and its preference for professional interpretations, there is little room for patient narratives (Kleinman, 1980). Social representations theory, however, reverses this trend.

Secondly, the 'social' nature of social representations theory lends itself to this kind of study. Representations are produced, reiterated, negotiated and employed by social groups, within their social contexts. As Flick (1998) has maintained, health is not an individual issue, but rather involves elements of the individual, the institutional, the community, the societal and of professionalization. Social representations theory acknowledges, and allows for this: it provides a framework for considering the way in which people make sense of their own health and illness, and the socially shared stocks of knowledge that they draw on in order to do this, changing and developing their ideas as their experiences and interactions with others change and develop.

Foster (2001, 2003a, 2007) draws on these aspects of social representations theory by undertaking a qualitative, multi-method study of client understanding, designed to examine representations in context. She uses ethnographic work and narrative-style interviewing in three different mental health services (two day centres and one acute ward) and also content analysis of material produced by clients or former clients in four magazines produced by mental health organizations, thereby seeking to access representations at both the microgenetic and sociogenetic levels.

The data that were collected (interviews, ethnographic notes, newsletter articles) were then analysed with the aid of the Atlas-ti (www.atlasti.de) computer-aided qualitative data analysis program. Foster's preference for this stemmed from the fact that it does not impose any structure onto the data a priori (Kelle, 2000), and therefore could be said to be of particular use when a researcher is interested in studying social representations openly, whilst maintaining an awareness of how our own preconceptions affect the analysis of data. However, one of the aims of this study was to examine the similarities and differences that exist between client understanding of mental ill health and representations held by the public and by professionals. While there is a relative paucity of studies examining client understanding (Rogers et al., 1993; Foster, 2003a), there have been numerous studies examining the beliefs about mental illness held by the public and professionals (see Foster, 2007, for a more detailed discussion). Consequently, it made substantive sense to develop a coding frame that allowed for a comparison with these studies: a coding frame was therefore developed that was partially deductive, thereby looking for certain themes that have proved important in public or professional understanding (such as violence to others), and partially inductive, thereby allowing alternative or additional representations to emerge from the data during the analysis (control of mental health problems provides an interesting example of this kind of theme). All the data was coded twice by the same author at different points to ensure that the coding frame had been used consistently, and to allow for the fact that the analysis of qualitative data is very much a cyclical process (Bauer, 2000). Notes were also made throughout the analysis to maintain both an awareness of the process of the research and in an attempt to maintain a level of reflexivity; those interviews that had been taped were also listened to on numerous occasions, to ensure that more conversational aspects of the data were not lost. Once all the data had been coded twice, the relationships between the themes

that emerged from the data was then examined in greater depth, as were the similarities and differences between the different kinds of data.

To some extent, the theoretical, practical and ethical concerns governing the choice of the multiple qualitative methods in this study overlapped. Undertaking ethnographic work in each location allowed researcher and participants to get to know each other better, facilitating interviewing, or providing a different forum for participants who find the idea of an interview too threatening: again, within a mental health context, this was important, as for many participants interviews carried negative connotations of interaction with psychiatrists.

Taking these approaches, and the perspective of social representations theory, highlighted some interesting issues. Using ethnography did indeed allow access to wider representations within the mental health services. In particular, it became clear that clients engaged in their own projects (Bauer and Gaskell, 1999) in relation to their mental ill health, and often struggled to assert these in the face of professional ideas and institutional barriers to them taking further control. The ethnographic observation of the organisation of the weekly ward round, a meeting between each patient and the professionals involved in his or her care, at the inpatient ward provides an informative example of this. Observing this situation allowed the researcher to see how institutional routine contributed to the patients' tension and sense of powerlessness, as they waited their turn, not knowing when, or even if, they would be seen. The patients also confirmed this in what was said informally during these waits: some likened the encounters to being sent to see the headmaster at school, or talked about how they worried about where to sit and so on. The subtleties of these power relations and their role in clients' representations would have been hard to grasp using any other method.

Interviews allowed the researcher to supplement, check and challenge observational data, once again acknowledging the

multiplicity of perspectives inherent in social representations theory. Interviews were broadly narrative in style, inviting clients to tell the story of how they had come to be at a particular service, thus allowing them the freedom to tell their story: narratives and social representations have a important, albeit complicated, reciprocal relationship (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). Through the stories that clients told about their experiences and developing interpretations of these, they further demonstrated their engagement in projects with regard to their mental health. As such, clients were working to make sense of their experiences, and to draw on this and the experience and interpretations of others, especially other clients, to engage with their mental ill health. Consequently clients had very firm ideas about what helped and did not help in their projects, and their representations of mental ill health were meaningful practically: rather than holding them in the abstract, they employed and developed them in their everyday lives and interactions with professionals, other clients, family and friends and members of the public.

Representational projects were also in evidence in the mental health service user literature that was analysed in the project. Firstly, drawing on this literature allowed an appreciation of how far clients of the mental health services share their experiences, and develop representations about mental ill health not only in the smoking rooms and lounges of mental health services and user groups, but also in a more community-wide, even national, context. This suggests that, contrary to some suggestions (Wagner, 1995), mental health service users draw on socially shared knowledge to understand their experiences, constructing new representations of mental ill health in the process, rather than relying on idiosyncratic explanations or on the ideas of mental ill health subscribed to by the general public or by mental health professionals. It also reinforces the importance of the developing mental health service user movement as a forum for sharing, promoting and challenging ideas about mental health and illness.

Other examples

Given the increasingly long history of social representations theory, the list of qualitative methods employed is lengthening (for a review of much of the relevant work in this area, see Wagner and Hayes, 2005). We would argue that the key is to maintain an open-minded and creative attitude towards developing methods that fit the research questions of social representations studies. Several recent studies do just this: for example, Gillespie (Zittoun, Duveen, Gillespie, Ivanson and Psaltis, 2003; Gillespie, 2006, in preparation) uses a range of methods in his consideration of tourists' construction of representations of Self and Other in their experiences while travelling in Ladakh. Gillespie (2006) carried out over twelve months of ethnographic research, and numerous interviews in naturalistic settings with groups of tourists and of Ladakhis. An example of the innovation in this study is his interviews with tourists over the photographs that they have taken of the region. This provides a fascinating insight into the representations that the tourists bring of Ladakh as Shangri-La, and a non-Westernized spiritual haven, and shows how they self-consciously continue to frame these ideas in their choices of subjects for their photographs, which, in turn, will perpetuate representations on their return to their home countries. Drawing on a range of other theoretical perspectives, Gillespie also considers the construction of the Self/Other relationship in the act of photography, and the 'reverse gaze' that is established as the tourist takes a photograph of a Ladakhi while at the same time imagining that this is undesirable, based on existing notions of what constitutes acceptable and respectful behaviour on the part of the tourist (or traveller).

Joffe (1999) undertook a study on the social representations of risks linked to new diseases like AIDS in which she interviewed people in Britain and in South Africa. For example, AIDS was first categorized as an epidemic, which only concerned special groups of 'other' people (like homosexuals,

people in California, etc.) but ‘not me’ (Joffe, 1999). Joffe’s interviews show how knowledge about something unfamiliar (like AIDS) is developed and has practical impacts in the way it develops, changes and is anchored. When the notion spread that AIDS could potentially infect everybody, certain groups developed different reaction patterns. So the discussion in Sweden or Germany for example oscillated for a long time between the poles of social integration/and medical treatment versus excluding the patients by setting up certain areas for them and drawing clear borders between those who are ill and those who are not. These reaction patterns can be seen as the result of processes of anchoring the unfamiliar disease and developing conventions. From that research, similar studies on other diseases could be derived (e.g. Joffe and Battega, 2003).

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The current situation

The days of big debates about the crisis of social psychology (in the 1970s; see Israel and Tajfel, 1972), in which social representations theory became a prominent player in the development of the discipline, are over. Gone are also the days when discourse analysis established itself against a background of a fundamental critique of social representations theory and research, which led to hot debates, as discussed above. Social psychology has localized itself either in the context of a more or less unchanged tradition of itself, in which the debates around social representations (and similar critiques) play a minor role. This is the case in the USA or in Germany and to some extent also in France. Alternatively, it is dominated by discourse-oriented approaches as in the UK. Nevertheless, there is a wide variety of research going on which uses social representations in combination with qualitative research. This can be found not only in the contexts just mentioned (social psychology in the UK, the USA, Germany and France) but even more so beyond these traditional fields of social

representations research. On the one hand we find great enthusiasm for this concept in research in Latin American social psychology (e.g. Krause Jacob, 2003), with numerous publications in Spanish and Portuguese. On the other hand, we can also see a wider spread of the approach of using qualitative research to study social representations into fields beyond social psychology. Here we find research in developmental psychology (following Duveen and Lloyd, 1990) extending into cultural psychology (see many contributions to the journal *Culture and Psychology*). There is also considerable research activity going on in areas of health psychology (see the contributions of Joffe, 2002; Murray and Flick, 2002; Flick, 2003). In particular, Claudine Herzlich’s (1968/1973) study is still a corner stone in research interested in lay concepts of health and illness in fields like medical sociology, public health and nursing – even if the link to the theory is not made explicit or in some cases quantitative methods are used. Social representations theory, in the combination with qualitative research, has therefore had a major impact on a variety of fields and contexts. This combination is still not oriented towards a specific method. Interviews, the use of focus groups or participant observation and the analysis of documents are all still common in these fields.

What next?

Inevitably, there are still questions left unanswered when we consider not only how we should do qualitative work using the theory of social representations, but also what we should then do with that research. Recent work has drawn attention to some of the problems and the potential of social representations theory: it has been argued that social representations theory must adopt a more overtly community-based, participatory approach to doing research (Campbell and Jovchelovitch, 2000; Howarth et al., 2004), and that we must consider the application of social representations studies more closely (Howarth et al., 2004).

Indeed, Moscovici (1972) was adamant that social psychology needed to emerge from the academic ghetto and address social problems that were relevant in a manner which was also relevant.

However, as yet few social representations studies have overtly adopted this approach: many studies remain somewhat reactive, detailing representations of an issue in existence, while the researcher maintains something of a 'disinterested attitude', something expressly suggested by Bauer and Gaskell (1999: 179), independent of the representations and their consequences. In some ways, given social representations theory's commitment to seeing all forms of knowledge as equal and relevant, this is not surprising: to imply that representations might be changed as a result of research risks subscribing once again to the idea of a hierarchy of knowledge, with some forms of understanding as incorrect, and in need of alteration by more knowledgeable and superior others. This position is clearly troubling, but it is not the same as admitting that representations can be harmful, detrimental to those that subscribe to them, or serve to keep others in a subjugated position (Jovchelovitch, 2001; Howarth et al., 2004). One study that does seek to develop social representations theory along these lines is that of Krause Jacob (2003), who undertook a participant action research project with a self help group made up of individuals diagnosed with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Working with the group, a number of negative representations based around the limitations caused by the disease were identified, and a programme was arranged to challenge and adapt these representations, which resulted in a transformation of the negative representations of the illness, which centred on normalisation, management and acceptance, thereby greatly improving the quality of life of participants. Another example is the study on professionals' health concepts mentioned before (Flick et al., 2004). Here, the interviews with doctors and nurses were analysed and the results were taken as starting points for a feedback process to the participants. Selected

results were taken as an input for focus groups with the participants. In these groups we presented obstacles and problems mentioned by the interviewees and asked the participants of the focus groups to discuss these obstacles, to rate them in their relevance for their own work and to discuss ways to overcome these obstacles. This feedback of results from a social representations study with qualitative methods can be seen as an attempt to develop an impact on the fields of practice that were studied in the first step. Similarly, other studies that take a more participatory approach to research have also drawn on the theory of social representations: adopting a pragmatist epistemology, Cornish (2004, submitted) undertook a qualitative multi-method study of the Sonagachi project in Calcutta, an HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual health programme run in the main red-light district of the city, widely regarded as a successful example of the peer educator model. In particular, she looks at the way that the project, and its participants, problematize existing representations of sex workers, based on the notion that sex workers should have rights, through comparison with other groups (including other oppressed groups) in society, and by drawing on material evidence of the successes already achieved by the project. The theory of social representations has much more potential for projects such as this, although it remains to be seen how far they might be actualized.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Social representations can be seen as a genuinely psychological framework for studying phenomena and issues which are addressed by qualitative research. Mostly qualitative research uses methods and relies on theoretical assumptions and theories that stem from other disciplines such as sociology or cultural anthropology. Social representations theory and the research done in this field outline a specifically psychological approach to using ethnographic methods, analysing everyday knowledge and processes

of social construction of reality. This is not only relevant for social psychology but other areas of psychological research, which are not (only) interested in laboratory studies of abstract phenomena, but practically relevant issues of social problems. As the last part of this chapter has shown, a social representations approach can also offer a fruitful access to changing fields under study and to making practically relevant contributions.

NOTES

1 The issue of whether any collective representations continue to exist is still debated. For example, it has been argued that individualism in Western society is a collective representation in the Durkheimian sense (Farr, 1996).

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Q Methodology

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INTRODUCTION

Q methodology is a mixed blessing. No doubt about it. Any method which has such an openly *qualiquantological* heritage (see Stenner and Stainton Rogers (2004) for a fuller explanation of this disgraceful neologism) risks being singled out and victimized. This is, after all, a method which has its roots in the psychological laboratories of Charles Spearman and Cyril Burt – laboratories which throughout the 1920s and 1930s were responsible for the invention and refinement of the psychometric techniques that still characterize the discipline today (often to the detriment of qualitative techniques). Yet, if that were not shameful enough, here it is rearing its frankly ugly head (nearly a century later) in the pages of a handbook of qualitative research methods. You see? We warned you.

So how did it end up here? That is a good question and we are glad you asked. The answer is, in fact, relatively straightforward. Q methodology was first introduced by William Stephenson in a letter to *Nature* published in 1935. Stephenson worked as assistant to Spearman and subsequently also

to Burt at University College London. His 1935 letter observed that the factor analytical techniques being developed at the time by Spearman (as well as Thomson, Pearson, and others), in order to facilitate the measurement and manipulation of supposedly essential traits, could also be deployed within a radically different ontological framework and to a radically alternative end: namely, the systematic study of *subjectivity*.

Q methodology was hence designed expressly to explore the subjective dimension of any issue towards which *different points-of-view* can be expressed. Methodologically speaking, subjectivity is made the centre of concern in two related ways that correspond to the two main distinctive aspects of Q methodology: the collection of data in the form of Q sorts and the subsequent *by-person* correlation and factor analysis of those sorts. The Q sort as a form of data collection was developed for the purpose by Stephenson, not only to maximize the expression of subjectivity, but also to deal with the relatively unusual situation of a form of data analysis that, technically speaking, treats participants as variables rather than as cases. The 'Q' in Q methodology thus refers to a distinction

between procedures that correlate and factor traits (named 'R methodology' after the 'r' in the famous Pearson correlation) and those that do the same with *persons* or Q sorts (named Q methodology).

In simple terms, Q methodological studies involve a group of participants sorting a sample of items into a configuration (the Q sort) that, taken as a *gestalt*, reflects a relevant subjective dimension (e.g. personal degree of agreement with the items). The Q sorts of a number of participants (or numerous sorts from the same participant) can then be analysed by-person to yield a smaller set of factors each of which identifies a highly inter-correlated cluster of Q sorts (i.e. Q sorts from within the group that are sorted in a similar way). Given the manifold possibilities of combination inherent in the Q sort task, Q sorts that are sorted in a similar way typically express a shared and coherent point-of-view on the topic addressed by the item set. This point-of-view is then identified and explicated through careful interpretation of the factors (or, more accurately, through careful interpretation of the different item configurations that typify each factor). The result of a Q study is hence the holistic identification of a finite range of distinct viewpoints relating to the addressed issue or subject matter.

Stephenson's concern with subjectivity will, of course, be shared by many who read this handbook. Such concern was nonetheless very much at odds with the hypothetico-deductive logic that prevailed in the psychological discipline of his time. Despite his initial optimism and belief that Q methodology would allow the development of a new psychology based upon 'individual differences *in type*' (Stephenson, 1936: 205), Stephenson never truly established his method as a serious alternative to the psychometric possibilities afforded by conventional factor analytic techniques. He developed and then directed the Institute for Experimental Psychology at Oxford, but subsequently left the UK for the USA after the Second World War and thereafter effectively left psychology, apparently frustrated with its

intransigence. As a consequence, Q methodology all but disappeared within UK psychology, continuing in the USA thanks to the efforts of individuals such as Steve Brown (1980) in fields such as political science. Q and its inventor have subsequently been all but written out of the history of psychology (most now associate Q sorting only with Carl Rogers!).

Fortunately, Q methodology returned to the UK and to psychology during the 1980s under the guise of an early incarnation of the discursive turn. A key moment here was the Q methodological conference held at Reading which was attended by William Stephenson in the year of his death. This return, associated predominantly with the work of Rex and Wendy Stainton Rogers and their numerous students, was inspired by the kind of constructivist and poststructuralist thinking best exemplified in the writings of legendary polymath Beryl C. Curt (e.g. Curt, 1994). In this context, subjectivity becomes a central concern once more and is theorized in relation to its enmeshment in the power dynamics of a shifting manifold of discursive practice. Here is Curt (1994: 119–20) describing this 'critical polytextualist' use of Q: 'What we were looking for as a method was the "opposite" of correlating "traits", something which correlated whole structures of readings (e.g. about people) in order to disclose how they "shake out" into sets of very similar accounts, i.e. shared stories'. And what they found was Q methodology. So, despite its factor analytic heritage, Q finally found an adopted home for itself within UK psychology as a discursive, constructivist, and hence as an essentially *qualitative* method. And that is why it has a place in this book.

POSITIONING Q: SOME NOTES ON NATURALISM

In the opening section, we have argued that Q is a qualitative method. It is nonetheless an idiosyncratic example and in this section we will attempt to understand these idiosyncrasies a little better. One way of

doing this is to position Q in relation to the important distinction between methodologies that aspire to *naturalism* and those which self-consciously stage an artificial set-up. It seems apparent that the former aspiration tends most obviously to be a goal of the qualitative tradition, whilst the latter has a distinctly 'quantitative' feel. Ethnographers, for example, place great importance upon studying people in the context of their everyday life-worlds, or what is often quaintly called 'the field'. At the other extreme, the best laboratory experiments are cleverly contrived artificial 'set-ups' designed for purposes of measurement. One might argue that a qualitative interview falls between these two poles, since it has a distinctly contrived set-up designed for purposes of *communication* rather than measurement. The standard arguments then suggest that good naturalism gains ecological validity at the cost of a lack of precision born of overwhelming complexity. Good experimentation, on the other hand, gains reliability at the cost, in psychology at least, of a lack of relevance born of the highly circumscribed applicability of the findings.

Clearly Q methodology involves its participants in an artificial set-up and in this important sense it does not aspire to naturalism (in contrast to many of its qualitative cousins). However, to properly understand the set-up of Q methodology we need to recognize that it is best grasped neither in terms of measurement *nor* in terms of communication. Certainly both number and communication are involved, but number is not deployed for the purposes of quantitative measurement and communication is deliberately restricted to a situation in which a participant responds to a set of items (usually in the linguistic form of statements or propositions) according to a pre-specified subjective criterion (which do you *like*, which do you *agree* with, which are most *important to you*, and so on).

Naturalistic communication, if one can use that term, is obviously very different. To put it schematically, it involves an ongoing process in which ego's understanding of alter's contribution (utterance or other missive) is confirmed by alter's understanding of ego's

reply which gives rise to further reciprocally related utterances and understandings in a sequence that unfolds self-referentially (i.e. communication provides its own *context*) in real time and space. This process entails the combination of subjective (thoughts, feelings, intentions, expectations, experiences, and so on) and objective aspects (such as shareable utterances), in which the objective contributions embody subjective anticipations of comprehension specific to the particulars of the unfolding dialogue.

Responding to a proposition typed on a piece of card by ranking it in relation to a number of others is a rather different matter. There is no interlocutor present, the contributions (propositions) lack a clear source, and the participant is not required to articulate an appropriate reply. Judged from the perspective of naturalism, these are problems indeed! However, the artifice of a Q methodological study is not an oversight that should lead to its dismissal – it is an integral aspect of its design. The participant is deliberately placed in the position of an *observer of statements* and asked to express their orientation towards a large number of these in a highly controlled form that has the virtue of permitting *direct comparison* with the orientations of other participants (or themselves on different occasions). Neither is this artifice restrictive. Q methodology makes overall item configurations its research target, and its design and procedure render a hyper-astronomical number of possible configurations available to its participants (see Watts and Stenner, 2005a). The artifice simply serves its purpose.

At this point, it will be useful also to contrast Q sorting with more familiar quasi-quantitative psychological procedures such as Likert-style questionnaires, attitude scales and personality measures. These typically aspire to be quantitative, in the sense that they claim to provide objective *measures* of variables which should vary only in quantitative (and definitely not qualitative) terms. Leaving aside the many valid criticisms of this aspiration, a participant completing an intelligence test or personality measure is, from the psychologist's point-of-view, a 'subject'

in the full sense of being *passively subjected to measurement*. What the participant ‘thinks’ or ‘feels’ their ‘psychological significance’ about the items they check is, in principle, irrelevant to the process, just as an individual’s attitude to a given tape measure is irrelevant to the question of how tall they actually are. This is further reflected in the fact that the meaning of each item is carefully predefined in the process of designing the measure such that the possibility of its negotiation is excluded. In these ways a certain singularity or ‘monologic’ is imposed through the *practical elimination* of qualitative variation. Indeed, it is precisely this semantic exclusion that permits the impression that it is *measurement*, rather than mediated dialogue, that is ‘going on’.

With Q sorting the situation is quite different. The Q sort as a data-collection form is designed to maximize the expression of *qualitative* variation and to record it in numerical form. It is *assumed* that one person’s understanding of a set of items will differ qualitatively from that of another, and in this sense Q methodology can be likened to the repertory grid techniques of personal construct theory (Bannister and Fransella, 1971). The qualitative dimension shifts from being ‘noise’ to ‘signal’. The Q sort can hence be seen as a means to carefully delimit – but also to maximize – the expression of qualitative variation at the level of subjectivity. It is less a measure than a *vehicle for the controlled expression of subjectivity*. To this end, Q sorting greatly amplifies the tendencies immanent in more familiar nominal and ordinal ‘scales’ by asking participants to rank a large number of items into an elaborate configuration according to their own likes and dislikes. Stephenson argued that the items were sorted according to their ‘psychological significance’ for any given participant (see Burt and Stephenson, 1939). Items of great psychological significance would hence receive a high ranking, with less significant items receiving progressively lower rankings. In this way a large and formerly heterogeneous set of items can be rendered ‘homogeneous with respect to...[a particular] individual’

(Stephenson, 1936: 346). The set of items is lent order precisely *from the perspective of the Q sorter*. The Q sort of one participant can then be directly compared with those which have been rendered homogenous with respect to other participants. This process of self-conscious artifice is designed to enable a numerical representation that makes qualitative variation mathematically tractable. In sum, this shift in the status of qualitative variation from noise to signal constitutes a profound reversal. In the Q methodological situation, participants are not passive subjects but *genuinely active participants* who operate on a set of items from an explicitly self-referential and semantic point of view (what *I* believe or understand from *my* perspective). In contrast to standard quasi-quantitative techniques, therefore, in which individuals are *scored* by tests, in Q methodology ‘the tests get ... [the scores] instead, due to the operation of the individuals upon them’ (Stephenson, 1935: 19).

HOW DO YOU DO Q? AN ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY

Okay. That is quite enough theorizing for the moment. Thinking about things is all well and good, but probably by now you are gagging to ‘do it’? And that’s what this section is all about – a step-by-step guide to getting a Q methodological study done (see Box 13.1), accompanied by a pertinent illustrative study which (rather conveniently in the context) explores the meaning of qualitative research. All very helpful we think you will agree...

Step 1: Formulating the research question

In keeping with its recently claimed qualitative status, the formulation of specific research hypotheses is typically inappropriate in the context of Q methodology. As an essentially exploratory technique, Q cannot prove hypotheses. Its strength lies in bringing a sense of coherence

BOX 13.1 Q Methodology Step by Step

<i>Formulating the research question</i>	
The subjective dimension of any issue towards which different points-of-view can be expressed. E.g. 'What is the meaning of 'Quality of Life'? 'What does love mean to you?' Ethical issues should be considered at this stage.	
<i>Generating the Q-set</i>	
The Q-set is comprised by numerous item based on your estimation of the concourse. Individually these should express a relevant proposition and together they should cover the 'concourse' of what we know to be sayable about the issue in question. Each item should be clearly expressed in ordinary language and randomly numbered.	
<i>Selecting a P-set</i>	
A typical sampling concern when selecting a P-set of participants to take part in a Q study is to maximise the likelihood of a variety of distinct viewpoints being expressed.	
<i>Collecting data</i>	
Collecting data from participants in the form of Q sorts with open-ended comments: This typically involves having participants rank order the Q-set into a quasi-normal distribution according to some subjectively relevant dimension such as 'most disagree' to 'most agree'. Through their unique response to the Q-set, each participant expresses their viewpoint on the topic in question. It is the overall pattern, configuration or 'gestalt' of the sort that is of primary interest.	
<i>Analysing Q sort data</i>	
Q analysis involves correlating and factoring the data by-person in order to identify a small set of factors. Each factor will be loaded by a number of Q sorts that have been sorted in a substantially similar way.	
<i>Interpreting Q factors</i>	
Since the Q sorts loading on a given factor will have been patterned in a similar way, for each factor a single 'factor array' is generated by merging the highest loading Q sorts. This factor array can be taken as representing whatever 'point of view' is informing the factor. Each factor array is therefore subjected to an interpretation based upon an inspection of the complete set of rankings in combination with any open-ended data provided by the relevant participants. This can also be followed by a 'cultural analysis'.	

to research questions that have many, potentially complex and often socially contested answers (Stainton Rogers, 1995). It has, for example, been used successfully to study issues such as child abuse (Stainton

Rogers and Stainton Rogers, 1992), jealousy (Stenner and Stainton Rogers, 1998), irritable bowel syndrome (Stenner, Dancey and Watts, 2000), love and personal relationships (Watts and Stenner, 2005b), child phenomenology

(Taylor, Delprato and Knapp, 1994), and psychoanalysis (Edelson, 1989). Some further applications of Q will be highlighted in the final section. In short, we are saying that the type of research questions suitable for Q methodology are quite typical of those used in other forms of qualitative research and certainly fit Ann Bowling's definition in terms of a 'focus ... on the meanings the participants in the study setting attach to their social world' (Bowling, 1997: 312).

As the issue of the *meaning of qualitative research* will undoubtedly engender a range of different points of view, it seems a perfectly appropriate topic for an example Q methodological study. It is important to recognize, however, that we could still investigate such meanings in a variety of ways. We could seek 'representations' of the topic – what 'type' of people might engage in qualitative research for example? Alternatively, we could ask a 'policy' related question, such as how qualitative methods should properly be taught. Or, as we actually decided to do, we could consider 'theoretic' propositions (understandings or explanations) about how or why things are the way they are – such that our example study seeks 'understandings' relating to the *meaning of qualitative research*. Typically, these different sorts of questions require different Q-sets, such that Q studies which attempt to span these various domains ordinarily require the participants to complete two (or sometimes three) separate Q sorts (Curt, 1994; Stainton Rogers, Stenner, Gleeson and Stainton Rogers, 1995).

Whatever the research question, however, the important point is that it be stated in a clear and straightforward fashion (it should ordinarily contain only one proposition). This is because it will inevitably dictate the nature and structure of the set of items (or Q-set) to be generated, and because it must also serve as a 'condition of instruction' for the sorting process itself. In our illustrative study, we were interested to ascertain our participants' understandings of qualitative research and we

duly needed to create a Q-set that would properly facilitate responses to the question: 'What is your understanding of qualitative research?'

Step 2: Generating the set of items (or Q-set)

As we have already implied, having decided upon our research question we need now to generate a Q-set that adequately reflects (or which is 'broadly representative' of) the issue under investigation. This is envisioned as a *sampling* task in Q methodology, the aim of which is to provide an estimate (the Q-set) of a wider issue or cultural *theme*. Usually, the themes at issue for Q methodologists concern communication and are semantic in nature, although Q-sets can also involve sets of perfumes or colours (or indeed anything at all) that be configured into Q-sorts by subjective preference.

Questions about the nature and place of qualitative research evidently constitute a much debated theme within the sub-culture of contemporary academic psychology. Contributions to this theme can take many forms, from formal publications to seminar discussions to post-conference chats in the bar. This book, for instance, contains numerous contributions to the qualitative methods theme. Themes also involve the regulation of contributors. A professor speaks from a different position from a student or research participant, for instance. From a temporal perspective, themes outlive contributions (and contributors), integrating themselves into gestalts with a structure capable of displaying great stability over time.

To carry out our sampling task successfully, therefore, we need to generate a Q-set which adequately reflects a full range of contributions to the qualitative debate (Stephenson referred to this hypothetical 'full range' as a *concourse*). This requires familiarity with the theme in question, which can be gained in numerous ways, such as being a participant observer, running focus groups or interviews on the theme, staying abreast of discussions and debates, and

so on. Item generation can also be theoretically guided, drawing upon key texts in the literature. Such familiarity might then lead us to notice a number of distinct aspects to the concourse: a debate about the relative merits of ‘understanding’ and ‘explanation’ for example; a related tendency to polarize qualitative and quantitative techniques; and perhaps a perceived need for clear instruction in the application of qualitative methods? One contribution to the first of these could be expressed in a self-referential statement such as ‘for me, qualitative methods are about “understanding” rather than “explanation”’. The second could be expressed in a proposition such as ‘there is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers’, and the third might find expression in a statement such as ‘all qualitative research should follow a good “how to do it” guide’.

There is clearly much more to be said and sampled in this concourse and hence we ultimately generated a Q-set of 100+ items that could subsequently be reduced to a final set of 60 (see Appendix 13.1). Whilst we would not dare to claim that this is an exhaustive set, we think that it serves the purpose of providing a broad estimate reflecting the nexus of current communication on this theme. At the very least it should enable the reader to grasp the central problems at play. It is, in any case, not the Q-set itself that is of prior importance in this context, but what the participants *do* with it. The ultimate aim of a Q study is not, after all, to estimate a theme or issue, it is to identify (in a holistic fashion) the various *positions* that participants adopt in relation to it. For further discussion of Q-set sampling work see Brown (1980).

Step 3: Selecting a P-set

We have stated that one important aspect of Stephenson’s method is that in a Q study the *participants* are the variables and the items are the *cases*. If the notion of representative sampling has any purchase in Q, then it must be applied to the sampling of

cases, and that means in the generation of the Q-set (as described above). Reciprocally, the selection of the P-set (or participant group) is a very different process in Q methodology, and it is duly important not to impose traditional R methodological requirements onto Q methodological designs. Most notably, participants in a Q methodological study are *not* regarded as subjects from sub-populations whose responses can be extrapolated to estimate population statistics. This means that, in principle, relatively small P-sets can yield worthwhile results (as our illustrative study will demonstrate). Indeed, Stephenson’s own work included a number of single case studies in which the same participant produced Q sorts under a number of different conditions of instruction (Stephenson, 1953). Participants in Q studies are instead treated as strategic ‘sites’ from which a limited independent variety of subjective viewpoints can be heard. The aim is to gain access to that range of viewpoints, and not to make claims about the frequency of their occurrence amongst the general population (or about the ‘personality’ of any individual participant).

This conception of participants entails some far-reaching theoretical assumptions. Here we touch upon an issue that is far from having been settled or agreed amongst Q methodologists. Indeed, some heated debates have taken place around these questions (e.g. in a special issue of *Operant Subjectivity*), and so it is important to emphasize that what follows is merely our ‘take’. The phrase ‘limited independent variety’ in fact comes from Keynes’s (1921) *A Treatise on Probability* where it features as the basic principle that whilst variety is to be expected in human social and economic life, such variety will be limited in scope by various constraints (Stenner and Stainton Rogers, 1998). In Q methodology this entails the expectation that one will not find infinite variety in viewpoint, but a circumscribed range, and the aim is to identify and describe that range.

This relates to the broadly constructivist observation that human experience is shaped and selected by the cultural semantics and normative practices available within social systems. A theme such as 'qualitative methods' is not just a subjective issue but, proximally, a topic for *communication*. As we implied earlier, such a theme is an essentially social product which outlives and presupposes individual contributions and which cannot properly be reduced to a psychic level of abstraction. Of course a theme requires the contributions of individuals and their psychic input, but the level of its organizing principle is *collective*. Culture – or at least the semantic aspects of it – is ordered into themes to which contributions can be made. But between a theme and its contributions, at a middle level of redundancy, lie a limited independent variety of more or less socially sedimented orientations, positions or points-of-view on that theme. Indeed, a theme arises precisely as a function of its *problematic* or contested status. Debates about qualitative methods (to stick with our example) will hence never be unitary but rather *polytextual* and appropriate analysis may duly require a *critical polytextualism* (Curt, 1994). There are clear resonances here with Potter and Wetherell's (1987) notion of an interpretive repertoire, drawn from a different tradition of qualitative work.

One further implication of the above is that the target of a Q study is less the 'psychological world' of the participants than the *cultural manifold* of possible or potential orientations which structure or pattern that world. As we have stated, therefore, the objective of a Q methodological study is not to make claims about the individuals in one's sample but to identify and describe the manifold of positions that are *culturally available* in a given temporal and spatial location. Particular individuals are hence literally *sites* for the expression of particular viewpoints, but no assumption need be made which might restrict a given participant to the expression of any single viewpoint (although in practice such

restriction is often observable). Also, in line with post-structural theory, the manifold itself would be expected to shift its form historically and geographically, transforming psychic possibilities as it does so (Curt, 1994).

In practice this all means that our qualitative methods Q-set should ideally be administered to a carefully selected sample of differently located participants (a typical Q study involves 40–60 participants). Such a P-set would reflect the range of positions and statuses available to contributors and would hence maximize the likelihood of having a range of different viewpoints represented. For example, one might wish to include:

- a) Both expert and student representatives of different qualitative traditions (personal construct theorists, discourse analysts, conversation analysts, grounded theorists, and so on).
- b) Those who like to mix qualitative and quantitative methods and those who identify solely as quantitative or qualitative researchers.
- c) Those who work in applied fields and those who consider themselves 'pure' researchers.
- d) Potential end-users of qualitative research.
- e) Those who are critical of psychology and those who believe in its current mission.
- f) Those with a particular political or moral orientation (e.g. feminist or Marxist researchers) and those who aspire to neutrality.

For illustrative purposes, however, we have done something much more simple and straightforward. Our P-set was comprised of students taking an MSc in psychological research methods at a UK university with a reputation for a strict 'natural scientific' approach to psychology (a member of what is known as the Russell Group of universities), and a group of trainee clinical psychologists drawn from a UK university which achieved university status relatively recently (post-1992) and which has a reputation for critique of this natural science model. Such a strategy was evidently unlikely to maximally capture the cultural manifold, but it *was* likely to allow the observation and explanation of some suitably polarized viewpoints. And that is what we were after...

Q sorting is what Brown (1980: 17) calls 'the technical means whereby data are obtained for factoring'. In practice, it is just a convenient means of facilitating the subjective evaluations of the participants. In our example study, each participant was provided with the Q-set in the form of 60 separate (and individually numbered) cards. Thirteen numbered labels were placed in front of them, running from -6 through 0 to +6. Each participant was then asked to read through the 60 items and to sort them into 3 piles: 'agrees', 'neutrals' and 'disagrees'. This marks the beginning of the evaluation process. The participants continued the process by sorting the 60 items into the fixed quasi-normal distribution described in Figure 13.1. In effect, they are asked to respond to each item and to make a specific self-referential judgement about it (in this case a judgement of agreement/disagreement) and

When participants felt comfortable with the overall configuration of their completed Q sort they recorded the numbers of the sorted items into a provided matrix (see Figure 13.2). It is usual in Q methodology also to gather some open-ended comments from the participants at completion of the process. The information gathered at this stage will clearly vary study-by-study (see Watts and Stenner (2005a) for a list of possibilities) – we asked simply for a brief paragraph outlining the participants’ views of qualitative methods and research – but

Figure 13.1 The Q sort distribution

Figure 13.2 Q sort response matrix

it nonetheless represents an important part of the Q procedure, for such comments will be used to aid the later interpretation of the emergent factors.

We should also note at this point that the procedure described above can be adapted in a number of ways. One can, for example, work with ‘free’ as opposed to fixed distributions in Q methodology, which, as the name suggests, allow participants to assign any number of items to any of the available ranking positions (see Watts and Stenner (2005a) for a longer discussion of this issue). It is also possible (and possibly desirable) to use other face-valid dimensions to facilitate the sorting process – such as from ‘least irritating’ to ‘most irritating’ or from least to most ‘productive for psychology’. One can also ask the same participant to do multiple sorts from different perspectives (e.g. me before taking my methods course; me as I imagine I will be after taking my methods course; how I imagine a radical Foucaultian might think, and so on). All such adaptations can elicit interesting results.

Step 5: Q data analysis

Table 13.1 shows a selection of our basic Q methodological data (the first 8 items and 6 example participants). Note again here that in Q methodology, contrary to standard statistical procedure in psychology, the participants (the P-set) are regarded as

variables and the items (the Q-set) as cases. Reading Table 13.1 by column we can see, for example, that participant A has given item 1 a ranking of +1, item 2 a ranking of +4, and so on. In its entirety (read from item 1 to item N), column A duly illustrates the completed Q sort of participant A. Reading by row, on the other hand, allows us to conduct a by-item comparison of individuals. We know already, for example, that participant A has ranked item 1 at +1, but we can see now that participant B has ranked it at –5, C at –4, and so on. Indeed, row 1 suggests that participant A finds item 1 (a statement which reads: ‘Ultimately, there is very little “method” in qualitative methods’) to be of far greater significance than any of the other illustrated participants. It is also possible to ascertain at this stage that participants D, E and F appear (as a group) to be markedly more positive about items 3 and 6 (‘social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods’ and ‘Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines’), and markedly more negative about item 7 (‘You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings’), than are participants A, B and C. This may be a first indication of different groups (and points-of-view) at work within the data – an observation to which we shall return shortly.

Table 13.1 Raw data from 6 example Q sorts

		PARTICIPANTS						
I T E M S		A	B	C	D	E	F	N
	1	+1	–5	–4	–4	–6	–5	....
	2	+4	+6	+4	+2	+2	+4	....
	3	–1	–2	0	+3	+3	+2	....
	4	+1	–1	–2	+1	+1	–2	....
	5	+2	+4	0	+1	+4	+3	....
	6	–4	–1	0	+1	+1	+2	....
	7	+3	+4	+3	–2	–5	–6	....
	8	–5	–5	–1	–2	–2	–2	....
	N	....	....	....	....	....	....	....

Table 13.2 Correlation coefficients for 6 example sorts

PERSONS		<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>A</i>	Correlation Coefficient		0.531	0.618	0.217	0.163	0.274
<i>B</i>	Correlation Coefficient	0.531		0.579	0.283	0.297	0.365
<i>C</i>	Correlation Coefficient	0.618	0.579		0.491	0.374	0.428
<i>D</i>	Correlation Coefficient	0.217	0.283	0.491		0.706	0.684
<i>E</i>	Correlation Coefficient	0.163	0.297	0.374	0.706		0.780
<i>F</i>	Correlation Coefficient	0.274	0.365	0.428	0.684	0.780	

In Q methodology the analysis proceeds by correlating these data by-column (i.e. correlating the data in column *A* with those in columns *B*, *C*, *D*, *E* and *F*), such that the relationships between *complete Q sorts* can be established. Table 13.2 shows the column-by-column (for which read ‘person-by-person’) correlation matrix that results when this process is carried out on our 6 example sorts. It can be seen that Q sort *A* correlates rather substantially with Q sort *B* (0.531), but even more so with Q sort *C* (0.618). There is an even higher degree of inter-correlation between sorts *D*, *E* and *F*. The remaining small correlation coefficients make it clear that *D*, *E* and *F* have considerably more ‘in common’ with each other than they do with *A*, *B* and *C*, and vice versa. This seems to reiterate the possible existence of two groupings in the data and hence two different ‘points-of-view’, one shared by participants *A*, *B* and *C* (who turn out to be students from our Russell Group university) and another by participants *D*, *E* and *F* (our trainee clinical psychologists). It is important to remember at this stage (particularly given our abbreviated table) that the correlations outlined above are of complete Q sorts. These necessarily take into account *all* the data from the correlated individuals (the ranking of items 1–60 inclusive), and not just an arbitrary selection of items.

When the data from all the participants in the study are subsequently reduced by means

of a by-person principle components analysis (see Table 13.3), two distinct ‘factors’ or components emerge. The first (factor 1) explains 54.85% of the study variance and the second (factor 2) explains an additional 22.60% (following varimax rotation). Further factors have eigenvalues of less than 1.00 (see Watts and Stenner (2005a) for the use or otherwise of eigenvalues in Q), such that a two factor solution is preferred that explains a total of 77.45% of the study variance.

Lots of the study Q sorts loaded significantly onto one or other of these two factors. Table 13.4 (below) illustrates only the respective factor loadings for our 6 example Q sorts. Such factor loadings are expressed as correlation coefficients which indicate the degree to which each Q sort correlates with each factor. We can see, for example, that the Q sorts of participants *D*, *E* and *F* all clearly associate strongly with (and hence are all ‘exemplars’ of the single viewpoint

Table 13.3 Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.291	54.853	54.853
2	1.356	22.595	77.447
3	0.489	8.147	85.594
4	0.397	6.617	92.211
5	0.258	4.295	96.506
6	0.210	3.494	100.000

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis.

Table 13.4 Rotated component matrix showing factor loadings for 6 example sorts

	Component	
	1	2
e	0.916	0.114
f	0.873	0.235
d	0.858	0.202
a	0.040	0.876
c	0.346	0.798
b	0.198	0.798

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization. a Rotation converged in three iterations.

captured by) factor 1, whilst participants A, B and C exemplify factor 2 (we can tell this because they all have high loadings on ‘their own’ factor and negligible loadings on the other)¹.

It is apparent, therefore, that we do indeed have two distinct groupings within the data (an F-set of 2). This F-set clearly represents a reduction in the complexity arising from the relationships between the Q- and the P-sets. Perhaps most importantly, however, it is a reduction guided by the participants and not imposed by the researcher. The analysis simply serves to identify *pattern* in the data (and this is achieved by observing associations between the variables and explaining these via the emergent factors)². All the Q methodologist need do now is interpret these patterns and explicate the points-of-view in a holistic fashion. But this is nonetheless a very important part of the Q study, for it is necessarily

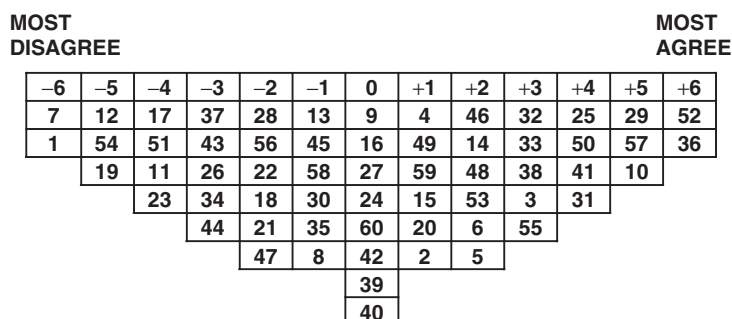
where the qualitative detail emerges from the data.

Step 6: Factor estimation

To enable interpretation to take place, an estimate of each factor must first be prepared by merging all the Q sorts that exemplify that factor. This procedure results in a factor score for each item. Arranging these factor scores into the form of the Q sort distribution yields a single complete Q sort for each factor. This ‘best estimate’ for each factor is called a factor array, and it is these that are subjected to interpretation.

Fortunately, packages such as SPSS and dedicated Q methodology programs such as PCQ (Stricklin and Almeida, 2001) and PQMethod (Schmolck, 2002) make this process of factor estimation very simple. Using the SPSS facility for calculating factor scores, for instance, yields the following array for factor 1 (see Figure 13.3 below).

We can see from Figure 13.3 that the factor array for factor 1 takes the form of a single Q sort. This Q sort serves as a ‘best estimate’ for the factor. Reading from left to right it can be observed that items 7 and 1 each received a factor score of -6 (they are hence the two most disagreed with items for this factor), whilst items 52 and 36 received a factor score of $+6$ (making them the two most agreed with items). Note that in the original sorts shown in Table 13.1, sorts D, E and F ranked item 1 at -4 , -6 and -5 respectively.

**Figure 13.3 Factor array for factor 1**

BOX 13.2 A Small Technical Box: Weighting Factor Exemplars

Another way of generating a factor array is literally to merge the Q sorts of factor exemplars in a procedure of weighted averaging. If we concentrate only on our 6 example sorts, the process of factor estimation would require that the Q sorts of participants *D*, *E*, and *F* be merged in order to generate an appropriate estimate for factor 1. However, in producing this merger greater weight must be given to Q sort *E* than to *D* and greater weight to *D* than to *F*, since *E* (at 0.916) has the highest loader and hence best approximates the factor to be estimated. Q methodologists typically employ the expression given by Spearman (1927: xix, expression 29) to calculate factor weights (cf. Brown, 1980: 241):

$$w = \frac{f}{1 - f^2}$$

where w is the weight and f is the loading. The weight for Q sort *E* would hence be:

$$\begin{aligned} w_E &= \frac{0.916}{1 - 0.916^2} \\ &= 5.7 \end{aligned}$$

The weight of Q sort *F* (which loads at 0.873), by contrast, is $w_F = 3.7$. This means that when calculating the factor scores for each item in the factor 1 array, Q sort *F* should contribute only $3.7/5.7 = 65\%$ as much to the merger as Q sort *E*.

The factor array thus does not correspond to any individual Q sort, but is an ideal-typical representation of the factor that *D*, *E* and *F* exemplify. The advantage of this is that the process of interpretation can be based on a single Q sort array.

Step 7: Factor interpretation

The interpretative task in Q methodology involves the production of a series of summarizing accounts, each of which explicates the viewpoint being expressed by a particular factor. These accounts are constructed by careful reference to the positioning and overall configuration of the items in the relevant factor array. The process demands great attention to detail, particularly given that Q methodological interpretation is necessarily constrained by (and can always be checked against) the subjective input of the participant group. This is possible because, in contrast to many other qualitative methods, that input is actually reflected in the objective structure of the relevant factor array. In a nutshell, the task is to reconstruct the subjective

point of view expressed in the factor array and hence to ‘breathe subjective life’ back into the purely numerical representation. It is important to stress that the interpretation must be based upon the sort as an integrated whole or *gestalt* and not upon individual (or a minimal number of) ranking positions, for it is only in the context of the whole sort that the meaning of specific item rankings becomes apparent.

That said, one must inevitably begin the process via attention to specific rankings. And it is usually sensible to start with the most extreme rankings. We will illustrate the step-by-step *process* of interpretation below. The reader may wish to consult the full list of items (see Appendix 13.1) in order to further develop and consolidate this interpretation.

Starting with factor 1, the strong (+6) agreement with item 52 suggests a particular concern with defending the *standing* of qualitative methods within psychology:

52.	It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research.	+6

This concern is also reflected in the negative pole of the distribution, since there is disagreement with a series of items which can be taken as devaluing or disparaging qualitative methods:

1. Ultimately there is very little method in qualitative methods.	—6
7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings.	—6
54. The more we drift in a qualitative direction, the more the prestige and influence of our discipline is threatened.	—5
19. Qualitative methods offer nothing more than a reading of a reading.	—5
12. Qualitative researchers have done enough criticising: it is time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own.	—5

This viewpoint is hence clearly concerned with *defending* qualitative methods against anticipated critical attacks. We might call this the ‘politics’ of methodology. The ranking of item 31 extends this theme by affirming the political nature of the research process itself:

31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent.	+4

Ethico-political values such as ‘giving voice’, ‘freedom of expression’ and influence from the ‘ground up’ also feature as key aspects underpinning the value of qualitative methods:

36. The value of qualitative research lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants.	+6
10. The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and voice back to the participant.	+5
41. Good qualitative research works inductively or up from the ground.	+4

A final point to note in this brief interpretation of the extreme ranking positions is that this factor supplements the ethico-political emphasis detailed above by also linking

qualitative methods to some of the more traditional epistemic values of science:

57. Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding.	+5
29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods.	+5

Once an initial exegesis has been provided, like the brief one above, it becomes possible to use this additional information to illuminate subsequent factors by way of contrast with previous factors. The arrays of factors 1 and 2 are shown in Table 13.5 in a modified layout. This layout enables easy comparison of the item rankings across both factors, and it demonstrates immediately (turning our attention briefly to factor 2) that one of this factor’s most agreed with items (item 22) was actually disagreed with by factor 1:

	Factor 1	Factor 2
22. Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science.	—2	+6

This observation immediately alerts us to an important difference between the two factors which can be used as an interpretative ‘thread’ to be followed in the factor 2 exegesis. The ranking of this item (number 22) in factor 2 suggests that qualitative methods are being made sense of within the broader context of an accepted, rather than challenged, notion of ‘mature science’. This hunch is further supported when other positive rankings are scrutinized, for example:

	Factor 1	Factor 2
40. The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity.	0	+6
2. Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement.	+1	+5

Table 13.5 Factor arrays

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Items	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	-6	-2	21	-2	+1	41	+4	-2
2	+1	+5	22	-2	+6	42	0	+3
3	+3	-3	23	-4	0	43	-3	-4
4	+1	-1	24	0	+4	44	-3	-1
5	+2	+2	25	+4	+2	45	-1	0
6	+2	-3	26	-3	-3	46	+2	-1
7	-6	+5	27	0	-5	47	-2	+4
8	-5	-4	28	-2	+5	48	+2	+3
9	0	-2	29	+5	-6	49	+1	-1
10	+5	+1	30	-1	+1	50	+4	-1
11	-4	-4	31	+4	-3	51	-4	-2
12	-5	0	32	+3	+3	52	+6	0
13	-1	-5	33	+3	0	53	+2	+2
14	+2	-2	34	-3	0	54	-5	-2
15	+1	-4	35	-1	+3	55	+3	+1
16	0	+4	36	+6	0	56	-2	+1
17	-4	+2	37	-3	0	57	+5	+3
18	-2	-6	38	+3	+1	58	-1	+2
19	-5	-1	39	0	-5	59	+1	+2
20	+1	-3	40	0	+6	60	0	+4

These rankings indicate factor 2's broad agreement with ideal standards of scientific practice (reliability, objectivity, quantification), but which still acknowledge a place for qualitative research in cases where these ideals are presently unreachable. To the extent that qualitative methods can further this broader scientific agenda, they are considered acceptable and desirable, and in this respect it is notable that factor 2 disagrees *more* with the following item than factor 1, doubtless as a result of this concern with 'proper science':

		Factor 1	Factor 2
29.	Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods.	+5	-6
7.	You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings.	-6	+5

Indeed, factor 2 perceives an acute need to standardize qualitative techniques in order to ensure their greater approximation to what is perceived as the scientific ideal:

		Factor 1	Factor 2
18.	One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods.	-2	-6
28.	There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research.	-2	+5
27.	The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules.	0	-5
16.	All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide.	0	+4

Accepting a *place* for qualitative methods does not, on the other hand, signal their equality with quantitative methods:

Finally, factor 2 positions qualitative research firmly outside of the political sphere and, tellingly, social constructionism is not considered the best theoretical framework for it:

31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent.	+4	-3
15. Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as a political act.	+1	-4
3. Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative methods.	+3	-3

The section above was designed simply to illustrate the *process* of interpretation. A further worked example of the interpretation process can be found in Watts and Stenner (2005a). The *product*, as mentioned briefly above, is typically a series of summarizing accounts, which holistically capture the viewpoint contained within each emergent factor. Ordinarily, titles are also chosen for each account to illuminate the content contained therein. Indeed, we would argue that it is the holistic (and perhaps also the inherently 'shared') nature of the Q methodological product that most differentiates it from other qualitative methods (which typically have a 'thematic' product) and which makes it an ideal complement to qualitative approaches that take 'themes' and/or the 'viewpoint-of-the-individual' as their primary research target (see Watts and Stenner, 2005a). We leave it to the reader to further experiment with Q and these related matters. It should be clear enough, however, that even this very small-scale illustrative study has enabled us to identify (and to begin the process of explicating) two very distinct understandings of qualitative research in the context of psychology – the first consistently voiced by three clinical trainees from a post-1992 university and the second by three MSc research methods students from a Russell Group university. In the next and final section we will briefly consider some examples of published work using Q methodology which exemplify some of the strengths outlined above.

APPLICATIONS OF Q METHODOLOGY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Q methodology has most often been employed in the context of health psychology (Stainton Rogers, 1991; Stainton Rogers et al., 1995; Eccleston, Williams and Stainton Rogers, 1997; Stenner et al., 2000; Stenner, Cooper and Skevington, 2003). This is no doubt a result of Wendy Stainton Rogers' (1991) influential text *Explaining Health and Illness: An Exploration in Diversity*, which made extensive use of Q methodology to identify a wide range of everyday understandings about what it means to be healthy and ill, and what factors may be involved in the process of recovery.

One of the strengths of this type of Q methodological work has been its capacity to make explicit (and subsequently to illuminate) some of the grounds for *misunderstanding* and conflict that separate patients from professionals. Eccleston et al. (1997), for example, used Q methodology to compare the accounts produced by chronic pain patients (about their illness) with those of the professionals who deal with them. They found amongst pain patients a conviction that their pain has an organic cause – albeit a cause that the medical profession was not yet able to explain or cure. They also evinced a strong antagonism to the suggestion (which they attributed to the medical profession) that the pain may be psychological in origin. And, as it turned out, the medical professionals who took part in the study did indeed view chronic pain primarily in terms of dysfunctional learning, and necessarily placed emphasis on the need to manage the condition in the absence of an obvious cure. The grounds for disagreement are made obvious here.

Likewise, Stenner et al. (2000) identified seven distinct ways in which sufferers of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) understood and made sense of their condition. It was very clear as a result of this study that the more IBS participants disagreed with what they perceived as the doctor's

view of their condition, the more antagonism they felt towards doctors. More specifically (and in common with Eccleston et al.'s pain patients), it was also clear that the main source of this disagreement concerned the tendency of the medical profession to construe IBS in psychosomatic terms. Following this argument it was not surprising to find that participants who *did* construe themselves as having some psychosomatic co-responsibility for their IBS also perceived themselves to have more positive relationships with the medical profession.

Further noteworthy studies in this general area include Collins, Maguire and O'Dell's (2002) work on smokers' perceptions of their own smoking behaviour; a pair of studies by Rayner and Warner (2003) and James and Warner (2005) which attended to the issue of self-harm using P-sets drawn from the general public, patients, and professionals in the area; and Jordan, Capdevila and Johnson's (2005) exploration of body image amongst a sample of women who had recently given birth. This latter study in particular illustrated the capacity of Q methodology to reveal understandings, explanations, and accounts that depart significantly from those ordinarily proffered and published by experts working in the area. Indeed, participants in the Jordan et al. (2005) study argued that body image was of more 'variable' import than the literature generally claimed, and showed that body image itself was often strongly tied to broader contextual issues such as having children; a dislike of change (not just bodily change) following birth; and one's overall sense of happiness and well being.

Another of Q methodology's strengths is its ability to facilitate the study of highly complex and contestable social issues, and through its findings to communicate a sense of order in such complex domains. Watts and Stenner's (2005b) study of partnership love exemplifies this well. Whilst the literature in this area is marked by 'conflict, confusion, and disagreement' (Fehr, 1988: 557) and by definitions that often 'seem incomplete and dry versions of an often explosive experience' (Beall and Sternberg,

1995: 417), a simple Q study involving 50 participants was able to reveal a clear series of interconnected accounts of partnership at work in our culture. Ranging from a central (or culturally dominant) account of love promoting the need for an effortful demanding mutual recognition, trust and support, to a hedonistic love in which self was prioritized over other and physicality over emotionality. These accounts emphasized the holistic nature of the participants' experiences. They also clearly demonstrated the *polytextuality* of love – that love is not 'one thing' – but a delimited range of possibilities for thinking about, managing, and conducting intimate relations.

The central issue for Q methodology is the subjective dimension – peoples' own meanings, understandings, points-of-view and so on – and their expression in a context that makes no *a priori* assumptions about the value or significance of a particular account. If it is psychologically significant to the participant, that significance is enough for the Q methodologist. Indeed, it is precisely this freedom and emphasis on the 'subjective' that led Celia Kitzinger (1987) – well known for her classic Q methodological study on the social construction of lesbianism – to promote Q methodology's suitability for feminist inquiry. In her words:

Q-methodology's focus on uncovering research participants' own perspectives, understandings and definitions, instead of simply measuring participants' understandings in relation to an operational definition imposed on them by a researcher, is one of the key features that should make this methodology attractive to feminist researchers.

Kitzinger (1999: 268)

Snelling's (1999) work on the multidimensional nature of the feminism construct is a prime example. This work also allows us to revisit an earlier point: namely, the emergence of unexpected or surprising perspectives through Q methodological analysis. The item configurations, factors, and accounts that emerge from a Q study do so because of the self-referential operations of the sorters (not the views of the researchers) and cannot

emerge unless the sorters make sense of the Q-set in a sufficiently co-ordinated and coherent manner (see Stainton Rogers, 1991). Given the hyper-astronomical sorting possibilities available to the participants, it is almost inevitable that accounts emerge which the researcher may not have expected, anticipated, hoped for. Of the 5 factors reported by Snelling, for example, four were resonant with established feminist theory (e.g. radical, liberal and 'post-feminist' factors appeared as might be expected), but the fifth factor – which was associated with the highest number of study Q sorts – revealed a humanist perspective on feminism which, Snelling argued, was not recognized by most taxonomies of feminist theory.

Senn's (1993) study on women's views of pornography revealed two perspectives not previously written about in the theoretical or empirical literature. The first expressed discomfort about the messages being conveyed by pornography and the fact that their (male) partners actually used it, but also conveyed relief that the *type* of pornography preferred by their partners was not more extreme, violent, or degrading. A second considered pornography to be in principle 'non problematic', but still objected to the limited range of women considered to represent the 'pornographic ideal' in sexually explicit materials.

CONCLUSIONS

The previous section merely scratches the surface of the many applications of Q methodology in psychology. To conclude we want to point out what by now we hope is becoming obvious. Whichever research question Q is applied to, the result is the identification of a finite number of distinct subjective *points-of-view*. Each such view-point involves considerably more than the expression of a given 'attitude' to a shared 'object'. In fact, a good Q study makes it very clear that what might superficially be taken to be different 'attitudes' are often in fact distinct ways of constructing the very

'object' under consideration. The bulk of psychology has been concerned with securing 'objective' knowledge from a 'third person' perspective. Q methodology, by contrast, is concerned with the self-reference of the first person perspective. The event of an emotional reaction, for example, can be observed 'objectively' by way of micro measures such as blood flow in particular parts of the brain or macro measures such as facial movements or ANS activation. But no amount of detailed objective measurement will answer the subjective question of how this emotion *feels* to the one experiencing it. We give the last word to Stephenson (1982: 246): 'instruments were never designed in Q to measure anything categorically...options were left free for measurement of subjectivity as a state of ... not mind, but feeling ...'.

NOTES

1 It is possible to calculate a 'statistically significant' factor loading in the context of a Q methodological study. See Watts and Stenner (2005a) for further details.

2 For those who are sceptical about factor analysis or PCA, the same pattern could be detected using other techniques such as cluster analysis. A by-variable hierarchical cluster analysis on this data, for example, yields two distinct clusters corresponding to factors 1 and 2. In our experience, however, PCA or factor analysis give superior solutions when dealing with more Q sorts.

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Appendix 13.1 Items used in the illustrative study

- 01 Ultimately, there is very little 'method' in qualitative methods
- 02 Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement
- 03 Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods
- 04 Qualitative and 'critical' research go hand-in-hand
- 05 Qualitative methods bring originality and creativity to the research domain
- 06 Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines
- 07 You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings
- 08 Only the most competent of undergraduate students are capable of handling a qualitative research project
- 09 The many qualitative methods in use have more differences than similarities
- 10 The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the research participant
- 11 The rise of qualitative methods represents a 'feminization' of the research process
- 12 Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: it is time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own
- 13 Most students turn to qualitative methods in order to avoid statistics
- 14 There is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers
- 15 Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as political act
- 16 All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide
- 17 Qualitative researchers always seem to have some political or 'moral' agenda: this lack of impartiality is a concern
- 18 One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods
- 19 Qualitative research offers nothing more than a reading of a reading
- 20 A good qualitative study will yield results that can be generalized to other settings
- 21 The relativism of qualitative research may ultimately prove its undoing
- 22 Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science
- 23 The banal simplicity of qualitative research is deliberately obscured by a mass of unnecessary theory
- 24 To my mind, more effort needs to be directed at the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods
- 25 All research methods teaching should include training in qualitative methods
- 26 Qualitative researchers prefer 'soft' topics like relationships and identities
- 27 The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules
- 28 There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research
- 29 Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods
- 30 Users of qualitative methods should think hard about how to make their knowledge claims reliable and valid
- 31 Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent
- 32 Qualitative methods provide a means to probe complex personal dynamics that otherwise go unnoticed
- 33 Qualitative data is necessarily a product of the situation and circumstances in which it is gathered
- 34 If a qualitative method cannot generate replicable findings, it can have no place in science
- 35 Qualitative research should be left to those with the knowledge to 'do the job properly'
- 36 The value of a qualitative method lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants
- 37 The skills of the qualitative researcher are more 'artistic' than 'scientific'
- 38 The primary advantage of qualitative methods lies in their ability to deal with meaning
- 39 The most intelligent and creative students are attracted to qualitative research
- 40 The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity
- 41 Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up'
- 42 For me, qualitative methods are about 'understanding' rather than 'explanation'
- 43 The findings of qualitative methods are rarely worth the time and trouble involved
- 44 The big problem with qualitative methods is that they cannot ultimately be used to test theories
- 45 Any good study will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques
- 46 The rationale for qualitative research is simple: the best way to find out about people is to talk to them
- 47 There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research
- 48 Any mature discipline will recognize the need for a variety of research methods, qualitative and quantitative
- 49 Qualitative researchers should pay more attention to the observational techniques of natural science disciplines like ethology
- 50 Quantification too often results in over-simplification and distortion
- 51 I would never dream of using qualitative methods in my own research
- 52 It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research

(Continued)

Appendix 13.1 cont'd

- 53 Qualitative methods bring research out of the laboratory and into the real world
- 54 The more we 'drift' in a qualitative direction, the more the prestige and influence of our discipline is threatened
- 55 The adoption of qualitative methods often involves our re-thinking the nature of our research question
- 56 Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth
- 57 Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding
- 58 The real reasons for a person's conduct are often obscured by methods which rely on self-reports
- 59 Good qualitative research should be theoretically informed
- 60 Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary: the former deal with subjectivity, the latter with objectivity

Factor 1

-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0
1. Ultimately, there is very little 'method' in qualitative methods	8. Only the most competent of undergraduate students are capable of handling a qualitative research project	11. The rise of qualitative methods represents a 'feminization' of the research process	26. Qualitative researchers prefer 'soft' topics like relationships and identities	18. One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods	13. Most students turn to qualitative methods in order to avoid statistics	9. The many qualitative methods in use have more differences than similarities
7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings	12. Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: its time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own	17. Qualitative researchers always seem to have some political or 'moral' agenda: this lack of impartiality is a concern	34. If a qualitative method cannot generate replicable findings, it can have no place in science	21. The relativism of qualitative research may ultimately prove its undoing	30. Users of qualitative methods should think hard about how to make their knowledge claims reliable and valid	16. All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide
(2)	19. Qualitative research offers nothing more than a reading of a reading	23. The banal simplicity of qualitative research is deliberately obscured by a mass of unnecessary theory	37. The skills of the qualitative researcher are more 'artistic' than 'scientific'	22. Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science	35. Qualitative research should be left to those with the knowledge to 'do the job properly'	24. To my mind, more effort needs to be directed at the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods
	(3)	51. I would never dream of using qualitative methods in my own research	43. The findings of qualitative methods are rarely worth the time and trouble involved	28. There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research	45. Any good study will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques	27. The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules
		(4)	44. The big problem with qualitative methods is that they cannot ultimately be used to test theories	47. There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research	56. Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth	39. The most intelligent and creative students are attracted to qualitative research
			(5)	56. Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth	58. The real reasons for a person's conduct are often obscured by methods which rely on self-reports	40. The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity
				(6)	(6)	42. For me, qualitative methods are about 'understanding' rather than 'explanation'
						60. Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary: the former deal with subjectivity, the latter with objectivity
						(8)

Factor 1 cont'd

+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
2. Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement	5. Qualitative methods bring originality and creativity to the research domain	3. Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods	25. All research methods teaching should include training in qualitative methods	10. The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the research participant	36. The value of a qualitative method lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants
4. Qualitative and 'critical' research go hand-in-hand	6. Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines	32. Qualitative methods provide a means to probe complex personal dynamics that otherwise go unnoticed	31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent	29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods	52. It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research
15. Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as political act	14. There is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers	33. Qualitative data is necessarily a product of the situation and circumstances in which it is gathered	41. Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up'	57. Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding	(2)
20. A good qualitative study will yield results that can be generalized to other settings	46. The rationale for qualitative research is simple: the best way to find out about people is to talk to them	38. The primary advantage of qualitative methods lies in their ability to deal with meaning	50. Quantification too often results in over-simplification and distortion	(3)	
47. There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research	53. Qualitative methods bring research out of the laboratory and into the real world	55. The adoption of qualitative methods often involves our re-thinking the nature of our research question	(4)		
49. Qualitative researchers should pay more attention to the observational techniques of natural science disciplines like ethology	48. Any mature discipline will recognize the need for a variety of research methods, qualitative and quantitative	(5)			
(6)	(6)				

Factor 2

-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0
18. One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods	13. Most students turn to qualitative methods in order to avoid statistics	8. Only the most competent of undergraduate students are capable of handling a qualitative research project	6. Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines	1. Ultimately, there is very little 'method' in qualitative methods	4. Qualitative and 'critical' research go hand-in-hand	12. Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: its time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own
29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods	27. The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules	11. The rise of qualitative methods represents a 'feminization' of the research process	3. Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods	9. The many qualitative methods in use have more differences than similarities	19. Qualitative research offers nothing more than a reading of a reading	23. The banal simplicity of qualitative research is deliberately obscured by a mass of unnecessary theory
(2)	39. The most intelligent and creative students are attracted to qualitative research	15. Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as political act	20. A good qualitative study will yield results that can be generalized to other settings	14. There is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers	44. The big problem with qualitative methods is that they cannot ultimately be used to test theories	33. Qualitative data is necessarily a product of the situation and circumstances in which it is gathered
	(3)	43. The findings of qualitative methods are rarely worth the time and trouble involved	26. Qualitative researchers prefer 'soft' topics like relationships and identities	41. Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up'	46. The rationale for qualitative research is simple: the best way to find out about people is to talk to them	34. If a qualitative method cannot generate replicable findings, it can have no place in science
		(4)	31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent	51. I would never dream of using qualitative methods in my own research	49. Qualitative researchers should pay more attention to the observational techniques of natural science disciplines like ethology	36. The value of a qualitative method lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants
			(5)	52. It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research	50. Quantification too often results in oversimplification and distortion	37. The skills of the qualitative researcher are more 'artistic' than 'scientific'
					(6)	45. Any good study will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques
						52. It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research
						(8)

Factor 2 cont'd

+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
10. The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the research participant	5. Qualitative methods bring originality and creativity to the research domain	32. Qualitative methods provide a means to probe complex personal dynamics that otherwise go unnoticed	16. All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide	2. Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement	22. Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science
21. The relativism of qualitative research may ultimately prove its undoing	17. Qualitative researchers always seem to have some political or 'moral' agenda: this lack of impartiality is a concern	35. Qualitative research should be left to those with the knowledge to 'do the job properly'	24. To my mind, more effort needs to be directed at the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods	7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings	40. The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity
30. Users of qualitative methods should think hard about how to make their knowledge claims reliable and valid	25. All research methods teaching should include training in qualitative methods	42. For me, qualitative methods are about 'understanding' rather than 'explanation'	47. There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research	28. There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research	(2)
38. The primary advantage of qualitative methods lies in their ability to deal with meaning	53. Qualitative methods bring research out of the laboratory and into the real world	48. Any mature discipline will recognize the need for a variety of research methods, qualitative and quantitative	60. Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary: the former deal with subjectivity, the latter with objectivity	(3)	
55. The adoption of qualitative methods often involves our re-thinking the nature of our research question	58. The real reasons for a person's conduct are often obscured by methods which rely on self-reports	57. Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding	(4)		
56. Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth	59. Good qualitative research should be theoretically informed	(5)			
(6)	(6)				

Grounded Theory

Kathy Charmaz and Karen Henwood

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we present, discuss and illustrate works of some of the many, differently situated researchers who have, over the last 40 years, originated and developed, employed and reflected upon their use of a now well-known methodological approach and associated set of inquiry methods known as ‘grounded theory’. These methods provide flexible, successive analytic strategies for constructing inductive theories from the data. We largely speak about these methods from our two cognate, but sometimes quite different disciplines – sociology and psychology – although we draw on other contributions, notably those from key grounded theory researchers and researcher-practitioners within allied health and social disciplines.

While our chapter is, of course, targeted on issues customarily discussed about a particular methodology and set of inquiry methods, we limit our historical view of the method and instead write very much from the perspective of the present. We want our readers to have ready, up-to-date access to the substance, character, and developing use

of grounded theory method, and to current debates about these methods. Grounded theory, as one of us has previously argued (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003), is not a unitary method but a useful nodal point where contemporary issues in qualitative social science are discussed. The method originated in sociology but has become a general method that has informed qualitative inquiry across and between disciplines. We aim to capture these discussions adequately here.

THE LOGIC, USE AND EMERGENCE OF GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory logic

Grounded theory methods consist of a systematic inductive, comparative, and interactive approach *to* inquiry with several key strategies *for* conducting inquiry (Charmaz, 2006a). Grounded theorists integrate and streamline data collection and analysis through making systematic comparisons throughout inquiry by interacting with their data and emergent analyses. We start analysing data from the beginning of our

data collection and begin building inductive theoretical analyses but do not stop with inductive logic. Rather, the logic of grounded theory requires comparisons and checks that enable us to shape our emerging theoretical ideas about the data while keeping these ideas grounded in data. We gather data, compare them, remain open to all possible theoretical understandings of the data, and develop tentative interpretations about these data through our codes and nascent categories. Then we go back to the field and gather more data to check and refine our categories. In this sense, grounded theory methods are abductive (Peirce, 1938; Deely, 1990; Rosenthal, 2004) because we rely on *reasoning* about experience to entertain all conceivable theoretical explanations for the data and then proceed to checking these explanations empirically through further experience – more data collection – to pursue the most plausible theoretical explanation. Thus, a strength of grounded theory is that our budding conceptualizations can lead us in the most useful – perhaps a new or unanticipated – theoretical direction to understand our data.

Both the positivist heritage in psychology and growing interest in constructivism make grounded theory particularly appealing. Researchers with either objectivist or constructivist proclivities can adopt grounded theory strategies. Objectivists assume that they make discoveries in a real world separate from themselves and develop theories whose generalizations transcend particularities. Constructivists view their data and ideas about it as constructions reflecting specific standpoints, situations, and conditions. In practice, the lines blur, yet grounded theory is fundamentally an interactive and interpretive method (Charmaz, 2006a). Not only do we interact with our research participants but also we interact with and interpret the resulting data about them through successive levels of analysis. We select and use grounded theory strategies according to our interpretations of the data and assessments of our emerging analyses of them. The entire process relies on creating these interpretations. We construct

theory through engaging in progressively more abstract levels of comparative analysis. By using grounded theory methods, we learn *how* to raise the level of abstraction at each stage of the analytic process.

Grounded theory strategies provide ways of working with data – of seeking, interrogating, managing, and conceptualizing data – but how we use these methods depends on our repeated scrutiny of our data and nascent analyses. Thus, grounded theory is an emergent method rather than a method of formulaic application.

This method holds significant potential for increased adoption by psychologists for five major reasons: (1) grounded theory offers a rigorous approach to qualitative analysis; (2) it can be used in conjunction with numerous qualitative approaches such as ethnographic, biographical, or discursive analyses; (3) it fosters viewing individual behaviour as embedded in situations and social contexts; (4) it fits either constructionist (interpretive) or post-positivist (quantitative) epistemologies; and (5) it can bridge qualitative and quantitative traditions in psychology. Psychologists have been moving away from atomized analyses of individuals and moving toward understanding the varied contexts in which they live. Adopting the logic of either objectivist or constructivist grounded theory furthers this move. Researchers with both epistemological leanings will find that grounded theory strategies increase their efficiency and effectiveness in gathering useful data and in constructing focused analyses. These strengths combined with the logic and rigour of grounded theory make the method a good choice for mixed method studies.

Using grounded theory guidelines

Grounded theory studies begin with open-ended research questions to explore but follow the ideas that researchers generate once in the field (Locke, 2001; Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004). Grounded theory guidelines invoke at least a two-phased type of qualitative coding that fosters analytic

BOX 14.1 Basic Grounded Theory Methods*

General Strategies

Engage in Simultaneous Data Collection and Analysis – early data analysis informs subsequent data collection, which then allows the researcher to define and follow leads in the data and to refine tentative categories.

Invoke Constant Comparative Methods – involves making comparisons at each level of analysis, including data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, codes with categories, category with category, category with concept.

Develop Emergent Concepts – analyses the data by constructing successively more abstract concepts arising from the researcher's interactions with these data and his or her interpretations of them.

Adopt an Inductive-Abductive Logic – starts by analysing inductive cases but checks this emerging analysis by entertaining all possible theoretical explanations and confirming or disconfirming them until the most plausible theoretical interpretation of the observed data is constructed.

Specific Guidelines

Initial Coding – begins data analysis early while collecting data by asking 'What is happening in the data?' The researcher examines the data for its potential theoretical importance, uses gerunds to code for processes, and remains open to the emergence of all theoretical possibilities. Codes are short, analytic, and active. Line-by-line coding fosters close scrutiny of the data and minimizes forcing them into preconceived categories and extant theories. Interrogating each bit of data for its theoretical implications begins the move from description toward conceptual analysis.

Focused Coding – takes the most frequent and/or significant initial codes to study, sort, compare, and synthesize large amounts of data. Focused codes become tentative categories to explore and analyse.

Memo-writing – occurs throughout the research process to raise the analytic level of the emerging theory, identify tentative categories and their properties, define gaps in data collection, and delineate relationships between categories. Memos become increasingly theoretical as analysis proceeds.

Theoretical Sampling – entails seeking specific data to develop the properties of categories or theory, not to achieve representative population distributions.

Saturating Theoretical Concepts – means that gathering more data reveals no new properties of a theoretical category nor yields further insights about the emerging grounded theory.

Theoretical Sorting and Integrating – involves weighting, ordering, and connecting theoretical memos (1) to show how the theory fits together, (2) to make relationships explicit between theoretical categories or between the properties of one theoretical category, (3) to specify the conditions under which these categories or this category arises and (4) to state the consequences of the theorized relationships.

*See Charmaz (2003a, 2003b, 2006a) discussion.

treatment of processes from the start. (See Box 14.1 for an outline of grounded theory guidelines.)

Coding defines and designates what the data are about and indicate. Traditional grounded theory coding has favoured examining actions and events rather than the entirety or unity of research participants' narratives. Initial coding opens the data to in-depth views. Depending on our research proclivities and/or type of data, we study our data closely in one of the following ways: word-by-word, line-by-line, segment-by-segment, or incident-by-incident. Line-by-line coding works well with certain types of interview

and textual data. It forces us to look at bits of data anew, dissect them, and label them. Segment-by-segment coding is useful for ethnographic, narrative, or behaviouristic data. Incident-by-incident coding provides a strong basis for making comparisons between data, particularly with intensive interview and ethnographic data.

Grounded theory codes are short, active, and specific. These codes address three fundamental questions: (1) What is happening? (2) Of what process are these actions a part? and (3) What theoretical category does a specific datum indicate? (Glaser, 1978). At this point, grounded theorists remain open to as

many theoretical directions as conceivable. After engaging in initial coding, we adopt the most frequent and/or significant initial codes as focused codes to examine large amounts of data. From the beginning, we compare datum with datum, datum with code, and code with code in written memos, or extended notes.

Memo-writing is the pivotal analytic step between coding and writing drafts of papers. Because memo-writing encourages us to stop and think about our data, codes, and/or emerging theory, it helps to write them at every stage in the analytic process. Grounded theorists write memos that range from notes to themselves or a co-author (see Strauss, 1987) to analytic statements that take a code apart and explore its potential for development as a theoretical category (see Charmaz, 2006a). Memo-writing prompts us to develop our ideas about our codes and to treat significant ones as tentative categories to explore and to check through data-gathering. As a result, later memos are more analytic and may serve as sections of the first draft of the researcher's report.

After establishing some tentative categories, we engage in theoretical sampling to collect more data to fill out the properties of a theoretical category, find variation in it, or delineate relationships between categories. Theoretical sampling is a strategy to advance theory construction, not to achieve any approximation of population representativeness. This sampling keeps the analysis grounded and makes it fit the studied phenomenon. As grounded theorists, we presumably sample until we achieve theoretical saturation, which means that we see no new properties of the theoretical category or connections between categories. Criteria for saturation rest on a researcher's claims but not all claims to saturation are merited. An analysis with several major categories that rests on skimpy data can hardly be saturated.

After researchers have created a set of memos, we sort them to fit our theoretical categories and to integrate the theoretical framework of the analysis and then write the first draft of the report. Standard grounded theory practices include creating the theoretical

explication before revising the piece for a particular audience and positioning it in the literature. These practices encourage us to develop our ideas first and then compare them with earlier theories and studies.

In essence, grounded theory is a method of data analysis with the intent of constructing theory. Until recently (Charmaz, 2001, 2002a, 2006a; Clarke, 2003, 2005; Scheibelhofer, 2006), grounded theorists gave scant attention to data collection and some have reduced concerns about it to slogans such as Glaser's (2001: 145) 'All is data'. These grounded theorists argue that the quality and quantity of data are not problematic as long as the analyst achieves 'saturation' of categories. Yet they do not delineate useful criteria for what should constitute either viable categories or saturation. Consequently, a number of grounded theory studies skimp on data collection and tout description as theory.

Emergence and evolution of the method

In their revolutionary book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss created an explicit method of constructing middle-range sociological theory from data. They led the development of qualitative inquiry by offering the first systematic set of guidelines for managing and analysing qualitative data. Prior to that time, students learned to conduct qualitative research from mentors and immersion in the field (Rock, 1979).

Consistent with its logic, the grounded theory method has an empirical foundation. This method emerged as Glaser and Strauss (1967) explicated how they studied the social organization of dying in hospitals (Glaser and Strauss, 1965). Glaser and Strauss departed from mid-century conventions about conducting research because they advocated: (1) integrating data collection and data analysis, (2) developing middle-range theories from research grounded in data rather than deducing testable hypotheses

from existing theories, (3) treating qualitative research as rigorous and legitimate in its own right, and (4) viewing qualitative inquiry as a means of constructing theory. All these ideas challenged conventional positivist notions of qualitative research as impressionistic, unsystematic, atheoretical, anecdotal, and biased.

A long tradition of qualitative research in sociology had arisen during the early decades of the twentieth century at the University of Chicago. By mid-century, however, sophisticated quantitative methods had gained hegemony in the United States; the gap between theory and research widened, and qualitative methods waned. Glaser and Strauss countered this trend with grounded theory and, simultaneously, codified a systematic method for analysing qualitative data.

The objectivist and constructivist threads in grounded theory have their antecedents in Glaser and Strauss's contrasting intellectual heritages. Glaser drew on his rigorous training in quantitative methods at Columbia University to frame central ideas about grounded theory and to form its language. He sought to bring an analogous rigour to qualitative analysis that his mentor, Paul Lazarsfeld (Lazarsfeld and Rosenberg, 1955), had brought to quantitative methods. Glaser imported positivist assumptions of objectivity, parsimony, and generality to grounded theory. To some extent, Strauss shared his notions of objectivity because qualitative researchers of the day juxtaposed their work against positivist notions and, thus were concerned with robust data, accuracy, and neutral observations of a real world. Yet Strauss also brought pragmatist emphases on agency, action, language and meaning, and emergence to grounded theory that supported its constructivist leanings. Both Glaser and Strauss emphasized process and saw grounded theory as a method that facilitated studying processes. Glaser (1978) particularly viewed grounded theory as a method for studying a basic social or social psychological process.

The founders have each taken grounded theory in different directions since their

original statement. Glaser (1998, 2001) still adheres to positivist principles of discovery, generality, parsimony, and objectivity and emphasizes neutrality of data, variable analysis, and an objective, authoritative researcher. He has, however, disavowed the quest for a basic social or social psychological process as forcing the data into a preconceived framework, rejected line-by-line coding in favour of incident-by-incident coding, and reversed his earlier insistence that participants will tell the researcher what the major issue is. Glaser (2003) now advocates using grounded theory methods to discover how research participants resolve a main concern, which they may not directly state. Glaser's commitment to comparative methods has become more explicit over the years; his defence of small samples has grown more strident, and his dismissal of typical methodological concerns such as attention to accuracy, standpoints, and reflexivity has become more transparent.

Strauss (1987) moved the method toward verification and with his co-author, Juliet Corbin (1990, 1998), added technical procedures that spawned Glaser's (1992) charges that their method was not grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin's techniques made the method more formulaic because researchers could apply these techniques *to* their data, rather than developing ideas – and analytic strategies – that emerge *from* their interpretations of data. They introduced axial coding as means of reintegrating the fractured data into a coherent whole after taking it apart during initial coding. In this coding, the researcher treats a category as an axis to delineate its relationships and to specify its dimensions. In keeping with their focus on conditions, causes, and consequences, Strauss and Corbin also introduced the conditional/consequential matrix, which is a coding technique for charting intersections of micro and macro conditions/consequences and clarifying the connections between them.

Consistent with Strauss's pragmatist assumptions, Strauss and Corbin's 1990 book made action the centre of the matrix but

their 1998 book placed the individual at the centre. If grounded theory methods remain an approach amenable to studying processes, then we must preserve a central focus on action. Whether or not axial coding and the conditional matrix advance grounded theory, make it cumbersome, or abandon its comparative principles remains unsettled (see Glaser, 1992; Stern, 1994; Robrecht, 1995; Charmaz, 2000, 2006a). Glaser (1992) argues that axial coding forces the data into preconceived categories and contends that his theoretical codes eliminate the need for axial coding. At the least, technical procedures add to the specialized language of grounded theory and make it more scientific.

Glaser's version of grounded theory remains positivist and Strauss and Corbin's retains elements of positivism such as investigator neutrality and reliance on method but also promotes postpositivist inquiry in their recognition of narratives, description, and social structure. Charmaz's (2000, 2002a, 2006a) distinction between objectivist and constructivist grounded theory offers an epistemological handle for moving grounded theory out of its positivist roots and further into interpretive social science. She sets forth a constructivist agenda that adopts grounded theory strategies for coding, memo-writing, and theoretical sampling but shows how the resulting theory is constructed rather than discovered. A constructivist grounded theory is located in time, space, and circumstance, rather than general and separate from its origins, and aimed toward abstract understanding rather than explanation and prediction. Constructivists assume that (1) the researcher is a part of what he or she sees, not apart from it; (2) facts and values are connected, not separate; and (3) views are multiple and interpretative, not singular and self-evident. These assumptions lead to attending to the processes of producing data – and theories – and of representing research participants.

Clarke (2003, 2005, 2006) extends grounded theory by integrating postmodern premises in her explication of situational analysis. She rejects twentieth-century grounded

assumptions of generality, truth, discovery, and objectivity in favour of a situated grounded theory analysis that takes into account positionality, relativity, and reflexivity. Like numerous other scholars (e.g. Charmaz, 1990, 2000, 2006a; Bryant, 2002, 2003; Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003, 2006), Clarke sees grounded theories as constructed, not discovered. She states that researchers already have theoretical knowledge and likely considerable knowledge about the substantive area and specific situation of study before entering the field. Consistent with Strauss's intellectual heritage, Clarke (2006) not only constructs situational analysis from symbolic interactionist sociology and pragmatist philosophy, but argues that symbolic interactionism and grounded theory form a theory-method package in which ontology and epistemology are co-constitutive and non-fungible. Her position (1) builds on the pragmatist agenda of empirical study of experiences and practices in obdurate, but multiple realities; (2) assumes that perspectives on these realities, including researchers', are partial, situated, and constructed; and (3) takes the situation of inquiry as the unit of analysis. Clarke constructs this situation of inquiry through augmenting grounded theory analytic strategies with maps depicting complex situations, social worlds/arenas, and positions taken and not taken.

Grounded theory methods offer a path toward constructing theory, but not a direct route. If grounded theory methods point the way to theorizing, why do numerous grounded theory studies remain descriptive? Three fundamental problems impede theoretical development. First, many grounded theorists do not attain the level of intimate familiarity (Blumer, 1969; Lofland and Lofland, 1995) with their studied phenomenon that permits looking at it from multiple perspectives. Instead, their view may remain partial and superficial. If so, they reproduce commonsense understandings of the phenomenon (see also Silverman, 2000) rather than regard such understandings as problematic objects of inquiry to take apart and begin to conceptualize. Subsequently, the

finished categories remain mundane and descriptive; they lack theoretical incisiveness. A lack of intimate familiarity also reduces the researcher's awareness of the range of variation of the phenomenon, its reach, and connections with other phenomena and levels of analysis. Some grounded theorists (e.g. Glaser, 2001, 2003; Holton, 2007) express less concern about the limits of limited data collection. They argue that the inherent modifiability of a grounded theory allows extending or refining a theory later. Perhaps. But does it occur? Usually not. Thus, researchers need to aim for thoroughness and theoretical understanding of variation.

Second, the analytic process starts with coding in grounded theory but most coding remains topical, descriptive, and general. This coding leads to synthesizing, sorting, and summarizing data. All are useful but do not fracture the data analytically. A grounded theorist must take data and codes apart and define what constitutes them. While coding, we define points and moments in the data that suggest analytic leads or illuminate telling issues. What we do during initial analytic stages informs what we can develop during successive phases of the analytic process.

Third, many researchers who claim grounded theory allegiance do not move back and forth between data collection and refinement of abstract categories. The logic of grounded theory calls for successively raising the level of abstraction of the analysis through interrogating it with emergent questions, filling and checking categories through theoretical sampling, and asking which theories best account for this analysis. If a researcher's main category is descriptive, theoretical sampling remains at a low level of abstraction and, moreover, many researchers who claim to adopt grounded theory strategies do not conduct theoretical sampling at all. Recognition of these problems can prompt researchers to gain the theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1978) that leads to posing theoretical questions and pursuing theoretical connections.

THE TAKE-UP OF GROUNDED THEORY IN PSYCHOLOGY AND EMERGENCE OF QUALITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Why and how has grounded theory become accepted as belonging not only to sociology but within psychology? What role has it played in the emergence of qualitative psychology? In this section we trace grounded theory's insertion into, and influence upon, psychology's methodological repertoire as it has expanded to include qualitative approaches and methods. It took 20 years for grounded theory to come to the attention of psychologists; however, having done so, it rapidly came to occupy a position in the vanguard of the qualitative approaches and methods used by psychologists.

The earliest grounded theory impetus: Clinical/practitioner psychology

The first psychologists who took up grounded theory principles and practices did so in the late 1980s (Rennie, Phillips and Quartaro, 1988). These psychologists worked primarily in the clinical psychology (mental health) research arena, and articulated two key areas of methodological concern (1) the need to seek out and utilize holistic methods for understanding and representing clients' and research participants' lived experiences and actions, *in situ*, and in their full complexity and (2) the importance of fostering forms of theorizing within psychology which can satisfy the demands of those seeking to combine their clinical/practical interests and academic research. Qualitative methods, and in particular grounded theory, were deemed to be important in both regards.

Researchers such as Rennie et al. found themselves outside the mainstream of an academic clinical psychology preoccupied with conducting controlled experimental studies – as was the discipline of psychology as a whole – and with emulating the standards and practices of a laboratory-based, natural science. To a large extent, this situation persists today, as the research concerns

and priorities of academic clinical psychologists resist change for institutional reasons. Most recently, though, new demands significantly undercut, at least interrupt, traditional priorities. Clinical psychology research must now show itself to be more directly relevant to patients' expressed concerns, as well as applying itself to the development and evaluation of treatment regimes and psychological/mental health services.

This latter situation has considerably strengthened the hand of those advocating the need for clinical (and its later derivative, health psychology) to adopt more flexible, qualitative, and contextualized methods. They aim to afford a better fit between clinical psychologists' theories and practices and the meanings their clients assign to their experiences and problems, in the contexts of their lives and worlds. Hence, qualitative research methodologies and methods have gained acceptability, noticeably as part of clinical and health psychology's development in the UK. Grounded theory is one of the most popular and widely well regarded of such methods (e.g. Chamberlain, Stephens and Lyons, 1997; Marks and Yardley, 2004; Slade and Priebe, 2006).

Questioning scientific orthodoxy, expanding psychological methods: Critical groundwork for grounded theory in the UK

Interest intensified in grounded theory from the early 1990s in the UK, as part of more general arguments for challenging scientific/methodological orthodoxy and creating a space for qualitative research within an experimentally, quantitatively and statistically defined discipline (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall, 1994; Henwood and Nicolson, 1995). A major concern was with the unnecessary narrowness of psychology's preoccupation with the control, prediction, and measurement of human behaviour and individual cognition (Hayes, 1997). Social psychologists who critiqued ideas typically taken for granted within psychology

about the practices and procedures of knowing and science (Harré and Secord, 1972; Gergen, 1973, 1982; Parker, 1989) – and who are now often known as social constructionists (Burr, 1995) and critical psychologists (Stainton Rogers, 2003) – did the early groundwork. Proposals for an early progenitor of qualitative psychology, in the form of an approach called 'ethogenic' psychology (Harré, Clarke and De Carlo, 1985), were also put in place. Research following this approach would analyse meaningful activity *in situ*, along with participants' everyday understandings or subjective accounts. Intelligibility and orderliness of conduct would be established in relation to normative expectations, and its predictability by positing 'real' generative psychological mechanisms and structures as opposed to abstract cause–effect (or in behavioural terms, stimulus–response) sequences. Although ethogenic psychology never really took hold, other than as an interesting but marginal set of theoretical ideas with a few published studies using the methods (e.g. Marsh, Rosser and Harré, 1978), it did flag the possibility of psychologists refusing to privilege modernist/dualistic practices such as the measurement of behaviour over the study of meaningful conduct and people's subjective accounts, and the use of non-objectivist inquiry methods. In this way it established the context of critical debate about psychological science, and prepared the ground for the entry of grounded theory into UK (and later US) psychology.

Grounded theory and qualitative psychology

In their contribution, which made grounded theory visible in the UK (and later in US psychology), Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, 1995, 2003) argued directly for the uptake of grounded theory in psychology, as part of their wider observation that psychology had too long neglected the potential benefits of qualitative research approaches and methods. In making this claim, Henwood

and Pidgeon echoed one of the main arguments of critical, social constructionist and ethogenic psychologists – that psychology's (dualistic) way of defining itself as an objective science opened up serious gaps in the logic and practice of psychological science. Additionally, they pointed out how grounded theory was a tried and tested qualitative social research method, developed within a cognate discipline (sociology), *epitomizing* many of the real potentials qualitative research offered to psychology. The reprinting of their 1992 article 'Qualitative research and psychological theorising' in the edited volume *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice* (Hammersley, 1993) signalled a belated but welcome entry of psychological discussions of quality–quantity issues into the social science methodology literature. Shortly thereafter, Smith, Harré and Van Langenhove (1995) forecast the possibility of fundamentally changing the discipline of psychology through qualitative research methods. By including Charmaz's (1995b) chapter on grounded theory in their edited volume, they brought the method into the classroom and increased its visibility among disciplinary colleagues.

Grounded theory offered psychologists a set of clearly articulated principles and practices for working outside the confines of their discipline's highly prescriptive stance on the need to conduct experiments, utilize psychometric measures, and test hypotheses derived from universalizing prior theories. This method provided an entrée into the rigorous work of empirically gathering and analysing initially ill structured, qualitative data, and of making sense of them in theoretical terms. It opened up a no less trustworthy or valid, but far more creative and exploratory logic of inquiry than hypothetico-deductive theory and practice: 'a kind of research in which order is not very immediately attained, a messy intriguing kind of research in which the conclusions are not known before the investigations are carried out' (Gherardi and Turner, 1987: 12). It provided individual researchers with a set of working principles and practices aimed

at both 'disciplining' and 'stimulating' the theoretical imagination.

Psychologists using grounded theory could inquire into research problems with substantive relevance to specific problem domains (sometimes called 'real world' inquiry). Although universalizing theories have their role in scientific research, they can engender researchers' excessive investment in winning arguments over highly generalized truth claims, making these theories of questionable value to researchers seeking to create useful knowledge. In this regard, and as specified by grounded theory, one's primary concern must be developing a close and meaningful understanding of a particular, substantive problem or social arena (e.g. the involvement of patients in decisions about their care; the introduction of new technology into a clinical setting; the management of risks in hazardous industries). Out of such understanding comes the possibility of research knowledge of close relevance to the lives of people inhabiting such domains, and also to the work and decisions of practitioners and policy makers dealing with problems people encounter in their everyday worlds.

Grounded theory's specific intellectual antecedents in American pragmatist philosophy and the perspective of symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1996) provided a further reason for its relevance to psychology, and role in stimulating the development of qualitative psychology. This linkage should not be surprising since both look back to the late nineteenth century psychological writings of Dilthey, who insisted that it would be mistaken to pursue causal explanation at the expense of understanding or *verstehen*, and that psychological and social investigations, alike, should ask questions about the creation of meaning. Pragmatist philosophy instantiates the idea that the value of any theoretical proposition or explanatory claim depends less on testing it against some absolute, transcendent reality, and more on considering the kinds of actions and consequences it allows for as people encounter and negotiate their empirical world (what, as a meaningful construction, it is 'good for'; Camic, Yardley

and Rhodes, 2003). Symbolic interactionism articulates a coherent justification for studying not the factors leading to behaviour but how and why people come to attach meaning to their own and others' conduct, other objects of experience, and their efforts at understanding and representation (Blumer, 1969; see also Nicolson, 1999). Symbolic interactionism also addresses action as a central concern and, in this regard, the combination of symbolic interactionism and grounded theory creates the potential for forging stronger links between psychology and sociology.

Grounded theory, then, provided a serious option to those psychologists who found themselves too constrained by psychology's traditional experimental and psychometric outlook. It posed a different mode of inquiry, creditably located in more expansive and constructive discussions of how to pursue human inquiry and social science methods. It allowed psychologists to contemplate – many for the first time – how they might undertake exploratory research utilizing qualitative, real world data, and with the goal of understanding and theorizing about people's lived experiences and meaningful worlds, so that their research might – in the manner highlighted by Dey (2004) and Punch (2005) – make some contribution to the ways in which people live with their daily problems. Although ethogenic psychology tried to achieve some of these goals earlier, especially centring the study of the meaningfulness to people of their conduct and experiences in their everyday worlds, its designation as a separate type of psychology had, perhaps, not helped to sustain it within psychology's institutional structures.

Of course, the prospects of any newly introduced perspective on method having longevity and impact are uncertain. Grounded theory's social science credentials could have made it seem too cumbersome for a discipline wedded to emulating a natural science model, while critical psychologists might have alighted upon more worthy voices and trajectories of science criticism and psychological practice (but see

Charmaz (2005) for developing a critical grounded theory). What seems to have happened in the case of grounded theory is that initial interest in, and discussion of, grounded theory's potentials has translated into considerable demand to know 'how to do' psychological research using the method. The demand has come from clinical and health psychology research, as already noted, but also from social, critical, and applied psychology. The plethora of edited, introductory compilations of qualitative psychological methods texts appearing rapidly since the earliest days have almost invariably dedicate a chapter to grounded theory (e.g. Smith et al., 1995; Richardson, 1996; Hayes, 1997; Willig, 2001b), as have texts developed to support training in inter- and multidisciplinary human and social research including psychology (e.g. Rice and Ezzy, 1999; Ezzy, 2002). Increasingly, such chapters also draw upon a body of original research studies, a selection of which feature and are used to exemplify specific methodological points throughout the remainder of this chapter.

DIFFERING APPROACHES TO GROUNDED THEORY IMPLEMENTATION IN ORIGINAL RESEARCH STUDIES

One important message in introductory chapters on grounded theory as a methodology within qualitative psychology concerns the do-ability of research using grounded strategies and methods within this new field. Another concern we wish to highlight, is how researchers conduct original grounded theory over time, across a range of different sub-areas of psychological research, and in the form of smaller and larger scale studies by single researchers (e.g. Bolger, 1999; Hirst, 1999; Nicolson, 1999); students and their supervisors (e.g. Sque and Payne, 1996; Tweed and Salter, 2000; Hussein and Cochrane, 2002; 2003); collaborative research partnerships – often between clinicians and academics (e.g. Borrill and Iljon-Foreman, 1996); and as part of funded

psychological and multidisciplinary projects often having a medical focus (e.g. Michie, McDonald and Marteau, 1996; Yardley, Sharples, Beech and Lewith, 2001), although not always (Pidgeon, Blockley and Turner, 1986; Henwood and Pidgeon, 2001; Cox et al., 2003).

Looking across this range of studies, grounded theory ideas and practices have now been implemented and used in psychology, and in multidisciplinary studies involving psychology, in at least three different ways: (1) as a methodological approach supporting research that distinctively differs from traditional quantitative, hypothesis testing, experimental, psychological studies; (2) as a set of research principles and practical methods for describing, understanding and explicating substantive problems in less distinctive ways in its methodological approach to the quantitative, psychological mainstream; and (3) as a means of beginning an in-depth, qualitative investigation so that inquiries produce outcomes well grounded in data, while other complementary approaches and methods are used to complete theoretical explication and interpretation. This diverse set of interests is one reason behind the continuing, robust commitment shown in the perspective and methods of grounded theory within psychology, while consideration of these interests can illuminate debate about certain quite common practices.

Grounded theory as a 'big Q' qualitative methodology

Willig (2001a) and Stainton Rogers (2003), following Kidder and Fine's (1987) suggestion, introduce the terms 'big Q' and 'little q' to highlight the major differences brought to the tasks of designing, executing and reporting psychological studies when working outside the canon of hypothetico-deductive method. Willig describes the meaning of the two terms as follows: "big Q" refers to open-ended, inductive research methodologies that are concerned with theory generation and the exploration of meanings, whereas "little q" refers to the

incorporation of non-numerical data techniques into hypothetico-deductive designs' (Willig, 2001a: 11). The place of grounded theory studies within this schema is clear: they cannot be 'little q' since "little q" methods of data collection and analysis do not engage with the data to gain new insights into the ways in which participants construct meaning and/or experience their world; instead they start with a hypothesis and researcher defined categories against which the qualitative data are then checked' (Willig, 2001a: 11). Accordingly, Willig depicts grounded theory as the first of her 'big Q' methodologies enabling psychologists to explore 'lived experiences and participants' meanings' (Willig, 2001a: 11).

In discussing the position of grounded theory within Willig's schema, characterizing grounded theory as more 'inductive' in nature does not mean reverting to a naively dualistic way of thinking about qualitative inquiry. Grounded theory procedures and practices are inductive in the sense of not seeking to confirm extant theory. But, as previously noted in this chapter and in earlier writings (Charmaz, 1990, 1995, 2003), they are also much more because they involve pushing forward understanding and theorizing through the researcher engaging intensively with the data, investigating its potentially varied and multiple contextual meanings. Within psychology, Henwood and Pidgeon have referred to this mode of inquiry as more 'exploratory' and 'generative', and (following Bulmer, 1979) as involving a 'flip-flop' between data and its conceptualization. Willig (2001a) describes the qualitative inquiry process as epitomized by grounded theory as more 'investigative' in nature, always seeking to find out answers to questions, and never merely seeking to find out whether a single hypothesis is false or true when tested against a particular sample or quota of data.

One arena illustrating how psychologists have harnessed the exploratory/generative and questioning/investigative potential of grounded theory as 'big Q' psychology is critical, qualitative social psychological

(specifically feminist) studies into women's life experiences and mental health. Hirst (1999) chose to conduct a qualitative, grounded theory study of seven women who had experienced depression because extant research on the causes of depression had used androcentric models that took men's experiences as the normative standard, and 'divorced (theorizing) from the perceptions of those who have actively experienced depression' (Hirst, 1999: 180). In such circumstances, grounded theory constituted the perfect antidote given its methodological objective to 'create theory that is intimately linked to the reality of the individuals being studied' (Hirst, 1999: 180). Grounded theory studies showing a partial commitment to questioning the presumed value of prior, externally derived, universally applicable (i.e. *etic*) theories might be censored for lacking critical reflexivity. Nonetheless, Hirst's study illustrates this practice when she writes reflexively about her expectation that a particular theoretical category in the prior literature – the constraints operating on women's self-perceptions through cultural constructions of the 'good woman' – would feature centrally within the psychosocial transactions leading women to understand their positions in ways that rendered them 'feeling depressed'. Following from her methodological stance of gleaning theoretical explication only through creatively and rigorously interacting with her (in this case interview) data, her emergent theory turned out to be surprising and quite different. Specifically, through charting her participants' experiences of a legacy of betrayal in relationships with significant others, and how this led to a process of 'becoming demoralized' (e.g. through feeling unloved, unworthy, and unable to change their lives for the better), she was far better able to account for the aetiology of the unhappiness and, ultimately, depression, of the women involved in her study.

The big Q/little q distinction encapsulates grounded theory's potential in supporting the practice of more 'critical' forms of applied, social and health/clinical psychology. Grounded

theorists and critical psychologists' concerns overlap as both seek to introduce a freshness and newness into arenas of investigation that are not well served by working within the parameters of normal, theory-testing, quantitative experimental science. Both specifically question reliance upon forms of prior theorizing – and also reality defining forms of public discourse (e.g. Hallowell and Lawton, 2002) – that embody dominant frames and values. Grounded theory also offers a specific set of principles and practices that can strengthen critical psychologists' goal of understanding and explicating people's own life experiences, everyday problems, and the complexity of psychological and social processes within particular, substantive inquiry domains.

Grounded theory forms outside 'big Q' psychology within psychology and related disciplines

In order to include recognizable forms of grounded theory studies lying outside the concerns and achievements of critical psychology, we now consider at greater length how medical sociologists and practitioner-researchers have used grounded theory methodology and method. Medical sociology has had a long and vibrant history of major grounded theory studies in the social psychology of health and illness (e.g. Strauss and Glaser, 1975; Corbin and Strauss, 1988; Charmaz, 1991; Karp, 1996, 2003; Baszanger, 1998). This area shares overlapping interests with psychologists as evidenced in Charmaz's and Karp's work, which we discuss here. Charmaz (1987, 1991, 1995a, 2002b, 2006b) emphasizes individual experience and meaning construction in her studies of people with chronic illnesses. She uses grounded theory strategies to plumb ordinary meanings and makes them interesting objects of study, such as 'being super-normal' (1987: 296) 'having a "good" day' (1991: 50), 'making trade-offs' (1991: 143) and 'setting priorities' (2006b: 30). This strategy simultaneously fosters remaining open and curious about studied life, learning the

logic of research participants' worlds, and minimizes importing disciplinary concepts that contain imputed judgments, whether of participants' motivations or their worlds.

Charmaz (1991) begins with sensitizing concepts including self, identity, meaning, and duration, and explores possible connections with time. She ends with major ideas about the self situated in time and links the self with specific categories such as 'unchanging time', 'drifting time', 'good days', 'identifying moments', while challenging professional concepts such as 'denial of illness' along the way. Grounded theory provides a lens for seeing beyond established professional concepts rather than only seeing through them. David Karp (1996) begins with self, identity, and illness career as sensitizing concepts and traces how people with depression progressively reinterpret the locus of trouble from relationships and situations to having an impaired self. He contends that they assume careers as mental patients with distinctive identity transformations by coming to view their depression as a sickness of the self. The following phases result in identity turning points: (1) a period of inchoate feelings when the person lacks words to express what he or she feels, (2) a phase of concluding that something is wrong with me, (3) a crisis that pinpoints illness and initiates formal help-seeking, and (4) reformulation of identity based upon illness. Karp supplies direct cues to his use of a realist grounded theory throughout the book. For example, when arguing against anti-psychiatry advocates who deny the existence of mental illness, Karp says that he 'would rather stick with verifiable lines of analysis that arise out of my interview materials' (Karp, 1996: 55).

In his later study of caregivers of mentally ill persons, Karp (Karp, 2003; Karp and Tanarugsachock, 2000) found that they experience a parallel career of predictable moments of redefining their obligations to their family member who has mental illness. His treatment of an *in vivo* category, 'drawing the line', reflects a sophisticated grounded theory processual analysis. Like

most researchers, Karp does not detail his analytic methods in his book; however, he does specify them in his co-authored article. In the book, Karp writes about his data-collection methods of participation in a support group and six early interviews as preliminary to conducting 54 in-depth interviews (although he continued to attend support group meetings throughout the project). Karp does tell us that drawing the line emerged as a category over and over in caregivers' stories. Identifying this major process gave him the grist for analysing fundamental meanings of obligation and family.

Practitioner-researchers have also adopted grounded theory methodology and method within psychological and related subjects allied to medicine (especially nursing studies). These scholars show fidelity to the grounded theory methodological package, and commonly seek a strict application of the approach as one among a number of more varied and specific forms of research practice. To be at their best such studies must avoid merely setting out to emulate grounded theory by imposing standardized procedures, thereby falling foul of robust criticism in medical sociology for reducing methodological practice to technical essentialism (Barbour, 2003) and in psychology to 'methodogma' (Reicher, 2000). As far as we know, discussions and reflections on this situation are few: whereas the risks posed by poor methodological practice are a subject of discussion (both in medical sociology and nursing studies), addressing questions of appropriate variation in practice is rarer. Yet, paying attention to both is likely to prove enlightening, as exemplified by Henwood and Pidgeon's (1995) and Pidgeon and Henwood's (2004) discussion of how organizational schema, taxonomies and typologies may represent alternative, perhaps more achievable, goals for smaller scale grounded theory studies than the development of an explanatory theory. Accordingly, in our following remarks, we begin to identify such variations across a range of useful examples of practitioner-researcher studies that we have found, and treat the question

of their methodological fidelity/flexibility as a foothold for appraising them.

Cohen's (1995) study of how families with a child suffering from chronic, life threatening illness manage the stress of uncertainty about the child's prognosis exemplifies a grounded theory study in nursing studies. It provides a clear and specific description of how the key, defining features of grounded theory design and practice contributed to the process and products of the reported study (see, for example, discussion of its implementation of the principles and practices of *emergent design*, *theoretical sampling*, progressive identification of *categories of analysis* from consideration of the data, presentation of a *theoretical model*). Nonetheless, an *essential openness* characterizes how even this study, with its apparent 'textbook-style' fidelity to the grounded theory method, 'adopts' some of grounded theory's defining features. Cohen speaks of employing Strauss and Corbin's (1990) refinements to Glaser and Strauss's original grounded theory thesis, refinements many read as recommending building a theory around a core, emergent, theoretical category model in order to explain it (e.g. Tweed and Salter, 2000). Yet Cohen's primary object of explication is not, in fact, its core emergent category of uncertainty per se, but the stepwise process as families moved from one discernable stage to another (from a 'lay explanatory', to a 'legitimation', to a 'medical diagnostic' stage) and an effort to account for 'significant variation in the parents' behaviour that might have heuristic value' (Cohen, 1995: 42). Accordingly, the study illustrates well how multiple options for finding analytical and interpretive pathways are held within the framework of grounded theory methodology and methods. Grounded theory was, to all intents and purposes, adopted as a complete and coherent set of strategies and methods, but still choices had to be made on how to use it to meet the emergent demands of the project.

In health and clinical psychology, grounded theory is the methodology of choice typically because of the close attention it enables investigators to pay to articulating

the categories of experience and meaning that make up people's subjective/phenomenal worlds. This is considered as both a major objective itself, and an inextricable part of investigations into the social and psychological problems, questions and issues under investigation – often concerning dynamic social psychological processes. Nochi (1998: 874), for example, uses the grounded theory method to 'clarify the categories around the experiences of self that people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) are likely to have', and 'to discover main themes and categories in the experiences of loss of self' (Nochi, 1998: 870). Bolger (1999: 343) aims to 'describe the phenomenon of emotionally painful experiences that occur as a result of life events and as a consequence of exploring those events within a therapeutic context' and then 'identify the processes involved in working through emotional pain, highlighting both the transformative qualities in the painful experience and the components responsible for the continued avoidance of pain'. Wright and Kirby (1999) sought to clarify and explicate the *in vivo/in situ* categories of experience and meaning of 'adjustment' to chronic illness relevant in the lives and worlds of people suffering end stage renal failure (ESRF), as a strategy to overcome poor conceptualization of the term in a research literature dominated by notions of adjustment as 'a return to normal social roles (e.g. work), an absence of psychiatric caseness (e.g. on depression) or compliance/adherence with treatment' (Wright and Kirby, 1999: 259).

Clearly, for certain research purposes, and following some of the general principles of qualitative inquiry (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 1985), charting or mapping out such categories of experience and meaning in more depth and detail than is possible in other forms of research aiming to count occurrences of events and establish general patterns, can be a valid research goal in and of itself. To an extent, this can also be the case, in grounded theory studies, when reporting early 'descriptive' stages of a project. In addition, conducting and reporting a detailed, rich or 'thick' (Geertz, 1973) description can be a

primary means for researchers to demonstrate that they have, indeed, 'grounded' any theoretical abstractions they make in familiarity, immersion and process of working with the data. Nonetheless, grounded theory studies that report primarily descriptive findings have elicited criticisms from numerous different perspectives. In the case of psychology, three main criticisms have arisen: (1) merely presenting the details and structure of experience does not amount to articulating a theory (a criticism that possibly insists on only using a complete version or a single 'true' definition of grounded theory); (2) arriving at categories of meaning and experience does not articulate or interpret their psychological meaning from the perspective of individual actors; and (3) simply reporting categories of experience and meaning does not provide for an analysis of social dynamics or process, nor does it answer specific questions about or explore the theoretical and practical implications of the data (e.g. Willig, 2001b). From a sociological point of view, the weakness of such descriptive grounded theory studies lies in their reliance on a loose presentation of themes derived from the data in the manner of abstract empiricism, as if the data merely speak for themselves, and where the researcher fails to provide any analytical framing or reading of the data (Silverman, 2000). Note that, while these criticisms can point to areas of weakness in grounded theory studies, they do not argue against researchers showing variation in the way they balance the demands for detailed description and analytical/theoretical explication of participants' experiences and meanings.

A further, notably different manifestation of grounded theory practice occurs when the method is no longer treated as a distinctively descriptive and analytical, open-ended/exploratory and investigative, creative/generative and exhaustive/rigorous *mode of inquiry*, but rather as a stage in an overall research process adopting a verificationist approach to method. For example, Michie et al. (1996: 455–6), in their study of family members attending a clinic for those

at high risk of inheriting bowel cancer, used grounded theory data analysis methods with interview data as a 'pilot study' to generate hypotheses about how people respond to predictive genetic testing 'to be tested in a prospective, wider scale, quantitative study'. Borrill and Iljon-Foreman (1996), having established a plausible model of therapeutic change following a short course of cognitive behavioural therapy, turned to discuss the need to 'validate the grounded theory' in order to determine which components of the model were necessary and sufficient to produce change. Yardley, Sharples, Beech and Lewith (2001) used grounded theory, in an interview study of people receiving chiropractic treatment for back pain, as a starting point for a more complex, evolving, multi-phased design, shifting from an exploratory/generative to a verificationist study in order to ascertain whether it was (dynamic) symptom perceptions, other factors (such as abstract illness representations and/or communication by and confidence in the therapist) or a combination of factors that influenced treatment perceptions and acceptability. Each of these studies points to the continuing pull of discrete variable analysis and generalist hypothesis testing within clinical research, while also highlighting the valued (if, in its own terms, limited) role played by grounded theory within it.

Grounded theory used in combination with other approaches to achieve theoretical explication and interpretation

A further variation in the implementation of grounded theory within psychology is its use in combination with other approaches. Studies in this mould clearly depart from the idea of grounded theory being a standardized package, conceiving of it instead as part of a flexible toolkit of methods. In recent years, a good deal of interest has emerged in social science internationally in developing principled and practical forms of 'methodological combining' – interest that will further encourage researchers not to

think of methods as hermetically sealed (e.g. Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2000; Todd, Nerlich, McKeown and Clarke, 2004; Henwood and Lang, 2005; Moran-Ellis, 2006). Within qualitative psychology, in fact, investigators have always made decisions and choices about methodology and method in the light of a broadening comparative, possibly critical, awareness and understanding of a range of qualitative perspectives and methods with first 'homes' within and beyond psychology (e.g. discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenological theory and method, voice relational psychology).

Grounded theory and discourse analysis have been used as co-contributors as psychologists have worked across methodological boundaries. In their investigation into how men's sense of masculinity is implicated in their involvement in crime, Willott and Griffin (1999: 449) used grounded theory tactics to identify a stratum of *in vivo* codes (e.g. earning, money, and the family) in the form of 'words and phrases used repeatedly by discussants'. These codes were then used 'to divide the huge quantity of data into manageable pieces, before moving onto the more theoretical phase of the analysis' (Willott and Griffin, 1999: 449). At this phase, the researchers began to attach greater significance to ideas and practices from discourse theory: focusing in particular on how men positioned themselves in their accounts and arguments, and cultural discourses of gender, masculinity and criminality. In their study of Northern Irish women's experiences of abortion, Boyle and McEvoy (1998: 291), again, used grounded theory procedures at earlier stages of analysis for: 'coding descriptions of the women's experiences in terms of a chronological sequence', 'identifying reference to context at each stage in the abortion process', and using the resulting 'themes to guide further reading ... to try to ensure as full as possible use of the women's accounts'. In the theoretical explication and interpretation that followed these authors devised an analytical account relating to the 'contradictions, apparent uncertainties, and silences' in the women's accounts *and* the 'chronological

stages of the abortion process', in order to encapsulate key concerns emanating from the discourse analysis and grounded theory readings conducted throughout the study, respectively.

Typically, techniques for achieving theoretical abstraction, integration and explication in grounded theory studies are through the constant comparative method, Strauss and Corbin's three C's coding framework, Glaser's integrating families of theoretical codes, and Charmaz's theoretically sensitive interaction with and interpretations of data – which is perhaps the culmination of grounded theorists' aim to pay constant attention, from the outset, to theoretical possibilities in the data. In the two cited exemplar studies, such tactics are not discussed, and do not seem to have been used, although some comparisons may be made with Charmaz's approach. Rather, a final framework for reporting the results was arrived at as the authors drew upon a range of ideas drawn explicitly from theory and the extant literature, to assist them in interpreting, integrating and explicating the varied, inconsistent and ambivalent meanings in their data. This practice points to the range of ways in which it is possible to bring analytical closure to studies using grounded theory in combination with other qualitative perspectives and methods.

CONCLUSION

In summary, grounded theory studies in psychology attest to the strength of the method for producing fresh ideas and challenging past truths. The rapid acceptance and ascendance of the method in the discipline confirm its usefulness in developing qualitative psychology. Like other scholars, perhaps psychologists first adopted grounded theory as a method of managing data and engaging in substantive coding (see also Urquhart, 2003). Yet grounded theory offers much more than coding strategies and data management. Raising the analytic level of initial coding practices is a start. Psychologists can enjoy a privileged place of access to people's

concerns and experience and a sensitivity to felt meanings. Grounded theory gives these psychologists tools to treat them analytically in ways that ultimately afford individuals new ways of understanding their experience.

For academic as well as clinical psychologists, creating increasingly more theoretical memos advances the analytic process and can spark reflexivity about it. Engaging in theoretical sampling to sharpen abstract categories and to dig deeper into the phenomena can also give clarity and precision. The potential of grounded theory's constant comparative method has yet to be mined as fully as it might be for constructing persuasive critical analyses to effect change. In short, taken to its logical extension, grounded theory holds much promise for new theorizing in psychology, for critical inquiry within the discipline, and for innovative links between academic ideas and clinical practice.

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SECTION II

Perspectives and Techniques



Ethics in Qualitative Psychological Research

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INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research in psychology entails the power to explore human existence in great detail. It gives access to human experience and allows researchers to describe intimate aspects of people's life worlds. The human interaction in qualitative inquiries affects researchers and participants, and the knowledge produced through qualitative research affects our understanding of the human condition. Consequently, qualitative research in psychology is saturated with ethical issues.

In this chapter we address some significant ethical issues that arise when conducting qualitative research in psychology, and we will do so from the premise that ethical issues are an intrinsic part of the research process from the initial formulation of the research question through the actual interviews or field observations, to transcriptions and analyses, and even further when the publications of the study reach readers inside and outside of the scientific community. In qualitative research, ethical problems particularly arise

because of the complexities of 'researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena' (Birch, Miller, Mauthner and Jessop, 2002: 1). When we observe and talk to people, analyse what they do and say, and publish our interpretations to the larger public, we are engaged in a process with inescapable ethical aspects.

We begin this chapter by pointing out the key role of moral issues and of qualitative research in early psychology. Then we turn to the common way of addressing ethical research today by means of ethical rules, guidelines, and ethics committees and outline their relevance for qualitative research; here we focus on fields of uncertainty regarding informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the researcher's role. Thereafter we go beyond ethics as rule-following to raise some principal ethical issues of qualitative research in psychology: we draw on ethical theories of duty, of consequences, and of virtue, address ethics and objectivity and criticize a 'qualitative ethicism'. We move beyond a micro

ethics of the researcher–participant relation to include a macro ethics addressing the broader ethico-political consequences of the knowledge produced by qualitative research. We shall conclude with a brief discussion of how to learn ethical research behaviour. We shall focus mainly on qualitative interview research, which is probably the most commonly used qualitative means of inquiry in psychology, and although interview research shares many ethical issues with ethnographic and action research, for example, we are aware that these also have their own distinct ethical problems (cf. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, Chapter 10).

ETHICS AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY

In today's handbooks and textbooks of psychology and other social sciences, the ethics chapter is often a small and marginal chapter, if included at all. This contrasts with the history of ethics in the social scientific disciplines. Historically, what we call social science emerged from moral philosophy, and the student of social science had to acquire moral dispositions as part of the curriculum. It was only late in the nineteenth century that the research university replaced the older moral model of learning in the academies that had put emphasis on the practical formation of the human being in light of moral standards. With the rise of the research university, social science increasingly strove to become a value neutral activity of pure observation in independence of society's moral values and traditions. Social science strove to become 'a disembodied cognitive enterprise' (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton, 1985: 301).

Nineteenth-century psychologists like John Stuart Mill still prided themselves on belonging to the 'moral sciences', and many other early psychologists were deeply interested in moral issues, among them William James, Wilhelm Wundt (who wrote a volume on *Ethik*), and, perhaps surprisingly, Hermann Ebbinghaus (cf. Giorgi, 1992).

Later on, influential psychologists such as Freud, Piaget, and Skinner also investigated human moral life, albeit in widely different ways. Since then, however, morality and ethics have become marginalized as relevant issues in psychology, and some major reference books for psychologists, such as *The International Handbook for Psychologists* (Pawlik and Rosenzweig, 2000) and the *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (Kazdin, 2000) treat ethics almost exclusively as applied ethics, i.e. guidelines for researchers and practitioners, rather than as an intrinsic and central part of human life itself that deserves a vital place in psychological science.

The history of how psychology went from being a part of the moral sciences to become a value-neutral science is closely paralleled in how the discipline went from being a qualitative science of human experience to become a quantitative science based on experiments, tests, and questionnaires. Qualitative research in psychology is much older than usually recognized, and many founding pioneers in fact based much of their research on qualitative methods, which are rarely mentioned in today's textbooks on psychological methods. Here can be mentioned Wundt's cultural psychology, James's study of religious experience, Freud's investigations of dreams and his clinical method more broadly, Gestalt psychologists' research on perception, Piaget's interviews with children, Bartlett's studies of remembering, and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body.

When researching humans who are concerned with how their lives and experiences are described, conceptualized, and analysed, it is impossible to separate completely the values and the facts, the ethical issues and the scientific issues. Now that qualitative research methods are reborn in psychology – mainly through the impact of qualitative research in other disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and the health sciences – we may hope and conjecture that the discipline rediscovers its own roots in qualitative research and moral inquiry as well. In the last section, we return to a

potential alliance of qualitative and moral inquiries.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND FIELDS OF UNCERTAINTY

Ethical issues are involved in the ends as well as the means of qualitative research. There is always an ethical *why* in research, related to the *ends* of the research activity: *Why* is it valuable to pursue this investigation? Who gains (if anyone) and who loses (if anyone) as a result of the investigation? Will it benefit the participants involved or the larger public? And if not, what warrants working further with this research question? The preamble to an earlier version of the ethical principles for the American Psychological Association (1981: 637) emphasized that, 'The decision to undertake research rests upon a considered judgment by the individual psychologist about how best to contribute to psychological science and human welfare'. In later versions, however, including the latest from 2002, this phrase no longer exists (American Psychological Association, 2002). There is always also an ethical *how* in research, related to the *means* of the research activity: what is the most responsible way of conducting my research? How will I ensure that no one is harmed? Is it enough to obtain approval for my research project by a research ethics committee and be nice to people, or are there more complex ethical issues at stake?

In what follows, we address four of the fields that are traditionally discussed in ethical guidelines for researchers: informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the role of the researcher (cf. American Psychological Association, 2002; Eisner and Peshkin, 1990; Guidelines for the protection of human subjects, 1992). Rather than seeing these fields as entailing questions that can be settled once and for all in advance of the research project, we conceptualize them as *fields of uncertainty*, i.e. problem areas that should continually be addressed and reflected upon. Rather than attempting to 'solve' the issues of consent, confidentiality etc. once

and for all, qualitative researchers work in an area where it is often more important to remain *open* to conflicts, dilemmas, and ambivalences that are bound to arise throughout the research process. This demands going beyond the ethical guidelines and principles and focus more on the ethical capabilities of researchers, which we shall address further below.

Ethical questions at the start of a qualitative research project

Below are outlined some of the questions that are raised by common ethical guidelines, which, while not being able to solve them unambiguously, qualitative researchers should ask themselves before embarking on a research project.

- What are the *beneficial* consequences of the study?
How can the study contribute to enhancing the situation of the participants? Of the group they represent? Of the human condition?
- How can *informed consent* of participants be obtained?
How much information about the study needs to be given in advance, and what information can wait until a later debriefing?
Who should give the consent – the participants or others who speak on their behalf?
- How can the *confidentiality* of the participants be protected?
How important is it that the participants remain anonymous?
How can the identity of the participants be disguised?
Who will have access to the interviews and other documents?
Can legal problems concerning protection of the participants' anonymity be expected?
- What are the *consequences* of the study for the participants?
Will any potential harm to the participants be outweighed by potential benefits?
Will the interviews approximate therapeutic relationships, and if so, what precautions can be taken?
When publishing the study, what consequences can be anticipated for the participants and for the groups they represent?

- How will the *researcher's role* affect the study? How can the researcher counteract over-identification with his participants, thereby losing critical perspective on the knowledge obtained?

We shall now turn to a more specific discussion of ethical guidelines concerning informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the role of the researcher. We also depict the fields of uncertainty that these guidelines point towards.

Informed consent

Informed consent entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. Informed consent further involves obtaining the voluntary participation of the people involved, and to inform them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Through briefing and debriefing, the participants should be informed about the purpose and the procedure of the research project. This should include information about confidentiality and who will have access to the interview or other material, the researcher's right to publish the whole interview or parts of it, and the participant's possible access to the transcription and the analysis of the qualitative data. In most cases such issues may not matter much to the participants. If, however, it is likely that the investigation may treat or instigate issues of conflict, particularly within institutional settings, a written agreement may serve as protection for both the participants and the researcher. In particular, when it comes to later use of the research material, it may be preferable to have a written agreement signed by both researcher and participant, thereby obtaining the informed consent of an interviewee to participate in the study and allow future use of the material (see Yow (1994) for examples of letters of agreement with participants).

Issues about *who should give the consent* may arise when doing research in institutions

where a superior's consent to a study may imply a more or less subtle pressure on employees to participate. With school children, the question comes up about who should give the consent – the children themselves, their parents, the teacher, the school superintendent, or the school board?

Informed consent also involves the question of *how much information should be given and when*. Full information about design and purpose counteracts deception of the participants. Providing information about a study involves a careful balance between detailed over-information and leaving out aspects of the design that may be significant to the participants. In some interview investigations, such as those using funnel-shaped techniques, the specific purposes of a study are initially withheld in order to obtain the interviewees' spontaneous views on a topic and to avoid leading them to specific answers. In these cases, full information should be given in a debriefing after the interview.

Informed consent as an ethical field of uncertainty thematizes the conflict between a complete disclosure of the rationale of the research project beforehand (thereby rendering much qualitative research impossible), and withholding information from the participants, which may sometimes result in knowledge that can improve the condition of the larger public. There is further the issue of how informed consent can be handled in exploratory qualitative studies where the investigators themselves have little advance knowledge of how the interviews and observations will proceed.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be reported. If a study will publish information potentially recognizable to others, the participants often need to agree to the release of identifiable information. The principle of the research participants' right to privacy is not without ethical and scientific dilemmas.

There is thus a concern about *what information should be available to whom*.

Should, for example, interviews with children be available to their parents and teachers? In studies where several parties are involved, e.g. in the case of individual interviews within organizations or with married or divorced couples, it should be made clear before the interviewing who will later have access to the interviews. Protecting confidentiality can in extreme cases raise serious legal problems, such as in cases when a researcher – through the promise of confidentiality and the trust of the relationship – has obtained knowledge of mistreatment, malpractice, child abuse, the use of drugs, or other criminal behaviours either by the participants or others. In the United States, a researcher may in advance obtain a certificate of confidentiality from the federal government, protecting against disclosure of the identity of their participants (see Guidelines, 1992: 6).

Qualitative research methods such as interviews involve different ethical issues than those of a questionnaire survey, where confidentiality is assured by the computed averages of survey responses. In a qualitative interview study, where participants' statements from a private interview setting may be published in public reports, precautions need to be taken to protect the participants' privacy. Here, there may be an intrinsic conflict between the ethical demand for confidentiality and the basic principles of scientific research, such as providing the necessary information for inter-subjective control and for repeating a study.

Confidentiality as an ethical field of uncertainty relates to the issue that on the one hand, anonymity can protect the participants and is thus an ethical demand, but, on the other hand, it can serve as an alibi for the researchers, potentially enabling them to interpret the participants' statements without being gainsaid. Anonymity can protect the participants, but it can also deny them 'the very voice in the research that might originally have been claimed as its aim' (Parker, 2005: 17). We should also note that in some cases interviewees, who have spent their time and provided valuable information to the

researcher, might wish, as in a journalistic interview, to be credited with their full name.

Consequences

The consequences of a qualitative study need to be addressed with respect to possible harm to the participants as well as to the expected benefits of participating in the study. The ethical principle of *beneficence* means that the risk of harm to a participant should be the least possible (Guidelines, 1992: 15). From a utilitarian ethical perspective the sum of potential benefits to a participant and the importance of the knowledge gained should outweigh the risk of harm to the participant and thus warrant a decision to carry out the study. This involves a researcher's responsibility to reflect on the possible consequences not only for the persons taking part in the study, but also for the larger group they represent.

The researcher should be aware that the openness and intimacy of much qualitative research may be seductive and can lead participants to disclose information they may later regret. A research interviewer's ability to listen attentively may also, in some cases, lead to quasi-therapeutic relationships, for which most qualitative researchers are not trained. In particular prolonged long and repeated interviews on personal topics may lead to quasi-therapeutic relations. The personal closeness of the research relation puts continual and strong demands on the sensitivity of the researcher regarding how far to go in his or her inquiries.

Anticipating potential ethical transgressions also requires a thorough knowledge of the field of inquiry. Some interview researchers, oblivious of the significant differences of oral and written language, may thus have recollections of having hurt the dignity of their interviewees when they send back verbatim transcriptions of an interview or if they publish excerpts verbatim. Bourdieu et al. (1999: 623) has commented more generally on the dangerous game of publishing interview discourses: 'the analyst not only has to accept the role of transmitter

of their symbolic efficiency, but, above all, risks allowing people free play in the game of reading, that is, in the spontaneous (even wild) constructions each reader necessarily puts on things read'.

The field of uncertainty that opens up when we consider the consequences of qualitative research is perhaps the most complex one, because it is often unpredictable. If a conversation between a researcher and a participant suddenly takes a turn and touches sensitive issues that obviously move the participant, how should the researcher react? Should she pursue these issues in a therapeutic vein in order to help the participant (and perhaps obtain important knowledge as a 'side effect'), but with the risk of ethically transgressing the participant's intimate sphere, or should she refrain from anything resembling therapeutic intervention with the ethical risk of appearing cold and aloof?

The role of the researcher

The researcher as a person is critical for the quality of the scientific knowledge and for the soundness of ethical decisions in qualitative inquiry. Morally responsible research behaviour is more than abstract ethical knowledge and cognitive choices; it involves the moral integrity of the researcher, his or her sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and action. In interviewing, for example, the importance of the researcher as a person is magnified because the interviewer him or herself is the main instrument for obtaining knowledge. Being familiar with value issues, ethical guidelines, and ethical theories may help in choices that weigh ethical versus scientific concerns in a study. In the end, however, the integrity of the researcher – his or her knowledge, experience, honesty, and fairness – is the decisive factor. Given this dependence on the ethical judgements of the researcher, it becomes important to foster the ethical skills of qualitative researchers.

To the ethical requirements of the researcher belongs a strict adherence to the *scientific quality* of the knowledge published. This involves only publishing findings, which

are as accurate and representative of the field of inquiry as possible, which are checked and validated as fully as possible, and striving towards a transparency of the procedures by which the findings have been obtained.

The *independence of research* can be co-opted from 'above' as well as 'below', by those funding a project, as well as by its participants. Ties to either group may lead the researcher to ignore some findings and emphasize others to the detriment of as full and unbiased an investigation of the phenomena as possible. Qualitative research is interactive research; through close interpersonal interactions with their participants, researchers may be particularly prone to co-optation by them. Researchers may so closely identify with their participants that they do not maintain a professional distance, but instead report and interpret everything from their participants' perspectives, 'going native' in anthropological language.

The field of uncertainty that is disclosed when reflecting on the role of the researcher can involve a tension between a professional distance and a personal friendship. Thus in the context of a feminist, caring, committed ethic, the qualitative research interviewer has been conceived as a friend, a warm and caring researcher. This early conception of the researcher as a caring friend has later been criticized from a feminist standpoint (Burman, 1997). Duncombe and Jessop (2002) argue that an interviewer's show of intimacy and empathy may involve a faking of friendship and commodification of rapport, sanitized of any concern with broader ethical issues. When under pressure to deliver results, whether to a commercial employer or to their own research publications, the interviewers' show of empathy may become a means to circumvent the participant's informed consent and persuade interviewees to disclose experiences and emotions which they later may have preferred to keep to themselves or even 'not know'. With an expression from a therapist-researcher (Fog, 2004), an experienced interviewer's knowledge of how to create rapport and get through a participant's defences may

serve as a 'Trojan horse' to get inside areas of a person's life where they were not invited. The use of such indirect techniques, which are ethically legitimate within the joint interest of therapeutic relations, become ethically questionable when applied to research and commercial purposes.

Ethical protocols and review committees

The four fields of uncertainty concerning informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the researcher's role need be carefully addressed in qualitative research projects. They can be used as a framework when preparing an *ethical protocol* for a qualitative study. Within some fields, such as the health sciences, it is mandatory to submit a qualitative study to an ethical review committee before the investigation can be undertaken. There is wide variation between countries and disciplines as regards the requirements to go through ethical review committees. Such a requirement can on the positive side force the researcher to think through in advance value issues and ethical dilemmas, which are likely to arise during the project, and perhaps also encourage a novice to consult more experienced members of the research community. Even when not a formal requirement, it may nonetheless be of value when planning a qualitative research project to draft an ethical protocol. With a foreknowledge of the ethical issues that typically arise at the different stages of a qualitative research project, the researcher can make conscious choices while designing a study and be alert to critical and sensitive issues that may turn up during the inquiry.

However, the existence of protocols and ethical review committees should not lead researchers to think that the ethical uncertainties in qualitative research can be removed through appeal to a 'tick box approach' to ethical standards. Consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the researcher's role constitute fields of uncertainty, which can all give rise to ethical conflicts that cannot be dealt with simply by appeal to the ethical

guidelines and review committees. Following Foucault (1984: 343), 'the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger'.

The difficulties of specifying in advance the topics of qualitative studies, which are often exploratory, as well as of depicting in advance the specific questions to be posed in most qualitative interviews, constitute a potential problem by ethical review committees. Some committees may want to approve every interview question in advance, which may be feasible for the predetermined questions in a questionnaire study, whereas open research interviews also involve on the spot decisions about following up unanticipated leads from the participants with questions that have not been prepared in advance.

Parker (2005) has criticized ethics committees in the UK for presupposing that people will do the worst unless they are prevented from doing so. He argues that ethics committees often favour quantitative over qualitative approaches, indirectly prevent new forms of research that have not been described in the code, are bureaucratic in their use of checklists, and often with the result that researchers spend their time trying to get through the review process instead of engaging in serious thought about ethics. In the United States, the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and their ethical guidelines for human subjects research have been criticized for serving a new methodological conservatism constraining participatory qualitative research (Christians, 2005; Lincoln, 2005). Developed for experimentation in biomedical research, these guidelines have been extrapolated to the social sciences, where they are largely incongruent with interpretative and interactive qualitative research methods such as interviewing, field research, and participatory action research. While full informed consent is highly pertinent in high-risk medical experiments, it is less relevant and feasible in low-risk field studies and interviews. In fact, most field studies would be put to a close if full information to and consent from all the potential participants were a requirement. In particular when

the IRB members are mainly quantitative-experimental researchers with little knowledge of qualitative research, adherence to detailed ethical guidelines may constrain and thus limit emergent qualitative research. Christians (2005) and Lincoln (2005) further argue that with the reconfigured relationships of qualitative research as cooperative, mutual, democratic and open-ended, key issues of common ethical guidelines become nonissues in a feminist communitarian ethics.

Although the above critiques appear valid in relation to the bureaucratic review practices of many ethical committees, there are wide procedural variations across countries, and rather than en bloc rejecting ethical guidelines and review processes as irrelevant, we believe they can favourably be approached as aids in addressing ethical fields of uncertainty in qualitative research, and not as the final ethical authority as such. It should be borne in mind that ethical guidelines are constantly debated and revised, and qualitative researchers need to develop ethical ways of inquiry that are relevant to their own field. Ideally, ethics committees for qualitative research in psychology should consist of (or at least include) experienced researchers within qualitative research.

THERAPY AS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In the preceding section we have treated ethical guidelines and fields of uncertainty in relation to academic qualitative research. We shall now address some of the ethical issues raised by the form of psychological qualitative research, which has had the most significant impact on our understanding of the human situation – the therapeutic interview. Textbooks of general psychology, as well as the public understanding of psychology, are today to a large extent based on knowledge originally produced in psychoanalytic interviews about personality, childhood development, sexuality, and neuroses (cf. Kvale, 2003). However, while academic qualitative researchers in psychology today may learn from therapeutic interviews, they

should not try to imitate them uncritically. Here, we shall discuss some ethical tensions of the role of the therapist and that of the researcher and also differences in ethical issues raised by therapeutic and academic interviews.

The therapeutic relationship opens up a personal mode of inquiry, which is part of the therapeutic contract, but will be ethically questionable in most academic research settings. This involves the extended personal relationship between therapist and patient which facilitates access to deeper layers of personality, the indirect questioning modes, the penetrating interpretations, and the therapeutic possibilities of critically validating the interpretations through dialogue and, pragmatically, through behavioural and bodily changes.

In therapy, the main goal is a change in the patient, in research it is the advance of knowledge. A therapist needs to consider the ethical tensions by drawing the role of the therapist and the researcher closer together, particularly where a strong research interest may interfere with the therapeutic process. Freud (1963: 120) thus warned against formulating a case scientifically while treatment is proceeding, as it could interfere with the therapist's ability to listen to the patient with an open mind. In an academic interview, an interviewer's ability to listen attentively may in some cases lead to quasi-therapeutic relationships, which most interviewers neither have the training nor the time to enter into. In particular long and repeated interviews on personal themes may lead the interviewee into a therapy-like relationship. The creation of close therapeutic interrelationships over several years, which may be required for obtaining insight into the deeper layers of personality, are ethically out of bounds for academic interviews.

Further, within a therapeutic relationship, it is ethical to access information indirectly. There is a common interest of both therapist and patient to promote change, and indirect forms of questioning and validation may be necessary parts of the joint venture of helping the patient change. In academic

research, however, indirect interviewing violates the ethical requirement of the participant's informed consent.

Therapeutic interviews and research interviews also differ with regard to interpretation and validation of interpretations. When an academic interviewer makes interpretations, which go beyond the self-understanding of an interviewee, several ethical issues are raised such as: Should participants be confronted with the new interpretations of themselves, which they may not have asked for? And what should be done about disagreements between the participant's and the researcher's interpretations of a theme? Put sharply, in therapy it may be unethical if the therapeutic conversations the patients have asked for, and often paid highly for, do not lead to new insights or emotional changes. In research interviews, which the interviewees themselves have not asked for, it may be unethical to instigate new self-interpretations or emotional changes.

Fog (1992) has formulated the researcher's ethical dilemma as follows: the researcher wants the interview to be as deep and probing as possible which carries the risk of 'trespassing the person', and on the other hand to be as respectful to the interviewee as possible which in turn carries the risk of getting empirical material that only scratches the surface. In a study of living with cancer, a woman is interviewed and denies that she fears a return of the disease (Fog, 2004: 238). She says that she is not afraid, and she appears happy and reasonable. However, as a skilled interviewer and therapist, the interviewer senses small signals to the contrary. The woman speaks very fast, her smile and the way she moves her hands are independent of her words. Her body is rigid, and she does not listen to her own words. If the interviewer decides to respect the interviewee's words, and refrains from anything resembling therapeutic intervention, then the written interview will subsequently tell the story of a woman living peacefully with cancer. Valuable knowledge might be lost in this way, which could only have been obtained by trying to get behind the apparent denial

and defences of the interviewee. If society has an interest in finding out what it means to live with a deadly disease, then the researcher should perhaps try to go behind the face value of the woman's words? But what is in the interest of the woman? Perhaps it is best for her not to have her defences broken down, or maybe she will live a better life if she faces up to the reality of her disease?

Such dilemmas of conflicting scientific and ethical concerns cannot be solved by ethical rules, but will depend on the experience and judgment of the researcher. There may in some cases exist research options where the depicted dilemma does not arise. If the research interview above had been a therapeutic interview, it would have been part of the therapeutic process to go beyond the person's apparent denials, and possibly to facilitate painful self-confrontations, and as a side effect obtain more thoroughly checked and penetrating knowledge than what is ethically defensible in a research interview.

PRINCIPAL ISSUES OF ETHICS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

We shall now present some principal frames of reference for reflecting further on ethical issues raised by qualitative research in academic psychological settings and in professional therapeutic settings. In this section, we first discuss some ethical theories that are often invoked in discussions of research ethics, and we then introduce and expand on a distinction between micro and macro ethical issues. Furthermore, we address the question of objectivity in science and ethics, and consider a possible alliance of ethics and qualitative research.

Ethical theories as tools to think with

Not only ethical guidelines, but also more broadly ethical theories, can favourably be conceived as tools to think with in qualitative research. The ethical theories that normally legitimate the judgments and decisions in

research are a duty ethics of principles, a utilitarian ethics of consequences, and a virtue ethics of skills (cf. Kimmel, 1988; Eisner and Peshkin, 1990).

The *duty* ethics of principles, also termed a deontological or an intentional position, judges an action independently of its consequences. Moral actions are those that live up to principles such as justice or respect for the person. Kant's imperatives to 'Treat every man as an end in himself, and never as a means only' and 'Act as if the maxim of thy act were to become by thy will a universal law of nature' are well-known examples of duty ethics. These general ethical principles may be specified in ethical rules for research, and this kind of principle-based duty ethics may lead one to conceptualize ethics as a top-down relation from abstract and universal principles to rules for behaviour and finally to concrete ethical decisions.

The *utilitarian* position, also termed a consequentialist position, emphasizes the consequences of an action. Actions are judged by their effects rather than by the intentions behind them. The end purpose might be the greatest good for the greatest number, and what is good might be conceived as an increase in happiness, satisfaction or knowledge, for example. In the extreme versions of the utilitarian position, the ends come to justify the means. In a sense, utilitarianism agrees with the duty ethics that ethical principles are authoritative, and, according to utilitarianism, the principle is a utilitarian calculus with which to determine how to maximize utility or happiness.

In recent years, a number of moral philosophers have questioned the premise that we should primarily think of ethics as something that can be stated in principles and rules. The problem is that no principles or rules are self-applying or self-interpreting (Jonsen and Toulmin, 1988). Even if we succeed in formulating a general rule that all can agree upon, we still need to know when and how to apply the rule. A classic example is found in Plato's *Republic*, where the rule under discussion is that one ought always to return borrowed items to the owner. Socrates

questions the universality of this rule: 'For instance, if one borrowed a weapon from a friend who subsequently went out of his mind and then asked for it back, surely it would be generally agreed that one ought not to return it, and that it would not be right to do so' (Plato, 1987: 66). We cannot go on forever formulating rules for when and how to apply them, for at some point we have to act.

A third position, often referred to as *virtue* ethics and developed in detail by Aristotle (1976), involves a more contextualist view of when and how rules and principles should be applied. This position does not necessarily advocate abandoning rules and principles, for moral rules (like those found in the documents of ethics committees) are still useful as rules of thumb, as 'descriptive summaries of good judgments ... valid only insofar as they transmit in economical form the normative force of good concrete decisions of the wise person' (Nussbaum, 1986: 299). There is thus a primacy of the concrete and the particular. Although ethics committees work on the basis of abstract ethical principles, it is noteworthy that Stephen Toulmin (1981), himself a former member of such committees, recounts that committee members could very often reach consensus on what to do in specific cases, but very rarely on which ethical theories and principles that could be brought forth to back their practical judgments.

The view that ethical theories and principles are tools to think with rather than ethical authorities has also been articulated by the psychologist and pragmatic philosopher, John Dewey. Dewey warned against reducing our moral experience to anything that a single theory about it or a set of rules could capture. As he said: 'a man's duty is never to obey certain rules; his duty is always to respond to the nature of the actual demands which he finds made upon him – demands which do not proceed from abstract rules, nor from ideals, however awe-inspiring and exalted, but from the concrete relations to men and things in which he finds himself' (Dewey, 1891: 199–200). Here, the ethical burden is shifted from theories and rules to the person in context, who interprets and

applies the rules in relation to this context (cf. Brinkmann, 2004, 2007). Thus, the virtues and capacities of the researcher come into focus, and also the standards of the research community of which the researcher is a part. Notably the intellectual virtue that Aristotle called *phronesis* becomes important as the capacity to determine how to act well in concrete situations, and to decide which rules, if any, to apply. In the final section of this chapter, we reflect further upon how qualitative researchers can be educated so as to deal well with ethical issues in their work.

Qualitative ethicism

Although we believe that it would be fruitful for qualitative research in psychology to rediscover its roots in moral inquiry, we do not think that qualitative research is ethically good in itself. The resurgence of qualitative studies in the social sciences (and now in psychology) has often been accompanied by a tendency among qualitative researchers to portray qualitative inquiry as inherently ethical, or at least more ethical than quantitative research. This can be called a qualitative ethicism (baptized and criticized by Hammersley, 1999). It is the tendency to see research almost exclusively in ethical terms, as if the rationale of research was to achieve ethical goals and ideals with the further caveat that qualitative research uniquely embodies such ideals. A qualitative ethicism can distract researchers' attention away from (a) the unanticipated consequences of a qualitative research project, (b) the inevitable power plays inherent in qualitative research, and (c) the cultural context in which the research is carried out.

As regards the first point (a), the human interaction in a qualitative investigation may have unanticipated effects, which are likely to be overseen if one starts with the premise that qualitative inquiry in itself has a moral superiority. Regarding the second point (b), it seems reasonable to conclude that qualitative research as practiced is in fact (and cannot but be) a power relation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005). In the case of the interview,

we clearly find an asymmetrical power relation where the interviewer has the scientific competence and the right to pose questions and set the agenda. Usually, an interview is an instrumental conversation that is not its own goal, but conducted in order to serve the researcher's ends. Interviews can be manipulative, when interviewers use subtle therapeutic techniques to get beyond the participant's defences. Furthermore, it is generally the case that researchers uphold a monopoly of interpretation over the participants' statements, and enjoy the privilege to interpret and report what the participants really meant. These points all engender significant ethical questions. Concerning the third point (c), it can be observed that although quantitative research in psychology was historically connected to objectifying forms of power exertion, there is a case to be made that current forms of qualitative research in psychology relate to softer, seducing, and subjectifying forms of power in today's consumer society that have replaced the hard, objectifying, but more transparent, forms of power exertion in industrial society (and quantitative research) (Kvale, 2006).

Taking into account the research participants' options for counter-control – such as evading or not answering the interview questions – it still appears warranted to characterize qualitative research in psychology as saturated with more concealed forms of power exertion than quantitative and experimental research. It may even be that the potentials for close personal interaction and inquiry into intimate personal domains entail potentials for more dangerous ethical transgressions in qualitative research than in the more distanced objectifying forms of experimental-quantitative psychological research. For example, interviewing may involve what has been called commodification of the skills of 'doing rapport', where the researcher can be led into the unethical affair of 'faking friendship' in order to obtain knowledge (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002). It may not be enough to ensure ethically responsible research if qualitative researchers are armed with good intentions and qualitative ethicism, for it is also necessary to

situate the means of knowledge production in power relations and the wider cultural situation.

Micro and macro ethics

Ethical issues in qualitative research tend to be discussed in relation to the personal implications for the participants, whereas the wider social consequences of the inquiries rarely receive attention. In order to grasp the ethical intricacies of qualitative research in the wider cultural context, we introduce a distinction between micro and macro ethics. Micro ethics is the ethics of the concrete research situation and relate to issues like consent and confidentiality. The macro ethics on the other hand is concerned with what happens when the methodologies and knowledge produced circulate in the wider culture and affects humans and society. We shall now adopt more explicitly a macro ethical perspective and address potential consequences of the knowledge produced by qualitative research in a broader social situation (cf. Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005).

Ethical issues may differ when viewed from a micro and macro perspective. The participant may experience the concrete interaction between researcher and researched in qualitative studies positively, when a researcher with an authority position shows a strong interest in what he or she has to say. The wider social consequences of the knowledge produced in such studies may, however, in some cases be problematic. A good example of this are the Hawthorne studies, coordinated by the industrial psychologist Elton Mayo, where interviews were conducted that suggested that management's display of human interest to the workers could be a key factor in increasing their morale and industrial output (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). More than 21 000 workers were interviewed, each for more than an hour and the interview transcripts were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The purpose of the study was to improve industrial supervision. In a sophisticated methodology chapter, interviewing is presented as a new mode

of industrial research, inspired by clinical psychology and anthropology. In their indirect clinical interviews, the researchers did not limit themselves to the manifest content of the intercourse, and they listened not only to what the person wanted to say, but also to what he or she did not want to say.

Qualitative market research is today perhaps the most extended and influential psychological qualitative research practice, and consumer interviews as individual motivational interviews or as focus groups may well follow standard ethical guidelines and also be enjoyable to the participants. On a macro level, however, the consequences may be more questionable. Focus group interviews about teenager attitudes to smoking may provide knowledge for improving the effectiveness of cigarette advertisements to teenagers, or the knowledge produced may be used in health campaigns to prevent smoking. In today's consumer society it is likely that there will be more funding available for producing and using knowledge on smoking attitudes for the tobacco industry's advertisements to increase tobacco consumption than for public campaigns seeking to decrease tobacco consumption.

The Hawthorne interviews served the management's interest in increasing the workers' morale and productive output, and motivational market interviews serve to manipulate the behaviour of consumers without their knowledge. It would be less conceivable that labour unions and consumer groups were allowed to conduct interviews with the management using corresponding interview techniques. While the vested and conflicting interests and power contexts of commercial qualitative research are rather visible, also potential less obvious partisan interests and power contexts of apparently impartial academic interview research should be considered.

Tensions of ethics on a micro and a macro level also arise in academic interview research. This can be shown within the context of a historic study on anti-Semitism, *The Authoritarian Personality*, by Adorno,

Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford (1950). In the wake of the Second World War the researchers investigated a possible relation of anti-Semitism to an authoritarian upbringing. An important part of the study consisted of therapeutically inspired interviews, where the researchers used therapeutic techniques to circumvent their participants' defences in order to learn about their prejudices and authoritarian personality traits. In the psychoanalytically inspired interviews, the freedom of expression offered to the interviewee was seen as the best way to obtain an adequate view of the whole person, as it permitted inferences about the deeper layers of the participants' personalities behind the antidemocratic ideology. On a micro level this research clearly violated the ethical principle of informed consent, whereas on a macro level the knowledge obtained of the roots of anti-Semitism could have beneficial social consequences.

Ideally, ethical issues on a macro level can be approached by public discussion of the social consequences and uses of the knowledge produced. For example, in a large-scale interview study by Bellah and co-workers (1985) about individualism in America, the researchers saw the very aim of doing social science as a public philosophy, to engage in debate with the public about the goals and values of society:

When data from such interviews are well presented, they stimulate the reader to enter the conversation, to argue with what is being said. Curiously, such interviews stimulate something that could be called public opinion, opinion tested in the arena of open discussion.

Bellah et al. (1985: 305)

Objectivity in science and ethics: And a potential alliance of ethics and qualitative research

Sometimes ethics is seen as an annoying obstacle to producing exciting new knowledge. The often-heard irritation that one has to spend time preparing an ethical protocol for the ethical review committee is one indication of this. Would it not be better

for the quality of the research if one could concentrate on refining the methods of qualitative research instead of having to think about the ethics of research? This is the case only if one thinks of ethics as something external to the practice of research. If we think instead of research *and* ethics as building on one and the same demand to be objective, then we can argue that ethical practices in qualitative research may simultaneously be conducive to good knowledge production.

What it means to be 'objective' in qualitative research, of course, is not easy to determine. The everyday meaning of 'objectivity' could be summarized as something like 'not imposing one's own biases unto something', and, as Latour (2000) has suggested, this is related to objectivity in the sense of 'allowing the object to object'. Ethical as well as scientific objectivity is about letting the objects object to what we do to them and say about them. Qualitative research in psychology seems particularly well suited to do so, since the research situation is not necessarily and inherently fixed as, for example, in many psychological experiments. In Milgram's obedience studies, to mention a famous case, it was predetermined in advance that the participant's responses were to be understood according to the binary concepts of 'obedience to authorities' or 'disobedience'. In qualitative research there is at least the possibility of a third option, and an important ethical and scientific attitude that should be cultivated in qualitative researchers is a willingness to let the object object and frustrate the investigations, since this is often at once a sign of important knowledge and of ethical issues. Freud (1963: 68) thus remarked that 'The whole theory of psychoanalysis is... in fact built up on the perception of the resistance offered to us by the patient when we attempt to make his unconscious conscious to him'. Objectivity in the sense of creating extreme situations where the objects are maximally provoked to object to the interviewer's interpretations is ethically out of bounds for most academic research interviews.

MacIntyre (1978: 37) has noted that 'objectivity is a moral concept before it is a methodological concept', and we learn what it means to be objective, impartial and fair in our moral lives before we do so as researchers. In qualitative research, ethics becomes as important as methodology when the question is production of objective knowledge, i.e. knowledge that has been produced through a process where the participants have been able to be 'interested, active, disobedient, fully involved in what is said about themselves by others' (Latour, 2000: 116). Here, there is little if any difference between scientific and ethical objectivity, and ethics becomes something helpful rather than an obstruction to the production of new knowledge.

We have above warned against what was termed 'qualitative ethicism', but nevertheless some genuine points of conversion between ethics and qualitative research exist. This is significant for the researcher who asks what resources there are available for thinking responsibly about ethics, if it is true that guidelines and abstract principles are not enough. Such ethical resources might in fact be internal to the practice of qualitative psychology. This concerns the potential option for research participants to object to the qualitative researchers' interpretations of their behaviour, mentioned above, as well as the coherence of the thematic fields of ethics and qualitative inquiries, and the role of 'thick descriptions' to which we turn now.

Ethics, as the study of moral phenomena, is concerned with phenomena that are practical, vague and uncertain, normative, qualitative, and particular. Together, these features provide a reason why psychology, although originally part of the moral sciences, to a large extent later has ignored the role of morality in human lives. Practical, vague, normative, qualitative, and particular phenomena are ill suited to a discipline that has modelled itself after Newtonian natural science, using causal concepts and aiming to formulate universal, theoretical and non-normative laws about human behaviour. In the field of qualitative psychology, however,

we also find psychological descriptions and analyses of phenomena that are practical (i.e. situated in practical contexts of life as lived), often vague rather than distinct, normative (or intentional), and also qualitative and particular. These common fields of concern point to a possible alliance of qualitative researchers and ethical theorists. What good qualitative researchers do might not be very different from what ethically proficient people do.

Good qualitative researchers master what has been called the art of thick description. The notion of thick description goes back to Gilbert Ryle (1971) and Clifford Geertz (1973). Mastering the art of thick description means to be able to understand the contextual and relational features of the phenomena we are concerned with. Similarly, it can be argued that in order to deal well with ethical issues, qualitative researchers should primarily cultivate their ability to perceive and judge 'thickly': 'As we move from the "thinnest" vocabulary toward the "thickest" phrases, we find ourselves increasingly committed to value-judgments' (Levine, 1998: 5). Moving one's index finger on a gun's trigger is morally neutral, firing a gun can be justifiable in certain contexts, but murdering someone with a gun is clearly bad. As we 'thicken' event descriptions, we see more and more clearly what the moral implications of the event are, often without having to invoke ethical principles (in this case, it is part of the meaning of the thick ethical concept 'murder' that it is morally blameworthy).

LEARNING ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

With the emphasis on the ethical capabilities and virtues of the qualitative researcher, the learning of ethical research behaviour becomes a key issue. A relevant source here is Aristotle's virtue ethics, which has also inspired the current wave in social ethics known as *communitarianism*. Communitarianists reject 'the liberal self', the autonomous, isolated chooser presupposed in rational-choice theory, contractualism, and much psychological theory. Also the

proliferation of ethical codes and committees can be seen as based on an idea of independent, autonomous agents that enter freely into contractual relations. In communitarianism, however, the self is conceived as constituted by communal attachments within communities and traditions (cf. Mulhall and Swift, 1996). A background of communities and traditions is needed in order to learn ethical research behaviour, and we shall here suggest two approaches to learning ethical behaviour: the skill model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus, and mastering the art of thick descriptions.

In a phenomenological account Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1990) have outlined a five step ladder of learning ethical expertise, starting with explicit rules and reasoning, which, with increasing experience and expertise, recede into the background of skill and habit, where the highest form of ethical comportment consists of being able to stay involved and to refine one's intuitions. Moral consciousness then consists of unreflective responses to interpersonal situations, which in cases of disagreement may be attempted to be solved through dialogue.

We further point to the art of thick description as an approach to learning ethical behaviour in qualitative research. Learning to describe particulars thickly does not just involve learning rules, but learning from cases, and observing those who are more experienced in some research community. It is about learning to *see* and *judge* rather than learning to universalize or calculate. The art of thick description is similar to what the good (in a non-moral sense) qualitative researcher should master in order to produce new, insightful knowledge about the human condition. There are different ways of learning to 'thicken' events to help us act morally:

Contextualize. We thicken events by describing them in their context. In a court of law, for example, the question whether somebody did something intentionally is decided, not by citing theories or general rules, but by describing the context of the act (Levine, 1998). In courts of law, and in qualitative case studies, the question of generalizing from one case to another depends

upon adequate contextual descriptions of the cases (Kennedy, 1979). Thick description situates an event in a context, and the experienced ethical reasoner knows which features of a context are relevant in order to judge it adequately. The skilled qualitative researcher understands the peculiar features of the research context, and how this context generates specific ethical issues to be addressed.

Narrativize. Those thick descriptions that incorporate a temporal dimension are called *narratives*, and 'narratives can carry moral meaning without relying upon general principles'... (Levine, 1998: 5). If we manage to pull together a convincing narrative that situates an event temporally, then we rarely need to engage in further moral deliberation about what to do. Looking at a situation as at a 'snap-shot', outside its temporal and social narrative context, will on the other hand make it hard to judge and act morally. If one is not provided with the kind of information necessary to narrativize – e.g. if the researcher has never met the participant before and does not know her larger life story – then it is ethically wise to be lenient about one's interpretations and generalizations, and refrain from anything resembling therapeutic intervention.

Focus on the particular example. Within a virtue conception of ethics, Løvlie (1993) has attempted to overcome an opposition of explicit rules versus tacit skills by the introduction of examples. These may be in the form of parables, allegories, myths, sagas, morality plays, case histories, and personal examples. The qualitative researcher should know about exemplars of ethically justifiable and also ethically questionable research, in order to evaluate her practice and learn to recognize ethical issues. Generalizations, as found in formal ethical guidelines, should not blind us to the crucial particularities encountered in the research situation. As qualitative researchers are involved in concrete issues with particular people at particular places and times, they need to master an understanding of these concrete particulars in order to be morally skilful.

Consult the community of practice. The learning of ethical research behaviour is a matter of being initiated into the mores of the local professional culture. Our emphasis above on a shift from an ethics of rules to the ethical capabilities of the qualitative researcher should not imply an 'ethical overburdening' of the individual researcher. Qualitative research is rarely practiced by single researchers who confront their participants as isolated individuals. A researcher is usually part of a research community, and she is normally accountable not only to the participants but also to peers, superiors, students, her institution, and the discipline at large. When confronted with difficult ethical issues, it is often wise to consult the research community, and if one wants to improve the skills of ethical perception, judgment, and reasoning, one needs to receive feedback from others. We can only learn by being corrected, and this presupposes the existence of a community with sufficiently shared values and some agreement concerning when and what behaviours stand in need of being corrected. Learning qualitative inquiry in a research community where ethical and scientific values are integrated into daily practices may foster an integrated ethical qualitative research behaviour.

CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter we have addressed ethical concerns in the practice of qualitative psychological research. We have attempted to go beyond research ethics as mainly following rules for ethical behaviour and emphasized the researcher's integrity, his or her ability to sense, judge and act in an ethically committed fashion. Whilst we have taken issue with a 'qualitative ethicism' which regards qualitative research as in itself ethical, we have pointed to similarities between qualitative research and ethical research, in particular the importance of the researcher's ability to provide situated thick qualitative descriptions, which include the value aspects of behaviour.

The shift of emphasis from a strict, formal rules-based ethics to the situated ethical judgements of the researcher should, though, avoid individualizing ethics in qualitative research by seeing them as mainly a concern for the participants and the integrity of the qualitative researcher. In this chapter we have argued not only for a deformalization, but also for a decentring of ethics in qualitative research. We have outlined a move from a micro ethics of personal participant-researcher relations to also include a macro ethics of the ethico-political effects of the knowledge produced upon the broader public. And we have gone beyond the focus on the integrity of the individual qualitative researcher to include the ethical values and support of the community of research practitioners and the ethico-political stance of the profession at large.

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Qualitative Methods in Feminist Psychology

Mary Gergen

INTRODUCTION

The central concern of this chapter is the relationship between qualitative methods and feminist psychology. How have qualitative methods affected the development of feminist psychology? And how have the interests and values of feminist psychology created new manifestations of qualitative inquiry? This chapter explores the ways in which this relationship has developed.

Feminist psychology has always been a field in transition. Many questions have been raised as it has developed: Is feminist research simply a recipe in which we add 'women' to existing paradigmatic forms, then stir? Or should an entirely new discipline be forged? How far can we deviate from traditional empirical methods, and not be ghettoized? How free are we to explore our research interests using qualitative methods? How can qualitative methods enhance our feminist pursuits? These questions, among others, have been hotly debated and as yet remain unresolved within the feminist

community. At the same time, many of the opinions emerging from these debates have shaped the support for qualitative methods in feminist psychology (Olesen, 1994).

With the caveat that tensions exist within feminist research circles, I would advance the view that, at its core, *feminist research is designed to seek social justice, to enhance women's voice and influence in society, and to explore alternative ways of understanding the world through women's experiences* (Harding, 1987; Baker, 2006). With a focus on these issues, the methodological choice of qualitative research has been very important in that it allows for explorations of lives and institutions in their rich diversity and wholeness, rather than supporting research that elicits and dissects data in the service of a statistical plan based on group scores (Reinharz, 1992). The precise formulations of qualitative methods, the interpretations of research outcomes, and the presentational forms have produced many styles of feminist research (Fonow and Cook, 1991). In addition to varieties of styles of research, there are

theoretical variations as well. However, the focus on qualitative methods in this chapter is primarily based on epistemological differences between a feminist standpoint position and the postmodern/social constructionist one. The latter position is non-foundational, with the emphasis on the social construction of reality, primarily through discursive means. The feminist standpoint position is based on the notion that research is in service of 'truth-telling,' with some researchers grounding this truth in individual experience, and others rejecting the individual perspective for structural truths related to class, race, and other demographic variables. It is impossible to comprehensively describe all of these contributions to feminist psychology, but a sampling of qualitative methods within the major approaches is included below.

FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1865–1965

As with all other sciences, women were not allowed to participate as fully functioning researchers until the end of the 19th century. Even then, they were few in number, marginalized as students and as researchers, and often deprived of the right to receive advanced degrees, publish in prestigious journals, or even to claim ownership of their ideas (Furumoto and Scarborough, 1986; Bohan, 1992). In terms of methods, the field of psychology in the late 19th century was fomenting with various forms competing for primacy. Qualitative methods, including introspection, were commonplace in early psychology. Despite the turn to experimentation and quantitative methods in the 1920s, especially in the USA, one of the first feminist psychologists, Mary Calkins, at Wellesley College, used qualitative methods in a study of social selves in interaction. In her work, she rejected the atomistic conception of the subject of psychology for a more interdependent one. Until today, the notion of

relationship is a keystone of feminist research (Palmieri, 1983).

The 'second wave of feminism'

The flowering of feminist research, particularly in North America, Western Europe, and the British Commonwealth countries began with the so-called 'Second Wave of Feminism' which followed by 40 years the 'First Wave,' the era of Suffragettes. Sparked by the publication of *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1972) and Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminist Mystique*, energized by the civil rights movement, and supported by the huge influx of women into higher education, feminist researchers found a groundswell of support for the development of their discipline. One facet of their work was aimed at criticizing the positivist empiricism of mainstream psychology. As Carolyn Sherif (1987: 38) said, 'The orthodox methods of studying and interpreting sex differences were capable of delivering only mischievous and misleading trivia.' Feminists argued against research that had advantaged men and supported stereotypic notions of women and femininity (Weisstein, 1971). Other criticisms of traditional experimental and statistical research emphasized the claim that scientists could conduct research without being in a relationship with those who were being studied, and that research could be value-neutral (McHugh, Koeske and Frieze, 1986; Gergen, 1988). The outcome of the resurgence of feminism as a political movement in the 1970s and beyond provided a strong beginning for the shift in methods that followed.

The turn towards qualitative methods in feminist research

By the 1970s the quantitative approach was hegemonic in much of psychology. Feminist researchers tended to adapt these methods to feminist issues in part to protect themselves from being rejected from powerful publication domains and academic jobs (Lykes and Stewart, 1986). Despite this career pressure,

some feminist psychologists, throughout the 1980s, took up qualitative methods; in the USA, they often published outside the mainstream, in their own books and in private periodicals, such as the Stone Center Papers at Wellesley College (cf. Gilligan, 1982; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986; Jack, 1991). Until today, the majority of feminist research psychologists in the USA have done quantitative work. For many, however, the corset of the quantitative distorts the body of inquiry, and much that is produced suffers from the constraints of the methods used. As a result, in recent years the expanding domain of practice has shifted radically toward qualitative research designs.

Many factors – social, political, and scientific – played a role in the transformation. Beginning in the 1980s, the ‘French invasion’ of postmodernism, which included the influence of French feminism, sparked interest in many new ideas, unsettled past philosophical assumptions, and enhanced the desirability of qualitative methods (Moi, 1987). More directly, in the 1980s British and Commonwealth psychologists demonstrated forms of research that escaped the confines of traditional methods and advanced feminist ideals and research practices (cf. Stanley and Wise, 1983; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984; Walkerdine, 1985; Wilkinson, 1986; Kitzinger, 1987; Squire, 1989). In addition the founding of *Feminism & Psychology* in 1991 provided a journal that strongly supported qualitative work. Over time, feminist critiques of the dominant perspective seemed to have infiltrated the more mainstream scientific domains. Researchers wanting to explore relational topics were looking to escape, and qualitative means provided the key.

Recent trends suggest that the acceptability of qualitative methods is rising within the establishment; for example, when the feminist flagship journal of the American Psychological Association (APA), *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, modified its editorial statement to encourage submissions of qualitative work, the APA published its first book on qualitative methods

(Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003), and in the UK, training in qualitative methods is now required by the Economic and Social Research Council, a major funding source for postgraduate training in psychology, ‘the times they are a-changin’ (Marecek, 2003). Also the increasing presence of electronic journals has widened publishing opportunities for non-traditional articles (e.g. Forum: Qualitative Social Research, or Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung, archived at www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-e/rubri-ken-e.htm). Whether these shifts result in an increased presence and prestige of qualitative methods research in psychology is yet to be determined. At least discussions of qualitative research need not have ‘some flavor of subversiveness and conspiracy,’ as Michael Bamberg (2003: ix) described his early experiences as a qualitative researcher in psychology.

It should also be mentioned that a great many research projects are highly complex, with an intermingling of qualitative and quantitative methods (cf. Fine et al., 2003; Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991). In a contemporary example involving a feminist topic, researchers studied differences between American and German mothers and grandmothers in terms of their ethnotheories of child rearing (Keller and Demuth, 2006). The study included interviews based on a picture card technique, as well as questionnaires. The analysis was done on a qualitative measure – a content analysis of conversations concerning parenting as generated by the photos, as well as on the quantitative measure, rankings of the photos in terms of representing good child care.

It might be asked what makes this study feminist research, as opposed to straightforward developmental research. The line between feminist and non-feminist research is indeed blurred. However, in their conclusions, the researchers comment on the generous maternal leave time and excellent day care in Europe, as well as the income mothers receive, as compared with the USA where they may not receive any special compensation for having a child, and have

more variability in daycare center quality. Brought to the fore, these contrasts serve to enhance awareness of structural factors influencing women's lives, their childrearing preferences, and their attitudes toward family membership and personal freedom.

TWO APPROACHES TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY

The feminist standpoint position(s)

Feminist qualitative researchers share the notion that there is no 'God's eye view' from which to observe and describe reality; there is no neutral point from which a scientist can describe nature. Instead, all descriptions of experience and reality are made from a particular standpoint position (Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1988; Naples, 2003). Although there are diverse subgroups among them, for many of these researchers, the concrete experiences of women – for example, as mothers, housewives, or gardeners – become the grounds for discovering the nature of knowledge and the real. As Dana Crowley Jack (1991: 25) wrote with reference to her longitudinal study of 12 depressed women, 'They are the ones best situated to provide a clear picture of the intersection of female personality with culture ... Let us view depressed women as informants from women's sphere ... trusting them to locate and describe the stresses that render them vulnerable to depression.'

A predominant feature of feminist research, especially from the standpoint position, has been an intense focus on girls' and women's bodies. Researchers have examined topics such as eating disorders, sexuality, violence, childbirth; menopause, and the objectification of the body by a patriarchal society (e.g. Tillmann-Healy, 1996; Tolman, 2002). Each of these topics expands out into a massive array of qualitative research projects, most often executed by using in-depth interviews with women who have been involved with a particular experience. For standpoint feminists the differences in embodiment between

women and men figure prominently in theorizing gender. This view is in contrast to much of the research from the quantitative empiricist approach, in which gender/sex differences tend to be minimized, in part, to support the value of equality between the sexes (Hyde and Linn, 1986).

A brief survey of three major standpoint positions, Grounded Theory, Socialist Feminist Theory, and Attachment Theory, follows.

Grounded theory

For many feminists interested in qualitative work, the method of choice is a 'grounded theory' approach to data analysis. Typically, the grounded theory approach involves an intense and extensive reading of interview transcripts, which allows for the central findings to emerge through an inductive process. Grounded theory stresses the importance of the actor's point of view, which guides the interpretations of findings (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003). A recent study using grounded theory asked why women, who had been diagnosed with mental and physical distress, several years later reported good physical and mental health (Bergman and Hallberg, 2005). The results of a deep and systematic analysis of the interviews indicated that the women's self-images had changed, they had more control over their lives, and as a result, they experienced relief from the physical and mental illnesses they had previously suffered.

Socialist feminist theory

The socialist feminist position has been particularly influential in Europe, where a structuralist view of society predominates in contrast to an individualist perspective characteristic of the USA. It is an important orientation that stresses the impact of social structure and economic conditions on women's lives. Thus, the study of women's experiences is interpreted from the standpoint of a particular social and economic structure. An early socialist feminist whose qualitative methods linked her political stance with research was Frigga Haug, who, with others, published *Female Sexualisation: A Collective*

Work of Memory (1987). Of special interest to feminist researchers was the work on emotion by Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault and Benton (1992) in which shared memories of childhood socialization become reinterpreted through a feminist lens. This research served as a form of liberation from the existing sexist societal norms.

In the past 15 years dramatic political shifts, especially the break-up of the Soviet Union, have created changes in this orientation, which owed much to Marxist theory. In addition, tensions between Marxists and feminists have often surfaced because women's work as homemakers and mothers did not count as labor within the theory (Fraser, 1989). As Heidi Hartmann (1981: 97) wrote, 'Many marxists typically argue that feminism is at best less important than class conflict and at worst divisive of the working class.' Today, critical feminists have tended to incorporate views of Michel Foucault into their feminist standpoint, especially on issues related to power and social control (Weedon, 1987; Hekman, 1990, 1999; Sawicki, 1991; Burman et al., 1996). An example of this type of research is Angel Juan Gordo Lopez's (1996) studies of the regulatory practices within gender identity clinics, and the ways in which the staff and patients exhibit the dynamics of resistance and regulation in the 'late capitalist market' (Lopez, 1996: 170). A Foucaultian approach is not without its feminist critics, however, as Foucault's position de-emphasizes the subject as agent in favor of attention to discursive fields. A fear within feminist circles is that the loss of the subject 'woman' reduces the potential of women to act politically (Ramazanoglu, 1989).

Attachment theory

A third important strand of feminist standpoint research is related to attachment theory, which focuses on gender differences related to early childhood experiences. In 1978 *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Chodorow, 1978) gave rise to a spate of standpoint research in the USA and elsewhere. One research group clustered around the feminist

psychoanalyst Jean Baker Miller (1976) at the Stone Center, now Wellesley Centers for Women. At the heart of their qualitative inquiry is the theory of the 'self-in-relation' (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver and Surrey, 1991). Often case studies are used to explicate issues of identity and the conflicts that arise between desires for connection and the societal requirements to be individuated. Through the stories of various clients, means for finding resolution through relational themes are examined.

A second powerful source of standpoint research, led by Carol Gilligan, is Harvard University's Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development. Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982), a classic in feminist qualitative research, involved interviews with women who made decisions as to whether or not to have abortions. These stories provided the groundwork for the development of her notion of contrasting justice with caring as orienting principles in making moral decisions. Other students and colleagues of Gilligan used qualitative research methods in institutional and community settings to study girls' and women's development. Two of the most well-known among these studies culminated in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al., 1986), a study of the different ways of learning that women use, as opposed to men, and *Meeting at the Crossroads*, a study of adolescent girls' development (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). Together Brown, Gilligan and their colleagues created the Listener's Guide, a method of psychological analysis focused on multiple listenings to interview transcripts in order to discover evidence of voice, resonance and relationship as entry points for textual analysis (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2003).

Resistance to the 'experience story' as truth from within the standpoint position

The notion that the experiences of individuals should be the basis for discovering woman's truth has been challenged from within the standpoint position as well as from without. Nancy Naples (2003), for example, has argued that the feminist standpoint position

is one that is acquired through communal discourse among women; it is not an individual's story. Marie Mies (1991: 66) has agreed, writing, 'Many women [researchers] remain mired in the describing of experiences ... The reason for this lies not in intellectual laziness ... but in a superficial, individualistic, and deterministic concept of experience.' Mies argues that experience 'denotes the sum of processes which individuals or groups have gone through in the production of their lives; it denotes their reality, their history' (Mies, 1991: 66). This notion of a communal story, which qualitative research should uncover, is shrouded in mystery, however. How does a researcher discover this story? How does an integration of individual and group stories take place?

The tensions registered above raise questions about the value of experiential reports and the possibility of creating joint stories. Whose stories are used and whose are disqualified? What methods are used to create the synthesis? These are difficult questions to answer and produce conflicting methodological choices within the standpoint position.

The minority group challenges to the standpoint position

After the development of the standpoint position in the 1980s came a powerful backlash from women of color, who were offended by various trends within the feminist research community (Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981; hooks, 1984). The major criticism was that the 'woman's standpoint' tended to represent white, middle-class, able bodied, academic women, who were controlling theory, research and publications, and thus the woman's standpoint position. This criticism fragmented the unity of the feminist movement, and it undermined the standpoint approach that had at its core an image of *womanness* as a coherent entity. Instead of being the oppressed, white women, especially middle class academics, became the oppressors. Thrown into question were the methods that had been used, the samples that had been selected, and the voices that had been heard (Cannon et al., 1991).

Patricia Hill Collins (1991), for one, was vocal in calling for a position that would clarify a standpoint of and for black women exclusively. For Collins, black women possessed a unique communal standpoint; the role of the black female intellectual was to clarify the standpoint for the black women. What was important was self-definition, self-valuation and black female-centered analysis. This argument suggested that the relationship of white women to minority women paralleled the patriarchal oppression of which feminists had complained, a view also promulgated by Barbara Smith (1983). In a more positive and recent vein, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997; Davis, 2003) with colleagues and students at Harvard University engaged in creating a qualitative method called 'portraiture' in which they creatively explored the lives of important women in black history. As a bridge between social science and art, portraiture is the integration of a series of images of a particular person or place created through multiple means, including archival work, field studies, interviews, conversations, and reflexive examination. Researchers, as artists, are concerned with creating a textual portrait. Here a standpoint position is developed by the research team as they combine together their various perspectives. Striving for unity, 'the research portraitist, like a Spiderwoman, is weaving elements into a vibrant multifaceted whole' (Davis, 2003: 215).

Oral narrative history, a method of collecting the stories told by women in minority groups, has been vividly presented in a volume edited by Kim Marie Vaz (1997). Each of the chapters describes how oral histories were created with African women as participants and researchers, the form of their interactions, the mode of analysis and the ethical issues of doing this research (Green-Powell, 1997; Obbo, 1997). In Georgia Brown's (1997) oral history project with the women of New Orleans, various goals were undertaken, which required special methods of inquiry. For example, to examine the culture's traditional images of black women in Louisiana, it

was necessary to study the historical context of these women's lives, including uncovering local discriminatory practices, employment options, and social norms. Within the interviews, participants were often shown old family photographs to elicit stories of the past. In Brown's chapter, suggested questions for an oral history are included as well as a transcript of an interview. Angela Gillem's (2001) research on the struggles of identity formation for biracial black/white people, suggests that there are multiple facets to voice, even within one person. Within other racial groups, similar issues of voice, identity, polyvocality and story have been studied as standpoint issues (Odeh, 1997; Kaw, 2003).

Other groups who have felt excluded from the dominant standpoint position have also laid claim to the value of their voices. Among the most vocal are disabled people, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gendered people, and the elderly. The dominant theme of these groups has been that oppression comes in many forms, not just as gender discrimination alone, but additionally as sexual, age, and disability discrimination (Kessler, 1998; Russell, 2000; Tannenbaum, Nasmith and Mayo, 2003). Oppression can be multiplied, and a research perspective that does not acknowledge diverse forms of discrimination is insufficiently inclusive (Fine et al., 2003; Palmary, 2006).

The postmodern/social constructionist position in feminist inquiry

For the social constructionist, or postmodern feminists who do qualitative research, a new world is opened, one that contains many fascinating and perhaps dangerous methodological and theoretical implications (Burr, 1995; K. Gergen, 2001; Gergen and Gergen, 2004). The first important step in defining this approach is to acknowledge that the nature of the reality being explored by researchers is socially constructed, that is, it is dependent upon the shared linguistic endeavors of relevant communities (Wetherell, 1986). This approach calls into

question the objective world, which is the basis of empiricist research, as well as the subjective world of the standpoint position. The 'real' world is not observed nor is it perceived, according to social constructionists. What is attended to as the 'real' is dependent upon the relational processes of groups in naming, defining and acting it. This is indeed a radical position that undermines the certainty of all research projects, including those from the social constructionist position. This approach also changes the nature of research. The most common reframing is to study the discourses and actions in which people engage and the relational processes in social groups rather than analyzing individual scores on scales measuring traits such as femininity, as empiricists might do, or inner feelings and 'experiences' as feminist standpoint researchers might do. Because of the loss of foundations that this position implies and the openness to various possibilities for doing research, the value orientations of the researchers play an important role in what is studied, what terms are used to describe the research, and the political consequences of a particular stance (Hepburn, 2000). These criteria strongly encourage the creation of innovative qualitative methods.

Defining gender and sex: A performative perspective

It is now commonplace in feminist literature in psychology, to see the phrase, 'Gender is socially constructed.' Within most texts this means that the sex roles people play in their daily lives are formed and regulated by social conventions. Thus what it means to be a girl is defined culturally, and she 'does' gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987). As philosopher Judith Butler (1990: 140) formulates it, one's 'gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*.'

This notion of gender role as an enactment tends to produce a distancing of the qualities of sex or gender from the self. Within this perspective it is more customary to find an emphasis on multiple selves, situated selves, and the temporary blurring of

self-other distinctions. This destabilization of the unit of the individual as the 'subject' of research challenges traditional research designs. Rather than having substance and stability, the self slips away, only to become realized in encounters. Often social constructionists acknowledge that the people they interview for a study have been co-created through the research process itself (Gergen and Davis, 2003). Because it is possible for a researcher to work within so many constructions of the world, all value positions, from liberal to conservative, are viable; regardless of orientation, feminist postmodern researchers promote feminist ideals within diverse contexts, e.g. within the therapy context (Hare-Mustin, 1994), health settings (Miles, 1993), and other politically charged venues (Russell, 2000).

Reflexivity as a facet of social constructionist qualitative research

An outgrowth of the social constructionist position is an emphasis on reflexivity within research endeavors, although other feminist researchers also emphasize this concern (Morawski, 1994; Naples, 2003). One facet of reflexivity involves researchers reflecting on their constructing capacities; there could be other ways of asking the questions, interpreting the findings, and presenting it to the reader (Gergen, 2001). In some cases, the researcher describes in detail her/his own involvement in the research, what the advantages and limitations of the research design might be, how the words are chosen, what the ethical judgments have been in creating the research and what the researcher hopes will become of the analysis (Sprague, 2005). Certain researchers consider reflexivity to be related to making explicit the power relations in the research process, for example by looking at the advantages the researcher may have vis-à-vis the researched.

Reflexivity is at the core of the qualitative method of autoethnography, in which the researcher uses her/his own stories within a particular situation as a means of bringing something to life. The researcher's body, in a

sense, becomes a seismograph registering the dynamics of a situation. Carolyn Ellis (1995), for example, wrote about sharing life with her husband, who was dying from emphysema. By writing about her thoughts, feelings and conversations with her husband in various situations, she clarifies for the reader her grieving process as she vacillates among various voices – sympathetic, self-pitying, angry, kind, loving, lonely, resigned – within the relational tumult of this phase of her marriage.

A sampling of methods within postmodern/social constructionist research

While there are many possibilities for doing postmodern/social constructionist research, most are variations of methods well-known in the qualitative research realm. In the following, several methods will be mentioned, with the aim of highlighting the feminist aspects of them.

Ethnography In ethnographic work, the researcher becomes embedded in the social and physical world of a community that is not her/his own (Ellis and Bochner, 1995; Miller, Hengst and Wang, 2003). Ethnography carries a reflexive aspect in that a researcher becomes intensely aware of her own position vis-à-vis the others with whom she engages in the project. It is also reflexive in that it is possible to engage with one's participants about the nature of one's research, the dilemmas and conflicts of interest that might be posed by the research activities and the ways that these issues become part of the research outcomes (Crossley, 2000). Michelle Fine and her colleagues and students at City University Graduate School in New York have been involved with 'critical' feminist ethnography for over two decades. Often they explored the lives of young people who are living on the margins of conventional society (Weis and Fine, 2000). Their goal has been to support and reveal the public and private spaces where these youth live and their forms of sub-culture. In their approach, the researcher becomes highly integrated into

a particular community, and the outcomes reveal this participation directly or indirectly. Much research goes beyond simple reporting of the researcher's constructions of events to an emphasis on changing the community's outcomes. Wendy Luttrell (2003: 147), writing about her research with pregnant teens, describes it as 'activist ethnography' 'which enables researchers and those who are the subjects of research to change how they see themselves and are seen by others.' In Luttrell's research, the girls created a collaborative book in which self-portraits were organized, along with their descriptions of the picture. Luttrell describes how she 'curated' the girls' art forms and stories, and the conversations they had about their transition from girlhood to motherhood. Luttrell's conclusions are drawn from her extensive interactions with these girls. Eugenia Kaw (2003) drew on data from structured interviews with physicians and patients, as well as medical literature, newspaper articles and medical statistics, to study decisions by Asian-American women to undergo cosmetic surgery for the double-eyelid operation or nose bridges. Kaw takes the position that this surgery is encouraged by gender and racial stereotypes in a culture that privileges female Caucasian facial forms.

Ethnomethodology Sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1967) is regarded as the founder of a qualitative investigatory method called ethnomethodology, the study of how people make sense of their social worlds. For Garfinkel order is not given in the world, but must be arranged on the basis of social impressions and experiences, a process he called 'the documentary method.' The researcher often manipulates meaning-making processes in the world in order to observe how the social fabric is disrupted. The first published feminist psychology in the ethnomethodological tradition was Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna's (1978) *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. Kessler and McKenna claimed that through external signals, such as clothing and gesture, assumptions of internal

or hidden characteristics related to gender are made. Similar to Butler's views, gender is produced through practices and props. Elizabeth Stokoe's (2003) research on neighbor relationships, in which conversations among disputing neighbors were analyzed for gender relevant assessments of trouble is also a strand of ethnomethodology, which tracks the emergence of cultural and moral knowledge of social life.

Action research For feminist psychologists, action research has played an important role in storying women's plight in various settings, and in helping to activate new social forms that improve their lives. For example, Niva Piran (2001) studied the students at a highly selective dance school using open forum meetings with the girls over a long period of time. Piran was concerned with the ways the culture of the school had evolved such that these young dancers experienced and perceived their own bodies and those of others in harshly critical ways. Through her encounters with them Piran was able to help the girls visualize and change their feelings about their own bodies, so that they could transform certain unhealthy practices of teachers and other students. Other feminist researchers who have been influential in participatory action research (PAR) include Lois Weis and Michelle Fine and their colleagues who have studied and attempted to help women prisoners (Fine et al., 2003). Joan Williams and M. Brinton Lykes (2003), working with Guatemalan women, have integrated photographic work into their research in efforts at healing following 36 years of civil warfare. Calling their project PhotoVoice, they gave each woman a camera with which to take pictures of their villages and their lives; in their report the researchers discuss their successes, as well as the difficulties, in creating positive social change with these women in the face of patriarchal challenges, especially from the women's family members and husbands. Finally, Geraldine Moane (2006) created a ten-week course entitled Liberation Psychology for Women as part of a certificate

in women's studies offered at University College, Dublin. The aim of the research was to transform internalized oppression among Irish women into an externalized energy for political action.

Discourse analysis Feminist psychologists have been very active in endorsing discursive methods in their research (Gavey, 1989, 2005; Hollway, 1989; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Morgan and Coombes, 1991). At the heart of these research activities for feminists is the creation of a focus of attention on the gendered nature of socially constructed realities. Margaret Wetherell (1986) argues that femininity and masculinity are ideological practices despite appearing to be essential outcomes of biological differences. For Wetherell, discursive approaches to the study of gender focus attention on the linguistic repertoire in the culture and its ideological implications, rather than on the unique individual. The voice of the researcher becomes more clearly identified because the interpretive act of creating meaning from the data is observable within the text. Thus, 'discourse analysis ... must be unavoidably political and thus ... engaged with feminism' (Wetherell, 1986: 93). Nicole Gavey's *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (2005) demonstrates how everyday discourse about heterosexual relations supports the double standard and unequal power relations between men and women that limits women's choices and creates a cultural 'scaffolding' that permits rape. In '“I'm 15 and desperate for sex”: “Doing” and “undoing” desire in letters to a teenage magazine' Sue Jackson (2005) reports on her analysis of letters to advice columns from girls. She describes how the sexual subjectivities of the girls are constituted in the letters and the identification of cultural resources drawn on within them. Promoting a feminist theme, Jackson is critical of the editorial stance of the magazine that both encourages the expression of sexual desire and then acts to suppress it. In a study that highlights feminist issues regarding identity among Asian women living in East London, Woollett, Marshall, Nicolson

and Dosanjh (1994) included excerpts from interviews with these women, which serve to undermine mainstream cultural psychology's position that ethnic identity is stable; rather the research illustrates that the dualism between being an 'Asian woman' and being 'westernized' should be problematized. Contrary to most methodological streams in psychology, which require a unity of self, this research supports the view that identity may be multiple, malleable and situated.

Narrative research Another prominent form of feminist research involves explorations of narratives. From the culture's repository of narrative forms, people learn to find their place in their social groups. As people identify with stories, so do they take on meaning in their lives (Lather and Smithies, 1997). This is especially relevant to minority and marginalized groups, who tend to be located in stories, without much involvement in the creation of that story. This becomes a feminist issue because women are often auxiliary figures within the quest narrative, the monomyth, which is largely a male-dominated story. My work on popular autobiographies looked at the differences in story forms that apply to women and men. Men's stories follow the heroic monomyth, and women's weave various story forms of love and achievement together in a more chaotic manner. Research on narratives of the body also illustrated the differences in import that the physical aspects of identity have for women's accounts compared to men's (Gergen, 2001). Other narrative researchers have also promoted feminist values within the narrative field include Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich, who have dedicated themselves to producing narrative works, often with an emphasis on women's lives (cf. Josselson and Lieblich, 1993).

Q-methodology A brief mention will be made of Q-methodology, despite some controversy as to whether or not it is a qualitative method (cf. Stainton-Rogers, 1995). This method is associated with a classic study in feminist psychology, *The Social Construction*

of *Lesbianism* by Celia Kitzinger (1987), which explored how lesbians themselves construct their identities. In her book Kitzinger (1987: 93) openly presented her feminist values, 'I have strong beliefs about which of the identities presented here is the "best".' Kitzinger launched a strong attack of liberal humanistic views of lesbianism, and used her research platform to create a radical position on the politics of lesbianism, which struck at the heart of the heterosexual hegemony supporting the liberal perspective. Today, Kitzinger has abandoned Q-methodology and has shifted to conversational analysis of 'talk,' drawn from naturalistic settings as her mode of doing research. She is 'committed to the development of conversation analytic understandings of how people's behavior in interaction reflects, constructs, and (sometimes) resists or challenges a heterosexual culture' (Kitzinger, 2004: 530).

Archival and institutional research Not all feminist qualitative research is done with the active participation of others. Research can also be rendered with data from historical records, literature, and other cultural artifacts and institutions, as well as governmental agencies (Gergen, 1992; Izraeli, 1993; DeVault, 1999). Aida Hurtado (2000) for example, in *La Cultura Cura: Cultural Spaces for generating Chicana Feminist Consciousness*, studied the operation of a theatre company and its use of Chicana actresses. Originally organized to promote the integrity and cultural values of the Chicano culture, the role of women had become limited to virgins, whores or the feminine macho, often portraying an abstract character, such as Death or the Devil. The analysis by Hurtado emphasized how the women involved in the theatre resisted these classifications and eventually broke the control of the sexist directors.

PRESENTATIONAL FORMS OF FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The goal of honoring the voices of participants within feminist psychology has

encouraged innovations in the presentation of qualitative research. Research need not be limited by specific formats, except for those enforced by outside gatekeepers. The linguistic possibilities for presenting research are great, and there is no ultimate reason why some forms should take precedent over others. This potential for openness has led to a great deal of creativity among feminist researchers (Paget, 1990; Squire, 1991; Gergen, 2001; Luttrell, 2003). A few examples illustrate the diversity of possibilities that have been produced.

In an exploration of sexual abuse, Karen Fox (1996) created a fictional conversation among a sex abuser in prison for molesting his granddaughter, his daughter, who was also one of his victims, and herself, the interviewer. The conversation is divided into three columns, with quotations from interviews serving as the dialogue. Across the page, the three perspectives are contrasted and compared, with each person expressing a diversity of moods and understandings. The form allows for more insight into the complexities of emotional bonds between abusers and the abused than a more didactic form could yield.

Lesia Lockford (2004) has written about her experiences as a first-time 'dancer' in a 'gentleman's club' in New Orleans. For Lockford, performance is a form of doing feminist research, as well as presenting it. She has incorporated striptease performance into her research presentations at conferences and in the classroom. Her investigation involves the multiple meanings of objectification of the female body. The feminist edge of these performances take many shapes – as a critique of existing social norms emphasizing the importance of stereotypical standards of beauty, as an artistic mode of expanding the realm of the possible in human physiognomy, or as a form of abjection.

Drama is also a means of conveying feminist qualitative work. Ross Gray and Christina Sinding (2002) used transcripts from interviews with women with breast cancer and oncologists to create a dramatic

script, which they presented in many venues in Canada; they also wrote a book relating their experiences of creating this drama, which included commentary by the actresses, women with metastasized breast cancer. Here the discovery phase, interpretation, and the presentation of research were encapsulated in dramatic form, with audience involvement as part of the performance.

Using another modality for presenting her research, Glenda Russell (2000) incorporated interview material into music. From research gathered in reaction to Colorado's vote to limit the civil rights of homosexuals, Russell produced a professional oratorio, called *Fire*, which was performed by a choir in several concerts. Several performance pieces have been created to explore feminist issues including becoming an aging woman (Gergen, 2001), and developing a social therapy (Holzman and Newman, 1979).

ISSUES OF ETHICS IN FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Ethical considerations are at the core of feminist research (Marecek, 2003). There are many reasons for this. In contrast to most quantitative research, relationships between researcher and researched are usually of longer duration, are more intimate and friendly, often involve collaboration, affect families and sometimes whole communities, include a high degree of self-disclosure about intimate topics, and seem to promise more relational contact after the research project is ended than may actually be the case. There are also issues of confidentiality that become difficult to handle if, for example, participants are promised anonymity, and yet the nature of their communal involvement makes it difficult to disguise who they are. Because of all of these characteristics of research, feminist psychologists often find themselves deliberating about the 'right' thing to do when faced with multiple and conflicting demands.

THE FUTURE FOR QUALITATIVE FEMINIST RESEARCH

The future seems promising for feminist qualitative research. 'The growing interest in qualitative methods has been likened to a paradigm shift in the spirit of Kuhn's (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*' (Ponterotto, 2005: 97). Rooted in postpositivist paradigms, research opportunities are growing, both in quantity and in form. In a period when research funds are restricted in the social sciences, qualitative research is often less expensive to produce; this promotes interest among researchers, who have fewer resources to spend. The call for a greater awareness of cultural diversity and issues related to globalization has also enhanced the prominence of qualitative work. Working with international partners, connecting via the internet and only rarely meeting face-to-face, expands the scope of exploration, limits quantitative options, and encourages creative collaborations around qualitative research. Most of all, qualitative research offers wonderful opportunities for exploring interesting topics in creative ways.

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Visual Approaches: Using and Interpreting Images

Paula Reavey and Katherine Johnson

INTRODUCTION

The visual has always had a place in psychology and has been used in a range of theoretical approaches as diverse as social cognition, psychodynamics and neuropsychology. Visual images have also been used as a trigger to elicit certain responses, for example, in the use of photographs to understand physical attraction or the use of inkblot images in the Rorschach test. Furthermore, in line with rapidly developing technology, visual images of the brain have represented attempt to pinpoint mental and physical processing in the field of neuropsychology. In these traditions the visual is of interest because of its relationship to the inner mental state that it signifies, be that an attitude, emotion or form of psychosis, rather than because of what the image itself depicts. Elsewhere, in social representation theory and art therapy, for instance, the visual has a greater role in claiming to make sense of meaning. For example, in social representations theory, visual images are seen as key to

the procedure for communicating new forms of meaning via the process of objectification (e.g. Moscovici, 1984) because, as Moscovici (1994: 164) suggests, 'linguistic forms are not enough to explain how the communicated message is received and then understood'. In a similar sense, in art therapy, the use of painting and drawing can sometimes allow 'vulnerable' people to tell stories about their experiences which they may not otherwise be able to put into words, allowing therapists access to new forms of understanding and interpretation (e.g. Linesch, 1994). Thus, psychological research has evidently made use of visual images and interpreted them in a variety of ways, yet visual methodologies have been predominantly overlooked by qualitative researchers (Frith, Riley, Archer and Gleeson, 2005). A number of reasons have been put forward to explain this.

Qualitative psychology has been heavily influenced by poststructuralist and post modern debates, particularly the genealogical method of Michel Foucault. Foucault (1969: 49) defines discourse as the 'practices

that systematically form the objects of which we speak' and Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network (1999) suggests this entails an attention to 'wherever there is meaning'. Thus qualitative data might well include cities, gardens, non-verbal behaviour, films, photographs and paintings, other sensory modalities including taste and smell, *as well* as the written and spoken word. Yet, since the 'discursive turn' in the 1970s, qualitative psychology has been dominated by spoken-word data and a variety of interpretive techniques used to analyse it. Most of the published qualitative research in psychology uses data based on naturalistic conversation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, diaries, case studies, focus groups and computer-based text analysis. What these methods share in common is a focus on speech or written text, or what some linguists are now referring to as 'mono-modal' forms of discourse (Iedema, 2003; Jones, 2005). A key reason cited for the dominance of mono-modal discourses in qualitative psychology is that visual data can be more 'ambiguous' or polysemic than sequential texts (Penn, 2000; Frith et al., 2005). In particular this raises questions regarding the validity of the researcher's interpretation of visual material, as the interpretation of it cannot always be exactly matched to the participant's verbal account (Lynn and Lea, 2005a). Qualitative psychology has always fought to be recognized as a credible approach to research within the methodological fetishism of the positivistic mainstream and this might explain an initial reluctance to embrace visual methodologies. Using visual data does require its own specific attention to issues of validity, interpretation, ethics and the relationship between the research and the researched, but it also permits a greater engagement with 'multi-modal' forms of communication in order to enrich understandings of social and psychological phenomena.

In the following sections we explore these points in detail, offering some practical and procedural guidelines for conducting visual research and discussing some of the challenges involved in interpretation, presentation, and salient ethical considerations. In the

final section we present examples of how visual images have been used and interpreted in two distinct research topics. The visual images in these examples are restricted to painting and photography and are used to demonstrate the benefits and limitations of visual methodologies.

SPEECH AND WRITTEN TEXT: THE LIMITATIONS OF MONO-MODAL DISCOURSE

Unlike more mainstream (positivist) psychology's pursuit of generalizable laws, linking cause and effect and relationships between variables, qualitative researchers have tended to focus on people's meaning making activities. As Willig (2001: 9) notes, qualitative researchers 'are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events. They aim to understand what "it is like" to experience particular conditions ... the quality and texture of experience, rather than the identification of cause-effect relationships'. Rather than defining research questions according to the researcher's pre-formed agenda, the participant occupies centre stage when it comes to the generation of meaning (though the researcher's role in this process should be fully acknowledged, in conjunction with this). However, what is understood as meaning-making is often assumed to be what we can 'hear' or 'read' (Silverman, 2001). Inviting participants to 'speak in their own voice' is common to this methodology as a way of gaining access to their thoughts, experiences or modes of accounting. We would argue that there are several reasons for this 'mono-modal' practice, including the conviction that words carry greater clarity and objectivity (Lynn and Lea, 2005a) because of their immediate recognition by other language users (shared communities of meaning), making interpretation more systematic and transparent. Another reason is the cultural prominence and value given to language in personal story telling and personalized narratives in how people represent subjectivity and

experience (Plummer, 1995). There is both a cultural and professional onus on participants to capture their experience using words and for the psychologist to represent this experience in professional language, embedded as it is in its own orthodoxies (Billig, 2000).

However, it is not only methodological issues that define the centrality of the spoken and written (talk and text) word in qualitative psychology, as words can be interpreted in many different ways depending on the theoretical discipline drawn upon and its epistemological assumptions. The 'turn to language' in social psychology, for example, in the 1970s challenged mainstream psychology's treatment of language as reflective of inner mental states by emphasizing the performative quality of language in the context of social relations. In other words, rather than viewing language as merely subsidiary to cognition, language is argued to be *productive* of cognition, emotion and experience more generally (Gergen, 1973; Edwards, 1997). This 'discursive turn', represented via discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter, 1992), social constructionism and some but not all versions of critical psychology more generally (Fox and Prilleltensky, 1999), views the central business of psychology as embedded in the language people use and the acts they perform in constructing reality. It is unsurprising, then, that language has become the dominant interpretive resource within approaches such as these, as it is positioned at the centre of human meaning-making activities and modes of interaction.

Despite this proliferation of ways of interpreting what people 'say', speech is not the only way in which people engage with and experience their world. Semiotics, the study of signs that circulate through visual images such as drawings, photographs and paintings, as well as in spoken and written language itself, is concerned with the relationship between signifiers and the signified. Structuralist writers, such as Barthes (1973, 1995), studied a range of cultural values by interrogating visual (and linguistic) signs (e.g. a bottle of wine) and suggested that

cultural ideas, such as the bourgeois construction of the relationship between wine, health, and relaxation, were communicated via the relationship between these signifiers (the particular image of the bottle) and the signified (the wine itself). For Barthes, in his earlier work at least, signs draw concepts and images together and these can serve to produce and reproduce 'myths' in society. Furthermore, signs only derive their meaning from their relationship to and difference from other signs. Accordingly, their meanings are never fixed and they can only be understood in the context of their use. Thus, in Barthes' analysis of wine, he demonstrated how the bourgeois appropriation of wine drinking altered the connotations surrounding this activity.

Linguistics, and more broadly cultural studies, have built substantially on this semiotic tradition. However, the relationship between the study of signs and people's subjective experiences has not been fully explored. In particular, Beloff (1997) points out that psychology's limited exploration of the visual closes off a whole range of questions and topics that would improve our understanding of everyday social life. This oversight would seem even more important as rapid advances in technology change the modes of communications we use to interact with one another. These have become increasingly influenced by visual technologies that can create and distribute visual images in rapidly decreasing timeframes – be this videophones, MSM photo-messaging, or the posting of video blogs, widely known as 'vlogs' on the internet.

EXPERIENCE, SOCIAL INTERACTION AND MULTI-MODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The use of the visual image in social research has become increasingly popular in disciplines such as human geography, social anthropology and sociology where the 'aesthetic' is acknowledged for the fundamental part it plays in speaking to 'who we are' – our identities and the

spaces we inhabit (Emmison and Smith, 2000; Banks, 2001; Pink, 2001). This is because some researchers have begun to discuss how 'multi-modal' (visual and textual) forms of communication are better able to provide access to space (visual), as well as time (words). This relates both to the use of the visual in 'real-time space' by examining how people use the visual in 'live' social interactions; or in the context of 'finished and finite' images that can be used as an anchor for present discussions (Iedema, 2003: 30). There is also a much greater acknowledgement by some that we are now living in a world where visual media play a key role in social and psychological activities, from knowledge consumption, experiences of health and illness (Radley and Taylor, 2003a,b; Frith and Harcourt, 2005; Mitchell, Delange, Molestane, Stuart and Buthelezi, 2005), women's experiences of war and the social psychology of drag performances, using film documentary (Haaken and Kohn, forthcoming), embodiment (Burr, 2000; Nightingale and Cromby, 2000; Gillies, Harden, Johnson, Reavey, Strange and Willig, 2005) sexual activity (Jones, 2005), memory (Radley and Taylor, 2003b; Middleton and Brown, 2005) and identity (Gleeson and Frith, 2006). Such projects form part of a wider aim to further understandings of experience and subjectivity through shifting modes of social interaction and to acknowledge that individuals do not only speak, but *experience and view* their world in material space (Brown, 2001).

Critics of purely discursive approaches have highlighted the importance of 'visual languages' in stitching together the socio-cultural fabric of social-psychological experiences and embodied ways of being (Banks, 2001). An example of this is the significance of aesthetic dress in the creation and maintenance of gendered bodies and identities (Adkins, 2002). Although a person is potentially able to talk *about* bodily experiences and subsequently conjure a 'representation', it has been pointed out that identification with an image, or presenting oneself through one's 'image', can be a more powerful way

of capturing emotions which may be more removed from verbal articulation. This is not to say that 'emotions' or 'embodiment' are in any way separate from socially constructed language systems or discourse, but the way in which we *live* feelings and experiences are not always available to verbal description. Furthermore, some writers have pointed out that new communication technologies such as the web, where people can communicate using photos, as well as web cams, increasingly lead to a shift in modes of social interaction and power relations (Jones, 2005). The visual, in this context, has changed the ways in which people not only interact, but also alters the whole dynamic and sequence of social actions, including how individuals exercise control over the presentation of themselves (Iedema, 2003). For example, the presentation of the body for visual display, via a still photo image on an on-line dating website, foregrounds or backgrounds different conversational actions such as 'who shows first'. It also demonstrates variation in power relationships through the practice of immediate rejection or acceptance of a potential date via the exchange of images (Jones, 2005). In studying 'multimodality', which requires shifting back and forth between visual, written or spoken text, qualitative researchers are able to examine more closely how interactants manage their relationships and identities in the context of visual spaces, as well as through speech and/or text production. In the next section we outline a range of practical and procedure tips for researchers looking to include visual data and interpretations within qualitative psychological research.

USING VISUAL MATERIAL IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: TEXT, CONTEXT AND INTERPRETATION

Using visual material can open up a range of new and exciting possibilities for qualitative researchers in psychology. There are a number of visual images that count as qualitative data. Forms of visual data used

include photography (e.g. Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen, 2005), documentary film-making (see Haaken and Kohn, 2006), paintings (Gillies et al., 2005), graffiti (e.g. Lynn and Lea, 2005b), and computer mediated interactions (e.g. Jones, 2005). Temple and McVittie (2005) outline three forms of visual materials qualitative psychologists have used: pre-existing visual materials, time-limited visual data and enduring visual products. They define pre-existing materials as images that exist independently of the research in the form of pieces of art or published photographs. In contrast, time-limited data and enduring visual products are produced within the research process but differ from each other in terms of their relationship to the research once the project has finished. Time-limited data, such as a collection of observations of individual actions, cease to exist as visual data as the focus shifts on to the interpretation of the observations. Visual data such as video diaries, and newly generated paintings and photographs are examples of enduring visual products as they come into being solely because of the research process, and have a continued existence after the project. Thus, the distinction between the three forms of data lies in the relationship the image has to the research process and the context in which it has been produced, but it also has implications for the process of interpretation. For instance, Temple and McVittie suggest the researcher needs to decide if the visual material is being used as a trigger for stimulating verbal discussions; as its own creative medium through which participants can generate their own meanings and experiences of a topic or event; or the visual is already part of the topic under study with the research focus on participants' use of the visual in communication.

The status of the visual data, in any of these forms, has implications for understanding, interpretation and social action in psychological research. For example, Frith et al. (2005) encapsulate three distinct ways that visual research can enhance psychological inquiry. Firstly, researchers may find that using visual methodologies allows them to

access information that is hard to reach through other forms, such as interviews. An illustration of this can be found in Malson, Marshall and Woollett's research (2002) into how adolescent girls negotiate practices of dress through the use of photo-diaries. This permitted the researchers to gain invaluable insight into teenage notions of femininity and how their participants mediated their experience of living across and between diverse cultural expectations of womanhood and appearance. Secondly, Frith et al. (2005: 189) suggest visual methods can 'change the voice of the research'. This points to the potential for personal and social transformation that can be produced by using the principles of participatory-action research and communication styles that incorporate the visual. This is demonstrated in critical health psychology research that promoted the use of a 'photo-voice' method where participants used photography to reflect their health care needs (e.g. Wang, Burris and Ping, 1996). Finally, Frith et al. (2005) suggest the presentation of research findings in both a visual and verbal form can permit a wider engagement with the experience and understanding of a particular topic. Although this is a less familiar process in qualitative psychological research we do find the occasional case that fits this model. For example, a queer theatre group presented an 'ethnodrama' account of the psychomedical construction of transsexualism and the experience of being transsexual. Here, transsexual and transgendered experience is reflected in dramatic form and acted out for a variety of audiences. This can include health care professionals, in order to inform them about their clients' perspectives, college students to address areas of discrimination and a wider, general audience that attend theatre events (e.g. Hateley, 2004).

REFLEXIVITY, INTERPRETATION AND PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

In contrast to some forms of discursive psychology (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987) for the visual researcher 'an exposition of text

and context is integral to understanding the social phenomenon of interest' (Lynn and Lea, 2005a: 219; italics in original). This requires particular attention to the interpretation of the context in which the image is produced, as well as the image itself; the boundaries between what is created, presented and (re)presented; and the influence of the researchers and audience in the process. Thus, Lynn and Lea (2005a) suggest that reflexivity needs to be at the forefront of the entire research process. This is something that should ideally happen in all qualitative research, but as qualitative research methods become more credible, rather than being used as an analytic tool, reflexivity is often presented as an afterthought. In order to demonstrate competing interpretations, Lynn and Lea propose that researchers draw on the work of Banks (2001). Banks distinguishes between an 'internal' content-driven narrative, where the image may be interpreted in multiple ways and not necessarily in the way it was intended, and an 'external' context-driven narrative which needs to reflect upon the context in which the image is situated and not situated. This process of reflexivity was important for their research on the impact of graffiti (Lynn and Lea, 2005b) as it is for other forms of visual research, and the practices it entails are seen as key to developing a rigorous approach to interpretation that can improve all forms of qualitative analysis.

In a similar fashion researchers need to reflect on pre-existing narratives for representing images. For example, in video diary research 'piece to camera' shots are used to create a sense of intimacy, or air of urgency for the phenomena they are discussing and this often precludes background context. These are strategies found in cinematography and news reporting and are replicated in visual data produced as part of a wider process of research. For example, Tony Dowmunt (2005) retraces his grandfather's journey as a colonial army officer in Africa. Using his grandfather's original diary he embarked on the same journey but this time he uses a video camera to record and document the journey. In one instance,

awaking during the night after a bad dream he recorded his memory of the dream. Of interest in this scene is less the fear he expresses, but the way the image has been posed to heighten the viewer's sense of it. His clammy, white face shines out of a glowing, green screen as he narrates the event. If we reflect on the way he as author, as well as participant, has constructed the image, the camera angle films him so that his face is close to the screen and lit from below in the green glow of a night-view light. Familiarity with how visual images can be stylized to project meaning adds another layer of analysis and interpretation for the qualitative researcher. If you use visual documentation yourself, or present participants with visual recording material, it does not, in the realist sense, open up a means to authentically capture the way in which people experience themselves, rather it provides another way of narrating the experience in line with existing visual practices found in, for example, documentary film-making. More than that, it also leads to new ways of experiencing the experience. In this example, if Dowmunt had not been filming his research project he might have woken from the dream and turned the light on in the room. Alternatively he might have fallen back to sleep quickly and have no clear memory of the dream. Thus, reflexivity is crucial for the visual researcher in documenting the layers of interpretation that acknowledge both the content and context in which an image is produced and explained (see also Haaken and Kohn, forthcoming).

Other researchers face additional questions in the process of interpretation when visual data have been generated by participants who are involved in the meaning making stages. Some researchers in sociology and psychology have developed ways of working with participants that use forms of media to communicate feelings and experiences. These include work with children and adolescents (Bolton, Pole and Mizen, 2001), individuals with low literacy, individuals with learning difficulties, and situations where dialogue between groups appears to have broken down. In this context visual methods are

seen as less obtrusive because they hand over agency to the participants, rather than requiring them to answer researcher-defined questions. If participants do not, or cannot speak about their experiences freely, it is potentially counterproductive, and possibly detrimental to the participants to enforce speaking. Therefore visual methods can be especially useful with groups who have traditionally been less visible or 'heard' in the social world (for example children).

Participant generated photography and subsequent discussions between the participants and the researchers of the meaning of the photographs they have taken one way in which researchers have engaged with an action research agenda. Mitchell et al. (2005), collaborating with educators and health professionals working with young people with HIV and AIDS in South Africa, argued that the use of 'photo-voice' permitted groups to 'see for themselves' key issues related to understandings of sexual health and illness. This occurred through the process of participants visualizing (taking photos of) the spaces which young people affected by HIV and AIDS occupied. What was of interest to the writers of this study was the way in which the images themselves 'spoke to' the difficult relationship that sometimes existed between these groups of adults and the young people they were aiming to help 'educate' about sexual protection. Pictures of empty classrooms, empty beds and school buses being used for transport to daily funerals all evoked discussion of the despair and alienation that professionals felt towards these young people and the tendency for adults (including the professionals themselves) to demonize young people's activity. What was missing from the images spoke to some of the ways in which the participants viewed their roles as well as their reluctance at times to listen. The photos proved to be a very useful means of engaging the workers with issues they did not initially consider problematic, even though many verbal discussions on the topic had taken place. Thus, researchers using visual material need to expect to find areas of interpretation that may

be problematic or challenging for themselves and their participants.

Despite such challenges, positive interventions can be made by allowing participants to be involved in the production and interpretation of their own visual material which and in turn can democratize the research space (Mitchell et al., 2005). Conducting research where participants are given a greater degree of control over the research process also fits more readily with some of the aims of critical psychology and its grounding in a model of social justice and transformative research, encouraging a dismantling of power relationships between researcher and participant and a greater fairness and agency to the people 'studied' (Rappaport and Stewart; 1997). This however raises particular ethical considerations, which are discussed in the next section.

PRESENTING THE VISUAL: ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The growth of qualitative research in psychology has required a greater focus on the ethical procedures of gaining informed consent and providing anonymity to research participants (Chapter 15). These issues relate to the research process and presentation of the research findings. Firstly, those who provide in-depth, personal accounts might be negatively affected by the research process and need to be aware of this and their right to withdraw, and secondly, the presentation of qualitative data increases the likelihood that participants could be unwittingly identified if there is insufficient attention to changing or omitting any distinguishing details. But, while ethical considerations are part of any research approach, they raise particular questions for psychologists using visual approaches. Here, informed consent and anonymity have to be negotiated in relation to key elements of visual research: presentation of the findings that might be in pictorial form and ownership of the image. Both of these vary in level of concern depending upon the context in which the data are produced. Thus, the status of the

image (whether it is pre-existing, time limited or enduring) also raises a variety of ethical and presentational concerns (Temple and McVittie, 2005). However, there are no clear guidelines within the latest version of the British Psychological Society code of conduct (1993: 4(5)) for researchers working with visual images, apart from noting that psychologists should have written permission before making 'audio, video or photographic recordings'. Some potential flash-points are laid out in this section and suggestions for good practice are made in light of outstanding ethical dilemmas.

Who's/what's in the picture?

The content of the image requires the researcher to reflect ethically on what should be presented within the dissemination process. If the image is a form of pre-existing data the researcher needs to consider whether re-presenting that image has any negative impact. For example, it was necessary that Lynn and Lea (2005a: 222) gave careful consideration to the 'ethical and moral implications of giving "voice" to "racist" graffiti writers' whilst they were presenting an analysis of racist graffiti. When participants are involved in generating the data the researcher also needs to attend to issues of informed consent and anonymity in line with the medium that is used. For example, if the work takes the form of a painting (e.g. Gillies et al., 2005) and it has been produced by the researchers-as-participants it presents fewer concerns in terms of informed consent or anonymity compared with data that videos or photographs participants. In the painting case, readers might try to guess which researcher produced which painting but the main route to identifying the researcher is through lack of confidentiality amongst other group members. This contrasts dramatically with a research project that encourages participants use of photography to document their everyday experiences. In this situation the researcher has a responsibility to both the participant and other people who may unwittingly become part of the research project

when they are captured in the picture without necessarily providing informed consent. Here researchers need to think very carefully about how these images will be used and in what contexts they will be re-presented. This was a crucial issue for Mitchell et al. (2005) in their 'photo-voice' community research project. As a partial form of address they established from the beginning of the project that participants should mark with an X any photograph they did not want displayed, while the full collection of negatives and photographs created during the project is archived at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Anonymity is also an issue in research working with 'vulnerable' groups. We have already seen how visual methods can be useful in research with, for example, children. However the researcher has a responsibility to protect the identity of that child by not publishing images that might lead to identification (Sparrman, 2005). Thus, in the context of data produced during the research with participants, the researcher needs to negotiate with the participants what can be shown whilst also protecting the identities of those who may not have been able to provide informed consent. However, there are also dilemmas about the status of the data after the project has ended in terms of who has ownership of the images.

Who owns the picture?

Visual research that uses pre-existing images, such as billboard campaigns, tends to offer fewer ethical dilemmas to the researcher. The researcher needs to seek copyright guidance if they are reproducing a sourced image and gain the permission of the author if they are known. Yet, because the image is owned or exists independently from the research process there is no debate about responsibility for and ownership of the image after the research has ended. In an exploration of the legacy of enduring images from visual research, Temple and McVittie (2005: 237) suggest 'practical issues become closely intertwined with ethical concerns. Questions of storage of visual products, right

of disposal, timing of disposal and retention of large items become all the more pertinent in relation to items of uncertain ownership'. Thus the researcher needs to give careful consideration to these issues. Who 'owns' the image? In what contexts do participants agree for it to be used? Is there a time frame for this? For example, Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) used visual methodologies to research differences between working class and middle class girls' accounts of growing up. Here, video diaries were used as 'auto-ethnographies' to understand the inter-relationship between notions of gender and class. The video data provided a rich source of the variety of accounts constructed by young women, but shown on Channel 4 in the UK in the form of the film 'Girls, Girls, Girls' these video diaries reached a much wider audience than one for academic purposes. Whilst widespread dissemination should be applauded these video diaries have a 'different life' from other forms of research data, as once television directors and producers were involved, it created a different format from one that sought to give the participants agency (Dowmunt, 2001). As an enduring product (Temple and McVittie, 2005) the film clearly identifies a range of young women at a particular stage in their life, and like those who agreed to take part in the original sociological drama *7 Up*¹ (ITV), and the subsequent follow ups, it is possible the participants might later feel restricted and even embarrassed by earlier representations of themselves. Thus, when visual methods are used, researchers need to reflect carefully on the life of the visual data and whether it should continue to be used in the public domain long after the end of the project. Equally, Temple and McVittie (2005) point out that disposal of the data can raise feelings of loss for the researcher and participants, yet this might be the agreed outcome if there are outstanding issues over ownership and access to the data after the project. Finally, a co-ownership agreement at the beginning of the research might seem one way of dealing with some of these questions. However other practical issues impact

when the method is seen to be particularly useful for generating meaning with more 'vulnerable' research populations, such as children.

PRESENTING THE VISUAL RESEARCH

There are several practical concerns that presenting the data entails. As we have noted it can be of ethical concern to present an image that clearly identifies research participants and bystanders if informed consent for the presentation of that data has not been granted. A number of practices can be used to overcome this. Firstly, the researcher might choose not to present any of the visual data, but instead describe the content of the image. Whilst this avoids issues of identification, the scaling down of meaning from a polysemic image to a mono-modal account sells short the reader in terms of the richness of the data and level of interpretation. Secondly, the researcher can use a range of digital media techniques to disguise the participants. Sparrman (2005) demonstrates several of these, including blurring the face, preparing a contour drawing in Photoshop, creating your own pencil drawing from the image, or zooming in on one aspect of the image such as an 'object'. She points out several problems with the first approach that would be guided by the topic of research. Blurring faces is a common tactic used in the media to represent criminals, or protect the identity of those deemed as vulnerable, particularly if they are acting as either an informant or they are the child of a celebrity. Drawings or sketches are also a familiar way of presenting courtroom cases and these connotations might be drawn on when the audience is interpreting the research images. This can impose on the type of interpretation being presented. Thus there is a careful line for psychologists to tread between attempting to guarantee anonymity, maintaining the polysemic value of the research data whilst not taking away a sense of agency from participants (some of whom may *wish* to be identified within the research).

Visual researchers face other practical dilemmas in terms of publishing visual data. Not all journals welcome the additional expense of publishing images, particularly if they are in colour. The development of online journals encourages greater use of a range of new media technologies and might provide a means to transport visual data into the public domain whilst overcoming financial concerns. If this happens, researchers will need to be even more vigilant about ethical and ownership issues as the audience the data could potentially reach magnifies exponentially.

In the next section we (re)present two pieces of research that have included visual data. We have chosen these two studies because they deal with two distinct visual approaches (painting and photography) and all the researchers involved have concerned themselves with theoretical as well as empirical multi-modal approaches to the social psychology of experience and embodiment in general. In both examples attention is drawn to how visual images (a) can be used as a way of accessing the multi-modal or polysemic layers of experience and (b) how inviting participants to generate visual images can encourage greater agency in the research process through an invitation to engage more freely in self-reflexive practices (Mitchell et al., 2005). Therefore, in using these examples, our aim is to demonstrate how researchers might engage with issues surrounding the social psychology of experience via visual methodologies. Each is considered in terms of notions highlighted throughout this chapter: status of the data, context, reflexivity, participant involvement and ethical and presentational dilemmas.

EXAMPLE 1: USING VISUAL METHODS IN PAINTING EXPERIENCES OF EMBODIMENT

The first example we draw on is from our own work (Gillies, Harden, Johnson, Reavey, Strange and Willig, 2004, 2005) within a researcher-participant group who

have a shared interest in understanding embodied experiences (what certain physical experiences feel like, and what they mean in relation to selfhood, identity and so on) within a broadly constructionist/poststructuralist framework. After using a variety of qualitative approaches (e.g. memory work, discourse analysis) that relied on written or spoken accounts, the group felt that such approaches were unable to fully embrace the non-verbal, sensory and symbolic reactions and recollections we might have of our experiences². Thus, we made an active decision in a study on experiences of ageing to begin with visual information which would act as the initial (but not the final) experiential expression of embodied experience, that would subsequently be developed via verbal discussion of the image and our verbal articulation of the image and associated experiences. Thus, the visual and discursive layers would conjointly be used to make sense of embodied experience as the image would be part of the ongoing discussion. The example we provide here are the images we produced via painting of our experiences of the ageing process (Gillies et al., 2005).

Contexts of production and interpretation: Producing the visual through painting embodied experience

Our use of paintings involved two phases of production and a third phase of interpretative involvement by the researchers-participants. In procedural order, these were (1) identifying a trigger, (2) painting an image that represented our experiences and feelings towards ageing and (3) the analysis of the paintings and discussions about ageing more generally³.

Identifying a trigger

The first phase of this research process involved the creation of a 'trigger' (which we defined as any word associated with embodiment) as a way of generating subjective material. We chose 'ageing' because in previous

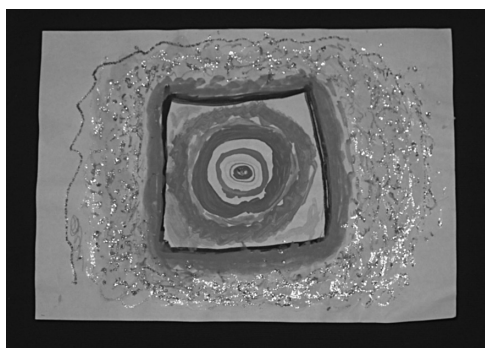


Figure 17.1 Image produced by researcher-participant no. 4

meetings, where we discussed embodiment more generally, ageing emerged as an issue of concern to some members.

Painting an image that represents feelings, thoughts and experiences of ageing

Immediately following the identification of a trigger, without allowing ourselves time to think about it, we set about painting an image that represented our feelings, thoughts and experiences of it. We sat around a large table and silently painted our images of ageing using a range of materials (paints, glitter, charcoals, crayons and pencils). There were no guidelines for doing this, as we wanted to keep this process as flexible as possible. There was no prior discussion and we did not consult with each other during the production of the painting. Once the paintings were dry, they were collected and put away until the next meeting (see Figures 17.1 and 17.2 for examples of paintings produced during this process).

Analysis of the paintings and joint constructions of meanings of ageing and embodiment

At the beginning of the next meeting we allowed ourselves time to reflect on the content of each painting and the feelings evoked by the image. This included paying attention to the colours, textures and symbolism in the painting. Each painting was discussed in turn, first of all, by all members of the group and



Figure 17.2 Image produced by researcher-participant no. 2

then by its author. Each member offered their interpretation of the painting and the author then discussed the group's interpretation in relation to her own. These discussions were recorded and then transcribed and circulated. The objective of the transcript was to serve as a memory aid to allow for the extraction of analytic themes, rather than acting as the only 'text' for analysis. Thus, our recorded discussions explored the symbolism contained in the paintings; the colours, the mood(s) and each person's feelings about their own painting and ageing more generally.

The transcripts of the first stage in the analysis were then further analysed individually, by each group member, who noted down and wrote about key themes arising in the discussion, as well as any similarities and differences and/or common patterns across the paintings themselves. Each individual analysis was then circulated before the next meeting. In the third stage of the analysis, we discussed our interpretations and held further conversations about issues arising. However, what was particularly interesting in this phase was the emerging connection we each felt with our images (to be discussed below). This latter phase involved meeting on a number of occasions as there was a great deal of debate about taken-for-granted meanings associated with ageing and our varying experiences of it. In order to analyse the material in depth, and represent multiple perspectives, we had to ensure that variation in interpretation was captured and conflict acknowledged.

This was a long and, at times, difficult process but we believe one that increased the subtlety of the analysis. However, these interpretations remain open to the audience and they were presented with the images to view.

Reflections on the process, interpretations and participant involvement

When conducting other forms of monomodal analyses, there is considerable opportunity to continue reworking and rewriting analytic observations in line with current thinking and theoretical insights. The layers formed are, therefore, much more malleable and able to be reoriented in line with new theoretical or empirical insights. However, our observations of using visual texts led us to note their role in personalizing and subsequently ‘fixing’ the interpretation more readily, though not exclusively, as flexibility was still afforded in the discussions. This was interesting in that some of the painting were, in themselves, very abstract, and only became meaningful when the participant described, in verbal form, the association and feelings emerging via the image. Despite this, our attachments to these images were strong because they were felt to capture emotions in a way that was not readily speakable in our verbal discussions. Some of us argued how important it was that other members of the group understood our paintings in just the way that we had intended. In other words, it became clear that we were more personally ‘attached’ to these texts, in contrast to the words we spoke regarding their meaning and cultural relevance. For example, when alternative interpretations were offered by other group members, the author of a painting would often try very hard and with considerable passion to communicate their own view of what her painting was about and what it meant. This desire to ‘own’ the paintings and to be the arbiter was a considerable surprise to all of us who carried a strong suspicion of practices in psychology that fixed meaning. In short, the image as text was more ‘sticky’ than verbal discussion.

Findings and insights

The findings of the study revealed a number of related issues with regard to embodied experiences of ageing. The paintings and discussions revealed general concerns and anxieties over the ageing process, as well as some positive feelings about the progression through life. The major themes arising from our paintings and discussions were (1) the relationship between self and others, in particular, concerns with the separation of self from others, (2) an incongruence between mind and body as ageing progresses, (3) the growing presence of death in life that significantly impacts on life itself and (4) ageing as a transformation of the self. The general group consensus was that some of the findings may have arisen through discussion alone, but many of them would have been greatly resisted at a verbal level due to anxiety and fear over ageing.

The status of the text: Where does the visual stand in relation to the linguistic?

During the interpretive process, we identified four different ways in which our paintings could be read (that only became apparent once the interpretive process was underway):

- As telling us something about the nature of the phenomenon (i.e. ageing)
- As telling us something about the person who painted the image
- As telling us something about the cultural resources/meanings that are available to us as authors in relation to the topic
- As a stimulus to encourage further talk about the phenomenon.

When we began discussing the images that we had produced, it soon became clear that we were moving between the four conceptualizations of the status of the images, with some disagreement along the way. For example, one member of the group was very unhappy about the idea that a painting might be read as an expression of inner emotions, which she did not feel was a legitimate

interpretation of the image. Others spent a great deal of time conveying the meaning 'behind' the image which they argued other members of the group did not have access to. Faced with a mass of visual and linguistic data, we found it difficult to produce a collective analysis of this data at times. It was not until we had spent considerable amounts of time discussing methodological, theoretical and personal concerns, that we were able to move forward and eventually come to accept that a range of interpretations were valid for the group, yet partial for individual subjectivity.

EXAMPLE 2: USING PHOTOGRAPHY TO EXPLORE HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS

The second example we describe is an ethnographic study by Alan Radley and Diane Taylor (2003a,b) that explored medical and surgical patients' experiences of recovery in a general hospital. Similar to our work, Radley and Taylor are interested not only in the 'discourses' produced by participants, but their embodied feelings that are *situated* in the spaces and objects that surround such experiences. Thus, these authors acknowledge the coupling of the visual and discursive, the qualities and power of the 'material' realized in the spaces, places and objects that contribute to the framing of experiences. Such an acknowledgement in Radley and Taylor's (2003a: 93) work allows for a different way of looking at experience, a 'turning on of the environment', where the material setting of the hospital is made explicit when discussing the experiences and meanings of recovery.

Contexts of production and interpretation: Using photographs to capture real and imagined spaces

Radley and Taylor use the photo-elicitation approach (see above for definition) to explore patients' experiences of their time on a hospital ward. In line with other forms of

participatory research the participants were involved at each phase of the (a) production, (b) sorting and (c) interpretation of the images. However, the researchers' use of photography is not intended to appeal to some 'real' meaning that emerges from the surface of the photograph (see Radley et al., 2005). Instead, the focus is on how the photos are made to signify the feelings and associations that were subsequently described by the participants. Here we will begin by outlining their approach to photo-elicitation which involves three stages of production:

- Identifying participants to take the photographs
- Interviewing the participants either immediately or one day after the photographs had been taken, using the photographs as source material
- Interviewing the participants one month after discharge using the photographs as source material.

Both the second and third phases involved the participants in a discussion of the photograph's meaning, focus and significance. In other words, the participant is fully engaged in a process of interpretation of the images in relation to their lived experience.

Contexts of production: Photography procedure

Six participants from the surgical ward and three medical ward patients gave consent to take part in this study, although two eventually withdrew. The patients were contacted via the nurse in charge and had to be in hospital for more than one week. Once the selected medical and surgical patients were well enough (see Radley and Taylor, 2003a), verbal consent was obtained and information sheets about the use of photographs were made available and written consent then gathered.

Radley and Taylor explained to the participants that the focus of the study was their experience of recovery and that they would like them to take up to twelve photographs of any objects and spaces that were significant features of this experience⁴. These could be

from the ward itself or other objects, such as personal items that they had brought in with them. Patients were given complete freedom of choice over the images produced and written guidelines were left with them. They were given a fixed-focus 35-mm camera containing 24 exposures so they could take the same picture twice to ensure it had been captured. The hospital made it clear that they wanted the researcher to stay with the patient while they took the photographs; an enforced rule that actually turned to the researchers' advantage because it afforded them the opportunity to make detailed field notes of the patients' descriptions of the reasons they were taking the pictures and the feelings they experienced at the time. In six cases, Polaroid cameras were used because there was a risk that the patient would be discharged before viewing the images they had taken and providing comments (see Figures 17.3

and 17.4 for examples of photographs produced by participants).

Contexts of production: Interview procedure and participant involvement

Open-ended immediate and follow-up (one-month post-discharge) interviews were carried out with the patients, where the focus of the interview was solely on the images they had produced. The conversations were tape recorded with the patient's permission and were approximately one hour in duration.

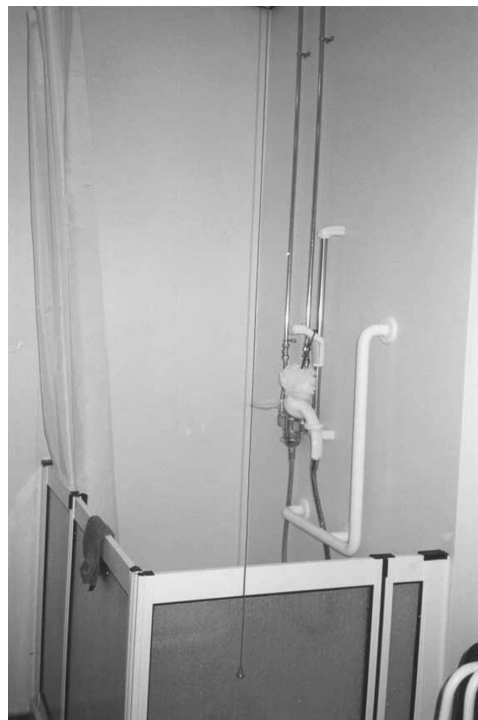
First stage: Hospital interview

In the hospital interview, each of the images was presented to the participant in the order in which they were taken. Some of the participants had given titles to their images and they were also invited to speak about the relevance



Gorilla No.2

Figure 17.3 Image produced by researcher-participant



Bathroom No.10

Figure 17.4 Image produced by researcher-participant

of the title. They were then asked to talk about and explain five aspects⁵ of the photography procedure.

- 1 What the picture showed
- 2 What the focus of the image was
- 3 Their response to the objects and places in the photograph
- 4 The most significant image that captured the experience of their hospital stay
- 5 Reflections on the choice of images, the act of taking pictures and whether they had taken the pictures they would have liked to (i.e. potential limitations).

Second stage: Follow-up interview at patient's home

The follow-up interview carried a slightly different focus and procedure. After being asked to describe their recovery and memories of their stay in hospital (see Radley and Taylor, 2003a), their photographs were laid out in front of them and they were subsequently asked to choose which one best represented their experience of being in hospital. A further five aspects were then considered, wherein they were asked to:

- 1 Describe the picture
- 2 Explain its focus
- 3 Describe the memories it brought back
- 4 Explain the feelings the picture evoked
- 5 Comment on the act of taking the picture
- 6 Describe which pictures they would have taken, given the opportunity.

Eighty-two photographs in all were taken by participants in the medical and surgical wards.

Analysing the images and interview data

The analysis involved examining both the images and the interview data, both with and without the participants (where participants had discussed the meanings of the images and their feelings about them). Thus, there were two key aspects of Radley and Taylor's analysis, these being (1) the analysis *by the participants* of their images in the context

of the hospital and follow-up interviews and (2) the analysis of the interview data and images *by the researchers*.

Once the participants had been invited in both of the interviews to consider the five aspects, including the content of the image as well as the reasons for taking the picture, the researchers had the task of making sense of both the images as well as what the participants had said about them. The first step was to lay out all 82 photographs in order to examine the types of images selected. The researchers then listened to the interview tapes with the photographs there before them. Detailed notes about what was being said about the images were made which were then related to the notes made at the time the photograph was taken, as well as the notes taken after the follow-up interview. Rather than transcribing the interviews and using these data as a primary source, the images and accompanying notes were used, as the images were viewed as just as indicative of the participants' experience.

The researchers identified a number of issues raised by the participants during the interviews including the kinds of objects and spaces that appeared a number of times, the view from which the photograph was taken and the spaces that participants claimed as their own during their hospital stay and the reasons given for this claim. The images also allowed the researchers to make comparisons between the two groups of patients by cross-examining the images from all of the participants simultaneously.

Findings and insights

Radley and Taylor (2003b) found that what is important in making sense of a person's experiences of recovery from illness is an understanding of what they try hard to forget, as well as what they remember from their stay in hospital. Displacing the time spent in hospital, for example, enables one to project forward into a time when wellbeing can be realized. Integral to this experience are the setting and objects that situate that experience (see also Middleton and

Brown, 2005; Reavey and Brown, 2006a). The authors, for example, argue that 'remembering and forgetting are facilitated by the movement of material objects and the re-representation of both objects and people' (Radley and Taylor, 2003b: 155). Thus, the photos taken bring to the fore the setting in which recovery took place for the participants and were viewed as a way of distancing the past from the present.

The status of the text: Where does the visual stand in relation to the linguistic?

Radley and Taylor make clear that the photographs are not considered to be more 'real' than words. They also state that the status of the image is never concrete and cannot stand alone, outside of the meanings and reasons given by participants as to why this image has been made visible in the first place. In short, the ways in which the participants responded to images at the moment of taking the picture, as well as their subsequent descriptions and memories emerging from discussion of the captured images, were argued to be indicative of feelings or tendencies towards their world (Radley and Taylor, 2003a). The final images, therefore, represent patients' prior engagements with the objects and spaces captured, their act of selecting significant features of the space, and a comment on their experiences of their stay. This approach calls for a continued reflexive process by participants, who are invited to comment on all aspects of the production of images as well as the associated meanings discussed in relation to the final photographic image. During this process, the researchers comment that many of the images in themselves are not interesting or aesthetically pleasing, but fairly banal.

Another noteworthy feature of using images was their ability to speak to the often un-speakable. For example, the image itself provoked the participants to try to explain aspects of their experience that were not immediately accessible to them: a challenge that the visual also brought to bear in the

painting-based approach that our embodiment group used. For example, the images presented to the participants in the interviews put them in the position of having to examine issues that they may not have *chosen* to, or did not wish to explore in the first instance. Radley and Taylor thus argue that the images were successful in nudging participants towards alluding to difficult and traumatic aspects of their experience of being in hospital. Another feature of the image's status was in its ability to often bring to the surface forgotten emotional feelings associated with certain objects and spaces in the hospital. The status of the image, therefore, was not so much in its ability to 'stand for' a time spent in hospital but instead served to evoke feelings such that an experience of 'being felt (again)' (Radley and Taylor, 2003a: 93) that was invoked in the context of being shown the image in the interview(s). Thus, Radley and Taylor (2003a,b) argue that the images produced by their participants should not stand alone or simply be treated as appendages to the words spoken about them.

CONCLUSION

We have argued here that experience is made up of more than written texts and spoken words (see also Middleton and Brown, 2005) and that visual methodologies are a useful way of accessing meaning, as well as expressing and transforming experience in psychological research. By presenting examples of how visual images have been used and interpreted in two different visual modalities we hope to have documented some practical and procedural guidelines on how to carry out visual research, while making clear some of the dilemmas and difficulties of employing these approaches particularly in relation to context, production, ethics, interpretation, reflexivity and presentation.

Like Radley and Taylor (2003a), we would argue that the interpretive layers involved in visual research must be multiply viewed because interpretations are more explicitly

built upon reflections on the production (feelings, thoughts, intentions, personal meanings) of the images, as well as subsequent interpretations of them as cultural resources for meaning making. This does not afford a straightforward reading of the images as 'texts' and calls for reflexivity by researcher and participant. Despite such challenges, we would argue that visual approaches are an extremely useful way in which to gain access to experiences, that, in our view, are never just discursive but made up of the associations and assemblies between spaces, objects, senses, symbols and signs (Latour, 2005) that we are variously aware of drawing on and producing ourselves in everyday life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are indebted to Alan Radley and Diane Taylor for permission to reproduce the images 'Gorilla' (Figure 17.3) and 'Bathroom' (Figure 17.4).

NOTES

1 Informed by the ideas of socialization theory 7 Up began in the UK in 1964. The television programme took a group of girls and boys from different socioeconomic backgrounds and set out to trace their development from age 7. The programme is updated every 7 years with the most recent programme shown in the UK in 2005 when the participants had reached 56. Some of the participants have struggled with the impact the television programme has had on their lives and the way it revisits previous versions of self in such a public manner.

2 We have used a range of visual techniques in the group. As well as a range of painting studies, we have analysed photography and film and are aiming to experiment with other visual approaches in our continued studies of embodiment.

3 Part of this explanation of our methodological approach has been taken from a previous paper (Gillies et al., 2005).

4 Due to ethical reasons put forward by the hospital staff, participants were not permitted to photograph other people. The participants, however, did talk about other people when describing the content and purpose of the image.

5 Radley and Taylor do not refer to 'five aspects' to be considered by participants. We have simply used a number sequence for greater clarity.

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Using the Internet for Qualitative Research

Alison Evans, Jonathan Elford and Dick Wiggins

INTRODUCTION

Since the emergence of the internet in the mid-1990s, social scientists have sought to capitalize on this multifaceted research resource. It has served as a site for retrieving information and data, as well as a means of generating new data. While qualitative researchers have been somewhat hesitant to incorporate the internet into their data collection strategies, this chapter will illustrate that the internet provides an attractive medium for collecting qualitative data that is well worth considering.

One possibility is for qualitative researchers to use the internet as a source of 'unsolicited narratives' (Robinson, 2001). In this way, unsolicited data are gathered from one or more online sources which may include web pages and blogs (online journals), newsgroups and bulletin boards, which are used to post and respond to online messages, and chat rooms, where participants interact in real time. Such sources provide ready access to an extensive range of diverse narratives.

Their use, however, raises the ethical issue of infringement of online privacy when using words that were not generated for research. The qualitative researcher may also consider internet-mediated interviews as an appropriate method for addressing a research question within the ethical framework of informed consent. The predominance of interviewing as a method of qualitative data collection in the field of psychology (Willig, 2001) suggests that an examination of the use of internet-mediated communication for this purpose would be of particular interest. (See Box 18.1 – Using the Internet for Online Qualitative Interviews.)

Before going on to describe how qualitative researchers may utilize the internet, there are several key issues that need to be briefly considered. These are the population of internet users that the researcher can hope to reach using online methods, the forms of internet-mediated communication that may be adopted, online identity and self-presentation and the nature of the social research interview.

BOX 18.1 Using the Internet for Online Interviews

An outline of issues associated with using the internet for qualitative interviews

- **Pros and cons of online interviews** – as with any method of research, online interviews have their advantages (such as low cost and wide geographic coverage) and disadvantages (such as narrow bandwidth of communication)
- **Establishing online rapport and trust** – the lack of visual and aural cues in the text-based online environment raises the question of how the interviewer can build rapport and trust
- **Choosing between synchronous or asynchronous interviews** – synchronicity of communication is the key difference between these two modes. It has a number of important implications for the online interview
- **Recruiting respondents** – this typically takes place online through posting advertisements to online groups but could also occur offline
- **Ethical issues in online interviewing** – there are certain issues that are specific to internet research and guidelines are available for conducting research online

Further Reading

Hine, C. (ed.) (2005) *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on the Internet*. Oxford: Berg.

Mann, C. and Stewart, F. (2000) *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research: A Handbook for Researching Online*. London: Sage.

THE INTERNET

The origins of the internet can be traced to 1969 when research led by the Advanced Research Projects Agency enabled connection of computers in four US universities via ARPAnet. Subsequent years saw a number of developments before the emergence of the internet in the form we would recognize today. Two online sources both entitled 'A Brief History of the Internet' (Leiner et al., 2003; Howe, 2005) provide comprehensive and readable accounts of this history.

The internet was originally funded by government and its use restricted to research, education and government. Despite the growth of commercial networks in the early 1990s, it was not until 1995, when government funding was withdrawn, that the way was clear for a commercially based internet. Coupled with the user friendly interface which had developed by this time (Houston and Fiore, 1998), the scene was set for the internet to enter the lives of millions.

Internet users

Despite the massive global increase in internet use, one of the main disadvantages

for those wishing to adopt internet-mediated research methods is that its use remains far from universal. The early image of the internet user was a young, white, educated male. As internet use increased over the years, the profile of internet users has become more diverse but certain disparities remain. In Great Britain, males continue to be more likely to use the internet than females, as do younger people (Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey, February 2006, www.statistics.gov.uk). Differences in home internet access based on household income are particularly dramatic (Office for National Statistics Family Expenditure and Expenditure & Food Survey, 2004–5, www.statistics.gov.uk) and there is a continuing disparity in the educational background of internet users (Dutton, di Gennaro and Millwood Hargrave, 2005).

The qualitative researcher who aims to make inferences that go beyond the population of internet users needs to consider this limitation in their research. In many cases, however, internet methods are adopted to research a particular group of internet users, in which case the restricted population of internet users need not be of concern. One of the additional advantages of the internet

is that it opens up research to a range of potential interviewees that goes beyond the limited reach of the student subject pool that is typically available for psychological research.

Internet-mediated communication

Within the virtual world, there are different forms of information exchange which may be used for different purposes. One of the ways in which these different forms of interaction are classified is through distinguishing between synchronous and asynchronous communication. This refers to the difference between interacting in real time, where dialogue is more or less instantly communicated between parties, and interacting through media whereby dialogue is sent to the receiver or posted on the internet and may not be read until later. The former takes place in virtual venues which include commercial chat rooms and MUDs, or employs some other form of messaging or conferencing software. Such real time online communication is also referred to as chat (Mann and Stewart, 2000). The latter commonly takes place via email or mailing lists, which are email distribution lists based around particular topics and commonly use the system list-serv, or newsgroups, which are topic-based collections of messages that are posted on the internet and technically somewhat different from mailing lists, and also includes posting information on websites.

The different types of communication are driven by the technology but are also culturally constructed (Hine, 2000). Internet users are expected to adhere to what is known as netiquette or 'the informal code of practice regulating the behaviour of Internet users' (Oxford English Dictionary). One such online convention has developed in certain chat rooms, where the norm is for all the interaction to occur in private chats rather than within the public forum (Waskul and Douglass, 1997). These 'relatively safe' environments are also found to encourage behaviours which are not normally experienced in everyday exchange, such as the

use of *flaming* which is a display of hostility in an electronic environment (Mann and Stewart, 2000). The superficial and playful quality of communication among users of venues such as MUDs or chat rooms may make them unsuitable environments for encouraging serious discussion (Gaiser, 1997). A further convention is the use of paralanguage to stand in for emotions that are seen face-to-face, such as acronyms (e.g. LOL for 'laugh out loud'), exclamation marks and emoticons (e.g. :-) for smiling or ;-) for winking).

Given the capacities and cultural conventions associated with both online and offline communication, people are likely to attach different expectations to the use of the various forms of exchange. McKenna, Green and Gleason (2002) examined how people use different modes of communication over the course of the development of relationships that were initiated online. They identified control as an important element of this particular interaction and suggest that email allows the greatest control over whether and when to respond without the pressure of conversing in real time; chat means giving up some of that control in order to enjoy real time interaction; the telephone provides greater trust, intimacy and physicality at the expense of further loss of control; and face-to-face contact entails loss of all control for the benefit of physical and emotional closeness.

Online identity and self-presentation

One of the major criticisms that is levelled at online research is that we cannot rely on participants to present themselves 'truthfully'. Although there is nothing to stop people from presenting multiple personalities over the internet, those who deliberately create online personae have found that it is difficult to maintain more than one such identity in practice (Giese, 1998). An investigation of people who regularly participate in virtual environments such as MUDs also found no support for a hypothesis that these people would be more likely to manipulate their

image in a web survey (Lozar Manfreda, Couper, Vohar, Rivas and Vehovar, 2002). These findings suggest that online identities are carefully created for the purposes of participating in online communities and, as Whitty and Gavin (2001) have argued, online self-presentation is determined by the intent of the individual user and not by the method of communication.

In other words, it is not use of the internet *per se* that prompts people to adopt personae, but should they wish to do so, the internet can facilitate such behaviour. While undoubtedly there are occasions when people do seek to deceive others on the internet, such behaviour seems less likely to extend to online qualitative interviews. Why would someone go to the trouble of deliberately trying to subvert an online interview for which they have volunteered? Those who have conducted online interviews and their reviewers have been convinced of the authenticity of the interviewees (Holge-Hazelton, 2002) and Taylor (1999) points out that much of what we are told in an *offline* interview must also be taken at the interviewee's word. She finds that,

to privilege one over the other on the basis of an authenticity argument (person vs persona) is problematic.

Taylor (1999: 443)

It seems reasonable to extend the benefit of the doubt to online interviewees and accept that any response is shaped by a range of influences. People who have spent longer in chat rooms have furthermore reported higher levels of openness in their online interactions (Whitty, 2002), suggesting that it might be advantageous to interview them online.

In presenting themselves over the internet, individuals do not necessarily intend to deceive but may modify their self-presentation according to the circumstances in which they are interacting. The concept of presenting oneself differently according to the situation in which one finds oneself is not a new one. Goffman's (1959) seminal work on *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* describes how individuals moderate their self-presentation according to their situation.

In the online context, Giese (1998) argues that the self presented via computer mediated communication can similarly be likened to the presentation of different aspects of the self in diverse real life social circumstances. One way to distinguish between online and face-to-face self-presentation, however, is that the cues which supplement the other person's words and may be unconsciously 'given off' in real life (Goffman, 1959) are not available online and participants must rely on written information that was intentionally conveyed (Kendall, 1998). This more self-conscious online self-presentation has been summarized in the following way:

When chatting on-line, participants are performers performing to an audience of performers – all aware that everyone is performing.

Waskul and Douglass (1997: 394)

At the same time, the spontaneous and distinctive nature of synchronous communication places it somewhere between written and oral modes (Turkle, 1997) and makes it more like a 'written conversation' (O'Connor and Madge, 2001). As with other forms of communication, however, people are likely to have their own particular style and pace when conversing online (Bowker and Tuffin, 2004; Markham, 2004).

These insights into the use and conventions of internet-mediated communication have important implications for its use in online qualitative research. As Lea and Spears (1992) have argued, however, the outcome of any computer-mediated communication cannot be divorced from the social situation within which it occurs. It is important therefore to consider the online qualitative interview in the context of social research interviews more generally.

INTERVIEWS IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

Interviews are one of the key tools available to the social researcher. They can be characterized using a range of criteria, including the pre-determination, directiveness and the degree of openness of the questions, the

length of the interview, the spontaneity of its arrangement and the setting within which it occurs (Kemp and Ellen, 1984). They can also be broadly divided into quantitative and qualitative approaches, each of which has particular aims and resulting consequences for knowledge formation.

The nature of the interview determines the type of data that are gathered, with quantitative researchers aiming for valid, reliable data that are generalizable and qualitative researchers seeking data that are rich and in-depth in order to uncover social meaning. The quantitative survey interview is designed on the basis that each individual should experience the same question and each answer should be recorded in the same way, so that different answers can be attributed to differences between interviewees and not to the process of producing the answer (Fowler and Mangione, 1990). By contrast, qualitative interviews can be seen from the perspective of Holstein and Gubrium's (1997) model of 'active interviewing', whereby meaning 'is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997: 114). Instead of aiming to control the factors that impact upon the interview interaction, the qualitative interview sees such factors as inextricably implicated in what occurs within the interview.

This perspective suggests that experience of online communication may shape expectations of the online interview. We should, however, bear in mind that this is just one element of the sum of experiences and expectations that participants bring to an online interview (Smith, 1998), which in turn should be situated in the context of the 'interview society' (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997) in which we now live.

ONLINE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

In the same way that online communication can be both synchronous and asynchronous, online interviews are classified in this way. Synchronous interviews can take place in any online synchronous modes – using chat

rooms, MUDs, messaging or conferencing software – and asynchronous interviews are generally conducted via email. Interviews in both modes may be conducted with a group or one-to-one, with any number of people potentially involved in an online chat and any number included in an email discussion, either through directly copying them in to the correspondence or through distributing summaries of the discussion to participants.

Market research organizations were among the first to realize the potential of the internet for qualitative research (Chase and Alvarez, 2000). Thus, the exploitation of moderated email groups was developed in this sector and a prescriptive method drawn up whereby participants individually supply answers to questions by email and these are summarized by a group moderator and sent back for comment (Adriaenssens and Cadman, 1999). Other researchers have pioneered the use of online interviews by simply entering into an email correspondence with participants or arranging online exchanges using various channels of synchronous communication.

While there are a number of distinctions between such different forms of online interviewing, they share certain advantages and disadvantages in common, which the following will describe. In so doing, reference is made either implicitly or explicitly to face-to-face qualitative interviews. Although Turkle (1997) has asserted that the virtual and real world provide different things which should not be required to compete and it may be similarly restrictive to examine online interviews in the context of face-to-face interviews (Gaiser, 1997), the aim here is to use comparison with the familiar as a device to explore the pros and cons of a comparatively new and less familiar medium. (See Box 18.2 – Our Investigation of Online Synchronous Interviews.)

What are the pros and cons of online interviews?

While advancements in technology move with breathtaking speed, at the time of writing, only 9% of British internet users were

BOX 18.2 Our Investigation of Online Synchronous Interviews

The subsequent boxes in this chapter contain findings from our own investigation into the pros and cons of using the internet for qualitative research (Evans, 2006). For this investigation Alison Evans conducted follow-up interviews with gay men who had already taken part in the internet and HIV study, a study of high risk sexual behaviour among gay and bisexual men in London. Full details of the internet and HIV study can be found at www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/4/39 (Elford, Bolding, Davis, Sherr and Hart, 2004). Between July and September 2003, 31 gay men living in London were interviewed one-to-one for the internet and HIV study by an experienced qualitative researcher (Mark Davis). Davis conducted online synchronous interviews with 17 men and face-to-face (traditional) interviews with 14 men. Evans then conducted follow-up interviews with 6 of the 17 online interviewees and 5 of the 14 face-to-face interviewees. The follow-up interviews were conducted in the same mode as the first interview. They were designed to explore the interviewees' experience of their earlier internet and HIV interview. All online synchronous interviews (both original, with MD and follow-up, with AE) took place in 'private chats' between the interviewer and interviewee which could not be accessed by other people.

making use of internet telephony or video conferencing compared to 86% who use email (Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey, May 2005, www.statistics.gov.uk). This suggests that text-based internet communication remains the norm and, this being so, one of the major advantages of online interviews is that there is no need to transcribe them. Given that it may take a less experienced transcriber up to ten hours to transcribe a one-hour tape (Robson, 1993), the process is likely to be time-consuming and expensive. Where time and cost are important, a researcher may consider the instant transcript of online interviews to be particularly attractive (Selwyn and Robson, 1998; Chen and Hinton, 1999).

A further financial benefit derives from the fact that online interviewing negates the need to budget for transport costs. If the interviewer travels to meet the interviewees, these costs need to be covered and if interviewees travel to the meet the interviewer, additional costs of interview facilities and refreshments may also be incurred. Researchers have thus found that online interviews may facilitate or even determine participation where access to interviewees is difficult due to geographic dispersion. In this way, online interviews have been used to bring together participants in China and Australia (Stewart, Eckerman and Zhou,

1998) and to conduct research among the Innuits (Christensen, 1999).

There are additional benefits to interviewing participants online without coming together in a physical space. They have been used to circumvent the issue of interviewee mobility (Campbell et al., 2001; Bowker and Tuffin, 2002) and the commitments of interviewers and interviewees who were pregnant and/or had small children (O'Connor and Madge, 2001; Madge and O'Connor, 2002).

Another possible motive for adopting online interviews surrounds the issue of whether interviewees feel less inhibited in a more anonymous virtual environment. Computer mediated communication has been found to increase self-disclosure (e.g. Joinson, 2001; Bargh, McKenna and Fitzsimons, 2002) and in survey research, respondents are more likely to disclose sensitive information in self-completion modes rather than when asked directly by an interviewer (e.g. Tourangeau and Smith, 1996). It is suggested that the anonymizing effects of the internet may have a similar effect in qualitative interviews and some people who participated in a health-related focus group found the anonymity of the online medium was preferable (Campbell et al., 2001). Although only seven of the 263 postings in an asynchronous online focus group were anonymous, the controversial nature of

these postings implies that there are circumstances where participants value the opportunity to remain anonymous among themselves as well as with the researcher (Kenny, 2005).

When researching online behaviour and communities, the use of online research methods is intuitively appealing and may serve to increase the credibility of the researcher in the eyes of the interviewees (Taylor, 1999). It means that participants are

integrally engaged with the environment where the topic of the interviews [is] located.

Bowker and Tuffin (2002: 332)

For this reason, online interviews were used in a study of internet addiction among college students where some of the interviewees were also resistant to taking time away from the internet for a face-to-face interview (Chou, 2001).

There are undoubtedly disadvantages to using online interview methods. One of the main disadvantages is the narrow *bandwidth* of internet communication which refers to the limited capacity of the channel to carry information (Kollock and Smith, 1996). Whereas face-to-face interactions are enhanced by the many visual and aural cues that accompany the exchange of words, the use of standard textual internet interaction relies almost entirely on the words themselves. Although little information is provided on how to analyse such cues in a face-to-face interview (Chen and Hinton, 1999), it is the effect of the narrow bandwidth of communication on the original creation of the interview dialogue that is a key issue for online qualitative interviewers. While the use of paralinguistic cues, such as acronyms or smilies, add an element of emotion that is difficult to project in pure text, such devices fall far short of communicating what may be conveyed in person. Researchers have found it important to provide the interviewees with detailed information on what is required (Curasi, 2001) and clarification of question meaning (Bowker and Tuffin, 2004).

Another possible disadvantage is that both interviewer and interviewee should be able

and willing to use the communication technology that is adopted for the interview. It is particularly important in synchronous interviews for participants to have strong keyboard skills (Campbell et al., 2001) but even without the pressure of typing in real time, interviewees report that writing emails is more demanding than the face-to-face mode (Curasi, 2001). The issues surrounding use of text-based communication are exacerbated for those who are less confident about their literacy and use of this interview mode is clearly limited to those who have attained a certain level of competence in reading and writing. Individuals may furthermore have aptitudes for different forms of communication, with some more articulate using email, others more fluent face-to-face and mode making no difference for yet others (Orgad, 2005).

Use of language takes on added significance in text-based interviews and becomes particularly pertinent where understanding of terminology may not be shared. Interviews of sexual behaviour provide a good example of this because sexual words are often used in the vernacular as terms of abuse which may be offensive in the context of the interview and many sexual terms – both formal and colloquial – may not be familiar to interviewees (Wellings, Field, Johnson and Wadsworth, 1994), which could lead to embarrassment and confusion. While qualitative research does not require that interviewees share a common interpretation of words, a lack of shared meaning may be more difficult for both interviewer and interviewee to manage without visual and aural cues.

A further disadvantage of internet-mediated communication is that it is subject to the features and functioning of the technology. Before selecting particular software, researchers need to establish the limitations and possibilities of what is available and, once they have made their choice, accept that it may be subject to technological glitches. Data that are not saved during synchronous online interviews may be lost, for example, if computers crash or systems malfunction and it is not always possible to tell

BOX 18.3 Pros and Cons of Online Interviewing

- **Interviewee mobility** – only one internet and HIV interviewee disclosed mobility issues but preferred to come in for a face-to-face interview. It should not be assumed that those who are less mobile prefer to be interviewed from home.
- **Openness** – online interviewees had the impression that the internet encouraged greater openness in their internet and HIV interviews. As one of them said, *'Talking on-line with MD was easy and I felt I could be very open to his questions in a way that I might have found embarrassing over the phone or face-to-face'* (29-year-old male). However, face-to-face interviewees also felt able to discuss their sexual behaviour openly and it may be that experienced interviewers are able to make interview volunteers feel at ease whether online or face-to-face.
- **Interview environment** – online synchronous interviews for the original and follow-up research were conducted in gaydar and gay.com chat rooms. These are two of the most popular websites in the UK for men to meet same-sex partners and meant that the exploration of internet-related sexual behaviour took place in a related online environment.

whether an email has been safely received in the course of an asynchronous interview. (See Box 18.3 – Pros and Cons of Online Interviewing.)

Online rapport and trust

One of the key elements that is said to facilitate successful interview interaction is the building of rapport and trust between interviewer and interviewee (e.g. Miller and Glassner, 1997; Fontana and Frey, 2000). A good rapport is likely to encourage the interviewee to speak more freely. While non-verbal cues play an important role in facilitating rapport in face-to-face encounters, the lack of information in the online environment raises the question as to how the interviewer can manage to effectively build rapport and trust.

In the text-based environment of online interaction where use of language takes on heightened significance, participants are likely to stereotype one another on the basis of available information, such as spelling and vocabulary (Markham, 2004). Other features of the written text such as paralinguistic also become particularly important (Lea and Spears, 1992) and participants learn the value of using such paralinguistic devices which are typically associated with long term use of synchronous online communication and used to aid friendship formation (Utz, 2000).

Other factors also come into play which tend to suggest that the online interviewee is unlikely to develop a negative perception of the interviewer. The online environment has been found to encourage projection because of the lack of such information about the other or 'the silence into which one types' (Turkle, 1997: 207) and a number of effects have been attributed to this. Because they lack the markings of social status which Goffman (1959) describes as stigma, online participants are conceived as 'astigmatic' which may facilitate participation on more equal terms (Smith, 1998). An effect has also been described whereby online communication is found to foster the presumption that the other conforms to the social norm. Disabled people have reported that the internet enables them to interact free from the discrimination that they face when others were aware of their disability (Bowker and Tuffin, 2002). White people also tend to assume that they are communicating with other white people when using the internet (Kendall, 1998). Similarly, online participants have been found to use representations of their offline contacts to build up a picture of the people that they meet online (Jacobson, 1999). The structure of the internet, which makes it easy to find others who share one's interests (McKenna et al., 2002), may contribute to this effect.

Internet communication has also been found to engender a highly positive perception of one's online partner and has been associated with idealization of the other (Walther, 1996; Bargh et al., 2002). Although it may take time for online perception to reach to this point (Walther, 1996), an experiment where participants met a member of the opposite sex online and face-to-face believing it to be a different person each time, found that they liked them much more when they interacted online and felt they knew them better (McKenna et al., 2002).

Another aspect of internet communication which may impact upon rapport, is that interviewer and interviewee can choose the location from which they participate. This may help both parties to feel more comfortable and secure (Madge and O'Connor, 2002). A familiar environment such as the home or workplace may encourage interviewees to feel more relaxed but there may be circumstances where they prefer not to receive the interviewer in these places, or where the interviewer feels uneasy about this (O'Connor and Madge, 2001). The use of online interviews means that the interviewer and interviewee can both benefit from the reassurance of the familiar.

It can be argued that the research relationship is built on a break down of the power hierarchy between interviewer and interviewee, requiring disclosure of personal information by the interviewer (Oakley, 1981). In the online interview, there may be additional grounds for such personal disclosure because of the complete lack of information about the other. Kivits (2005) considered mutual exchange to be essential to the development of successful research relationships with her email interviewees and Madge and O'Connor (2002) posted personal information on a website and established individual written relationships with each of the participants prior to their online synchronous focus groups. Madge and O'Connor also partially attributed their success to their 'insider' status as new mothers like their interviewees and users of the website under study (www.babyworld.co.uk).

Other researchers have also considered it important to meet interviewees offline where possible before beginning the online interview process (Bowker and Tuffin, 2003).

Although interviewees have suggested that the interviewer's manner is more important than their sociodemographic profile (Spencer, Faulkner and Keegan, 1988), the importance of interviewer characteristics in face-to-face interviews has been highlighted. This is particularly pertinent for interviews about sensitive topics. It is suggested, for example, that the attractiveness of the interviewer may impact response in surveys of sexual behaviour (Catania, 1997). While most women preferred to be interviewed by a female about their sexual behaviour and men were evenly divided over choice of interviewer gender, same-sex interviewers were associated with more candid responses (Catania et al., 1996). Another effect of interviewer characteristics is for interviewees to feel less comfortable with an interviewer who is similar to themselves, in case moving in the same circles leads to breaches in confidentiality. This was found to be the case when a black interviewer conducted interviews among black interviewees of the same age and gender (Catania et al., 1992 cited in Catania, 1997). The relative anonymity of the online interview may therefore increase feelings of trust and openness under certain circumstances.

The development of rapport and trust in the online interview is subject to a range of factors that the medium engenders. The individuals involved bring further influences to bear with the result that online research relationships are no more predictable than those developed face-to-face and have been found to vary considerably in both rapport and final outcome (Kivits, 2005). (See Box 18.4 – Online Rapport and Trust.)

Features of synchronous and asynchronous interviews

In addition to the overall issues associated with online interviewing, as outlined above, there are further considerations in choosing

BOX 18.4 Online Rapport and Trust

- **Interviewer perception** – in the follow-up interviews, one online interviewee used no paralanguage at all which left AE with the impression of limited rapport whereas another online interviewee used paralanguage extensively and appeared very familiar. The interviewer needs to feel comfortable with the online medium and understand that interviewees express themselves in different ways in the absence of visual cues.
- **Interviewee perception** – the format and limited duration of the synchronous online interview may not be conducive to forming a detailed perception of the interviewer. As one online interviewee said, *'I definitely could say very little about MD or yourself in terms of your own personalities or anything really!'* (34-year-old male).
- **Building rapport** – rapport with the follow-up face-to-face interviewees began before the interview started – meeting them in the lobby, offering them tea or coffee and so on. By comparison, there was limited time and opportunity to engage online interviewees in such niceties before launching into the interview.
- **Matching interviewer and interviewee** – both online and offline internet and HIV interviewees tended to favour the idea that interviews on sexual behaviour would be better conducted by a gay man because of the expectation of a common understanding of gay culture. A disadvantage may arise in smaller communities outside major cities around anonymity and confidentiality.

between synchronous and asynchronous interviews. As the classification suggests, the synchronicity of communication is the key difference between these two modes and this has a number of implications.

Co-ordination of interviewer and interviewee schedules is one such issue. Unless the interviewer enters the virtual space with the intention of interviewing whoever is available and willing at that time, participants in synchronous online interviews must agree a time and virtual place to meet, in order to conduct the interview. They might, for example, arrange to meet in a particular chat room at a chosen time and exchange screen names in order to recognize one another. Logging on to a computer and entering a chat room is a lot easier than arranging to meet face-to-face and means that busy interviewees are better able to fit the interview into their schedule. The greatest flexibility is offered by an asynchronous interview, however, where there is no need for the interviewer and interviewee to be simultaneously available.

This lack of synchronization means that the interviewee can take time to compose a considered response upon which the interviewer can also reflect before responding (Bampton and Cowton, 2002). With both parties able to reply at their own convenience, the use of email offers the opportunity

for participants to use their time efficiently although interviewers may expect to be placed in the uncomfortable position of waiting for a response. Face-to-face interviews are thus said to offer 'more controlled outcomes' because they may be completed in an hour or two whereas the asynchronous electronic interview can take weeks or months to complete (Bowker and Tuffin, 2003). This can become demanding for all concerned and asynchronous interviewers are faced with the problem of striking the right balance between maintaining the momentum of the email exchange and allowing interviewees time to reply without leading to interview 'fatigue' (Bampton and Cowton, 2002). If the exchanges drag on and participation becomes burdensome in this way, it also increases the interviewees' likelihood of dropping out of the study (Dillman, 1978). When the right balance is struck, however, the interviewer may benefit from the insights gained over this temporally extended interview process (Seymour, 2001).

Synchronous interviews have the advantage of taking place in real time under the expectation of a comparatively rapid exchange of dialogue. They tend to be completed over a much shorter period of time that often consists of a single sitting for an hour or so. While asynchronous interviews allow for reflection at the risk of dragging on,

synchronous interviews are said to encourage a more spontaneous response at the risk of interviewees feeling 'rushed to respond' (Chen and Hinton, 1999). This is particularly likely among those who are unfamiliar with the medium, who may feel uncomfortable about the silence between exchanges.

The immediacy of the synchronous interview helps to motivate interviewees through palpable demonstration of the interviewer's attention and commitment whereas the lack of interviewer presence in the asynchronous interview is likely to have a differential impact upon the individual interviewees according to their levels of motivation (Curasi, 2001). In a comparison with the data from face-to-face interviews, Curasi (2001) found that computer-mediated asynchronous interviews generated both the strongest and the weakest transcripts, with some interviewees providing short, precise responses and others discussing the issues in detail. Differences in the level of communication are similarly likely between those who participate in asynchronous focus groups using discussion lists (Moloney, Dietrich, Strickland and Myerburg, 2003).

As suggested above, the data captured by synchronous and asynchronous interviews are very different. Use of asynchronous communication lends itself to lengthier, more discursive texts that are said to be thorough and considered (Adriaenssens and Cadman, 1999). Synchronous interviews, on the other hand, are thought to be more similar to face-to-face in that they produce greater spontaneity of interaction but they also produce much shorter transcripts than the face-to-face mode (Davis, Bolding, Hart, Sherr and Elford, 2004). In this way, synchronous focus groups generate fewer words per comment and less elaboration on reasons for agreement than their face-to-face equivalents (Schneider, Kerwin, Frechtling and Vivari, 2002). Synchronous online interviews are said to require much longer to gather the same amount of material than a face-to-face interview (Biggs, 2000) but there is also a clear difference in the quality of the data collected.

Online synchronous interviewers have found that some of their comments appear banal and their questions too direct (Madge and O'Connor, 2005) and interviewees have commented that chat limits discussion because it takes too long to go into detail (Clark, 2002). In this way, chat may result in an interview that,

is less like a conversation and more like a series of questions 'fired off' by the interviewer.

Chen and Hinton (1999: section 12.9)

While the immediacy of chat would appear to lend itself to probing, the nature of the communication makes it difficult to use the sort of probing that provides valuable data in the face-to-face interview (Chase and Alvarez, 2000). Despite the concise and potentially ambiguous dialogue which synchronous online interviews are found to generate, attempts to clarify meaning through probing have been found to disrupt the flow of the interview (Davis et al., 2004). On the other hand, the instant transcript and time needed by the interviewee to type out a response allows the interviewer to re-read earlier responses and consider follow up questions as they wait for a reply (Markham, 2004). Although asynchronous interviews are conducted without any possibility of immediate probing, follow up questions can be used to pursue areas of interest (Curasi, 2001). This provides interviewees with the opportunity to expand on their thoughts although the interactivity of a face-to-face interview may be more conducive to broadening the research agenda (Orgad, 2005).

Whether using synchronous or asynchronous interviews, the interviewer is deprived of information about the interviewee's circumstances as they participate in the study. The pauses that inevitably occur in online synchronous communication carry added significance because of this lack of information (Madge and O'Connor, 2002). Although some chat software indicates when the other person is typing, this information is not always provided and gaps in communication could occur because the other person is

typing, thinking, attending to something else or disconnected. The interviewer may not be aware that an interviewee has become disconnected during the interview, for example, and may find themselves waiting for a response until the interviewee is re-connected and able to explain (Clark, 2002).

The interviewer needs to be aware that these pauses make synchronous online communication suited to multi-tasking (Waskul and Douglass, 1997) and interviewees might be composing emails or chatting to other people at the same time as the interview or dealing with whatever else is going on around them. In this way, interviewers cannot know whether they have their interviewees' full attention and must be patient in waiting for a response. Although they can turn multi-tasking to their own advantage and focus group moderators, for example, may use the time to consult a third party on the line of questioning (Chase and Alvarez, 2000), interviewers must also pose their questions reasonably rapidly in order to reassure the interviewee of their full attention (Mann and Stewart, 2000). Whereas silence is often recommended as a useful prompt in face-to-face interviews, it is more likely to disconcert interviewees in an online synchronous interview.

There is found to be less variation in the level of participation among members of online synchronous focus groups compared to face-to-face groups and, combined with the lower level of input, this suggests that such groups may be suited to the discussion of simple ideas where the diversity of opinion is sought (Schneider et al., 2002). Competent typing is a particularly important element of synchronous group interaction which may empower some individuals to contribute more than others (Mann and Stewart, 2000), although such problems can be reduced by adopting a round-robin approach (Campbell et al., 2001). Asynchronous online group discussions are particularly well suited to giving all participants an equal opportunity to express their thoughts. They are found to encourage a range of topic-specific opinions that is not biased towards the opinions

of dominant group members (Adriaenssens and Cadman, 1999) but which may not have the advantage of the group dynamic that is generated face-to-face (Chase and Alvarez, 2000).

The limited amount of published work on the use of synchronous online techniques (Madge and O'Connor, 2002) may in part be due to a well-founded scepticism about whether the mode is suitable for producing the type of rich data that qualitative researchers seek to generate. It is also likely to reflect the fact that chat has tended to be confined to the young and is used by only 21% of British adult internet users, compared to 86% who use email (Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey, May 2005, www.statistics.gov.uk). This lack of familiarity with chat among interviewers and interviewees is likely to have contributed to its restricted take up as an interview medium. Those considering using chat, however, may be encouraged by the generally positive feedback given by older adults who were familiar with the medium on their experience of participating in online synchronous interviews (Clark, 2002).

A related issue to consider in selecting an appropriate interview mode is that people have preferences for using different forms of communication which may extend to the interview situation. Given a choice between participating in a synchronous or asynchronous online discussion, 27% of readers of a computing magazine had no preference, 59% said that they would prefer an email discussion over one week and 14% said that they would prefer an online chat for one hour (Eke and Comley, 1999). The authors suggested that the flexibility and familiarity of email discussion as well as the negative hype around the use of chat were likely to have influenced these choices. (See Box 18.5 – Features of Synchronous Online Interviews.)

Interviewee recruitment

Although interviewees may be recruited offline, this typically takes place online. Permission from gatekeepers such as website

BOX 18.5 Features of Synchronous Online Interviews

- **Interview arrangements** – most of the online interviews took place in a gay.com chat room. Appointments were arranged by email and a hyperlink to the chat room was sent to interviewees. Having met in a public chat room, the interviewer and interviewee clicked into a private chat that was accessible to only the two of them.
- **Words and expression** – although online follow-up interviews took longer to complete, they generated an average of 2,200 words compared to an average of 10,600 words for face-to-face interviews. There was also more variation in both the length and number of words generated in the face-to-face interviews, whereas the online medium had a homogenizing effect on these factors.
- **Constraints on interviewee expression** – as one online interviewee said, *'chat tries to make u rush things'* (34-year-old male) and online synchronous interviews may be less well suited to the emotional and intellectual demands of the in-depth interview, given the extra burden of translating thoughts into typing in real time. As another online interviewee put it, *'trying to explain why I'd done something during sex with a guy wasn't something I'd thought about let alone tried to type out!'* (29-year-old male).
- **Constraints on interviewer expression** – as one online interviewee said, *'I did think the questions were just cut and pasted from somewhere else because they were chunks of text that sounded a bit like a survey where they stop you in the street ... it was a kind of hybrid of formal questions ... and informal ones'* (29-year-old male).
- **Managing the medium** – online interviewees were conscious of the time needed to interact using chat and experienced users had adopted strategies for dealing with this. One of the online interviewees (44-year-old male) felt online chat required *'fast fingers'* and others considered multi-tasking was an integral aspect of using chat and did so during the interview.
- **Interviewee expectation** – face-to-face interviewees tended to enjoy the discursive style of their internet and HIV interview and the opportunity to think and talk things through. They did not seem in any doubt that the interview was aiming to achieve an in-depth discussion of their sexual behaviour. Online respondents also reported positive experiences but were less clear about what the interview required of them.
- **Interruptions** – whereas breaks occurred in the online follow-up interviews when respondents took phone calls or answered the door, one of the face-to-face interviewees turned off his mobile phone immediately when it rang during the interview and did not take the call.

administrators or group moderators should be sought to recruit potential interviewees by placing advertisements on websites (such as pop-ups and banners) or posting them to online groups or by entering chat rooms that they are likely to frequent. It is possible to adopt an active or passive approach with regard to contacting those present. Individuals might be approached directly and asked whether they would be willing to participate or researchers might adopt a screen name that clarifies their identity with the aim of engaging interest in the study.

Provided email addresses are available, potential interviewees can be approached in this way. The use of individually addressed emails is likely to increase response over bulk email (Alves and Szucs, 2001) and emails should be seen to originate from a credible organization such as a university (e.g. name@university.ac.uk) (Cho and La Rose,

1999). There is, however, a tendency for internet users to dismiss unsolicited emails as spam (Witmer, Colman and Katzman, 1998) and caution is advised because such approaches have been found to annoy some people (Mehta and Sivasdas, 1995).

ONLINE RESEARCH USING UNSOLICITED NARRATIVES

The internet presents qualitative researchers with an inviting opportunity to seek 'unsolicited narratives' (Robinson, 2001). Data may be gathered from various online sources, including web pages, blogs, newsgroups, bulletin boards and chat rooms, as Mann and Stewart (2000) discuss in detail. These sources provide access to a wide range of narratives which can be retrieved with a convenience that has more in common with

deskwork than fieldwork (Rutter and Smith, 2005) and may furthermore be difficult or impossible to reach through other means.

One of the key features of the internet is the ease with which users can find others who share their interests (McKenna et al., 2002). It has thus become home to innumerable online special interest and support groups which qualitative researchers may consider approaching as a means of addressing their research interests. The use of participant observation or the intensive qualitative study of groups in the real world (Ellen, 1984) is thereby applied to the online setting, with the researcher's involvement in the group varying on a continuum from fully involved participant to detached observer.

Psychologists have typically taken a more detached approach to the observation of online groups. For example, data have been gathered from the discussion lists on a pro-anorexia website in order to investigate how participants use such sites and how this relates to disordered eating (Mulveen and Hepworth, 2006) and from a listserv dedicated to people who stutter in order to examine the role of the internet in their lives (Stoudt and Ouellette, 2004). Another study analysed chat room interactions in the period following the death of Princess Diana to explore response to shared disasters and coping strategies (Stone and Pennebaker, 2002).

ETHICAL ISSUES IN ONLINE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The Association of Internet Researchers (www.aoir.org) has drawn up a set of guidelines on 'Ethical decision-making and internet research' (Ess and the AoIR ethics working committee, 2002). They advocate that researchers seek initial ethical guidance from their academic discipline but recognize that there are certain issues that are specific to internet research. They provide a set of questions which aim to guide the decisions of those responsible for addressing such issues and include a list of references and resources which discuss ethical dilemmas.

This chapter has focused on the use of online interviews to which the principle of informed consent is generally applied, involving provision of information on the study, the implications of participation and clarification of the right to withdraw at any time. Information sheets and consent forms are easily sent to interviewees by email but if ticking a box to indicate consent is not deemed to be sufficient, hard copies can be sent for signature by other means.

One of the key elements of informed consent is that participation in research is entirely voluntary and interviewees should feel free to withdraw at any time. While they may feel under pressure to complete a face-to-face interview, the online environment may provide interviewees with a genuine choice about whether to continue with the process (Kraut et al., 2004). On the other hand, the potential withdrawal of interviewees raises another issue that is central to any research involving humans – the ethical obligation to do no harm. The lack of visual and aural cues is important in this respect because the interviewer may be unable to pick up on the distress an interviewee may feel when discussing sensitive topics and the interviewer's responsibility to provide emotional support to the interviewee may thereby be compromised (Kraut et al., 2004). Sources of information, support groups or helplines are easily accessed over the internet (Binik, Mah and Kiesler, 1999) but are of little use unless those in need are made aware of them. Those seeking unsolicited narratives in such support groups or any other online group must carefully consider the potential harm that this may cause.

The lack of visual and aural cues also raises the issue about the identity of the interviewee. In general, the interviewee should be given the benefit of the doubt with respect to the authenticity of their self-presentation in an interview to which they have consented, but an ethical dilemma may arise over the possibility of recruiting minors into studies where participants are exposed to adult material. Walther (2002) considers this to be an extreme example which researchers would

BOX 18.6 Ethical Issues in Online Qualitative Interviews

- **Consent** – before participating in an online interview for the internet and HIV study, interviewees were emailed a full information and consent sheet. They ticked a box on the consent form to indicate agreement and returned it by email. At the beginning of the interview, they were briefed on its purpose and voluntary nature and at the end, they were debriefed and permission again sought to use interview data.
- **Interviewee authenticity** – the six men who participated in the online follow-up interviews projected different personalities and provided credible insights into their interview experience in the same way as the five face-to-face interviewees.

not enter into without due care and points out the fallibility of trying to establish the age of youth on the basis of appearance. In research involving minors where parental consent is required, researchers may request information that only adults are likely to possess such as a credit card number and use offline channels to ensure that proper consent is obtained (Kraut et al., 2004).

The respect for online privacy is an important area of ethical concern, with the thorny issue of defining public and private space a prime concern for those who do not explicitly solicit the data that they use (Bowker and Tuffin, 2004). Researchers of online groups may weigh up perceived privacy on the basis of whether members are required to register for the group, the estimated size of its membership and its particular code of practice (Eysenbach and Till, 2001). Although the use of unsolicited emails for recruitment purposes may constitute an invasion of privacy, the amount of spam with which such emails compete and the ease with which they may be deleted is more likely to raise concern over their effectiveness as a recruitment strategy rather than the harm that they may induce. The exchange of emails and chat of the type used in the interviews described here clearly represent private communication.

Researchers who gather material in public online domains need to be aware that it could be traced back to its original source if entered into a search engine (Eysenbach and Till, 2001). Although communication which takes place in private emails or chat is not subject to this ethical dilemma, all online researchers need to understand that,

‘guaranteeing complete data security in a networked environment is not possible’ (Smith and Leigh, 1997) and should consult technical experts on the risks involved and adopt systems and protocols with a view to risk reduction. Interviewees should be informed that anonymity cannot be guaranteed so that they may take whatever steps they deem necessary to protect themselves (Mann and Stewart, 2000). (See Box 18.6 – Ethical Issues in Online Qualitative Interviews.)

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted some of the issues associated with online interviewing, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the online mode and the use of synchronous and asynchronous methods. It is suggested that electronic interviews may be used in conjunction with or as a cost-effective supplement to face-to-face interviews (Chen and Hinton, 1999; Bampton and Cowton, 2002). They may, for example, provide a cheap method for scoping out issues for future research or a tool for the rapid generation of data as part of a grounded theory approach, whereby data are collected from a variety of sources until emerging categories are saturated (Strickland et al., 2003).

Use of the internet in qualitative interviews is in its infancy and it will be interesting to see how things develop as the technology improves and video-enhanced interviews with sound and vision become more feasible. One of the key requirements for moving forward in this respect is that

interviewees should have access to the technology to facilitate such interviews. While general use of internet video conferencing has remained limited, the year on year increase in broadband connections (Office for National Statistics Internet Service Providers Survey, December 2005, www.statistics.gov.uk) which support such technology suggests that the possibility of conducting such interviews among the general population of internet users is not far away. Whether or not this will be realized is impossible to tell and text-based online interviews may continue to have a place in the researcher's tool kit, in as much as they generate data that are otherwise difficult or impossible to capture (Chen and Hinton, 1999).

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Using Computer Packages in Qualitative Research

Christina Silver and Nigel Fielding

THE EMERGENCE OF QUALITATIVE SOFTWARE

The support that information technology offers for social and behavioural science research does not simply depend on the development of computer science but on the methodological requirements and analytic practices of given disciplines. Increasing interest in computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) in psychology relates in part to changes in the professional standing of qualitative research methods. Regardless of debates over the status of qualitative methods in psychology, there are sufficient generic features in the analysis of qualitative data in the human sciences that the IT tools currently available will offer psychologists useful support for their work. While the disciplinary context in which CAQDAS originally developed was skewed somewhat to sociology, psychologists contributed to the development of these tools. This software field is somewhat distinctive in that, from the outset, development has generally been driven

by academic social scientists, aided by programmers. Much of this development was directed to satisfying analytic requirements associated with specific research projects, and some key projects in question were based in psychology, particularly environmental psychology, and the psychology of consumer preference. Indeed, two leading CAQDAS packages (MAXqda and ATLAS.ti) emerged from primarily psychology-based research teams, both in Germany, again suggesting that development partly reflects the standing of particular methods and analytic approaches in national research communities.

Computational support for social research is not a new thing. Indeed, content analysis as practiced in political science was one of the very first computer applications. According to the canonical authority, content analysis of textual data pursues 'objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication' (Berelson, 1952: 489). Computers enabled storage of extensive documentary data. Content was manipulated by tagging units of

text as 'variables', producing 'concordances' (organized lists of words and phrases), and enabling rapid access to the context surrounding particular text segments ('KWIC' searches – Keywords in Context). The dominant approach to analysis in politics required statistical features. While a precursor of CAQDAS, this approach produced software of limited direct use to qualitative researchers.

Latterly, computers have gained a substantial presence in qualitative research. As Weitzman and Miles (1995) observed, they are routinely used at each stage of qualitative projects, from data collection through analysis to presentation. As well as directly facilitating important parts of the qualitative research process, qualitative software has benefited the field by bringing more clearly into view how researchers manage and analyse qualitative data. CAQDAS can help with data management chores that are tedious and susceptible to error when done 'manually', and can enable analytic approaches which would otherwise be unwieldy. The first CAQDAS programs emerged on mainframe computers in the early 1980s. Roughly 25 to 30 programs eventually became available for personal computers, most of which remain, despite increasing market dominance by four or five. Commercial realities increasingly mark the field, but academics remain senior partners in the teams of developers, programmers and marketing staff relating to qualitative software, helping fashion it in ways closely informed by researchers' working practices. There is also useful freeware, packages that specialize in particular analytic purposes, and packages that are particularly oriented to team research.

In the early days there were myths and rumours about qualitative software, informed, some argue, by the view that computers were devices with roots in the quantitative paradigm (Tesch, 1990). After over twenty years of CAQDAS, the evidence is that the myths recur; each generation of users (and non-users) re-negotiates the notion of a 'pushbutton PhD' where the computer 'does your analysis for you', and that software will

come between researchers and their data, or will obscure the context so important to interpreting the data, and so on. A recurrent worry is that software will somehow 'take over' the analysis, dictating a standard approach and drawing on hidden assumptions. This is the so-called 'Frankenstein's monster' debate (Lee and Fielding, 1991; Kelle, 1995). It reflects a somewhat selective recall of Mary Shelley's classic, in which it is forgotten that the monster only became a threat because he was abused by humankind. The non-literary point is that, even after many years of development, qualitative software is generally quite modest in the support it offers for analytic work, the developers of qualitative software have a universal awareness of the need to keep control in the hands of the user and there is absolutely no realistic prospect of qualitative software excusing the need for the researcher to think. Moreover, the continuing variety of qualitative software provides its own counter to the Frankenstein's monster fears, each having a distinctive approach despite substantial commonalities. Getting to grips with this variety is the business of the next section.

TYPES OF CAQDAS* AND TYPES OF QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The first typology of qualitative software, offered by Tesch (1990), related the software then available to the kinds of analytic work that qualitative researchers do. This established a principle that remains important, that choosing the 'right' package is a question of being clear about one's analytic purposes, both those relating to work in hand and to work that researchers anticipate wanting to do in the future. To answer the question 'what is the right tool for the job' one has to relate one's own patterns of use and competencies to the available software. As Weitzman and Miles (1995: 9) observe,

'What's the best program?' There's no answer in the abstract. Choosing the right software for you depends on your own level of work with computers, on your time perspective, on the particular project

you have in mind, and on the type of analysis you are expecting to do.

We would not expect that there would be one right answer to the question 'what is the best car?'; if there was, no other cars would be marketed. The 'right car' depends on the user's requirements, and so it is with qualitative software. The first step in tuning in to what software package best supports the particular work at hand is to be aware of the range of software available.

There are several standard typologies in the qualitative software field. Weitzman and Miles (1995) identify three basic types of qualitative software: *text retrievers*, *code-and-retrieve* packages, and *theory-building* software. Kelle (1995) regards the three-fold typology of qualitative software as successive generations. For Mangabeira (1995) the distinctive third generation feature is its model-building capabilities

Text retrievers recover data pertaining to each category where specified keywords appear in the data. For example, when you search for 'hyperactivity', wherever this word appears in the text the software will extract it. Words, other character strings, and combinations of these, can be retrieved from selected or all files, plus things that sound alike, mean the same, or have patterns like the alpha-numerical sequences in social security records. Analytic memos can be linked to the data. The speciality of text retrievers is the very rapid retrieval of basic data held in large numbers of documents, e.g. finding occurrences of a term of interest in a large number of transcribed therapeutic sessions and so on.

Code-and-retrieve packages focus particularly on providing support for dividing text into segments, attaching codes to the segments, and retrieving segments by code (or combinations of codes). Coded data can be retrieved based on an individual or group of codes, or retrieved based on how codes relate to one another, e.g. where data coded 'frustration' coincides with data coded 'depressive illness'. Organizing data to known characteristics (such as socio-demographic variables) allows retrieval based on the combination of

conceptual codes and organizational features; for example enabling a search to recover only data where two particular characteristics apply but not a third; for instance, data from MALE respondents with DEPRESSION who are NOT married.

The distinction between such software and Weitzman and Miles' third type has become less pronounced as the more basic packages have become more fully featured. Code-and-retrieve packages focus analytic attention on relationships between codes and data. *Theory-building software* emphasizes relationships between the categories, while still offering code-and-retrieve functionality. Theory-builders can help users develop higher-order classifications, analytic typologies and data representations other than those derived directly from data, such as formulating propositions that fit the data and testing their applicability using hypothesis-test features. They can also visually represent connections between categories as an aid to conceptualization, showing code names (or other objects, like memos) as nodes in a graphic display so users can link them to other nodes by specified relationships like 'leads to', 'is a kind of', and so on.

Many researchers remain committed to 'manual' methods. For some purposes, manual methods have advantages over software. For example, if the time involved in setting up the data in the format necessary to enter into the program, and in applying code labels to segments, and so on, is likely to exceed the time taken working with the data in the software, it may not be worth using qualitative software. Manual methods may be useful for pilot work or work having limited analytic purposes. Researchers should not feel guilty or behind-the-times about not using software or pressured into using it. Similarly, if researchers do decide to use software, they need not refrain from conducting some analytic tasks outside of the software and away from the computer, using print-outs and highlighter pens in 'traditional' ways (Lewins and Silver, 2007). Using CAQDAS will not in itself ensure high-quality analysis. What does seem necessary is that, even if use is made

of it rarely or never, there is some general awareness of what it can and cannot do. Problems come when things are dismissed from a position of ignorance.

The features provided by qualitative software reflect prevailing approaches to the analysis of qualitative data. Typological boundaries between groups of CAQDAS become increasingly blurred as software develops and packages have increasingly provided features that would not be practical without a computer. Figure 19.1 provides an overview of the basic functionality of CAQDAS packages in general, and some idea of how they may fit together.

CAQDAS packages include tools for organizing, exploring, integrating and interpreting qualitative data which can be used according to the methodological and practical needs of the project and the researcher. The tools chosen, and the order in which they are

used is not determined by the software. The data corpus can be organized in a variety of ways, often divided into segments both within a given datum (where the segments may be discrete sub-units of the datum, such as a particular sentence within a transcribed interview) and at a data type level (such as keeping interview data distinct from observation data). Labels or tags are often assigned to segments, usually referred to as 'categories' or 'codes', which relate to the analytic themes in play. Segments can also be annotated. The practice of writing 'analytic memos' involves a meta-narrative relating to the data, for example, giving the reasons why a given code was applied to a given segment, or expressing some nuance of an analytic point under development. This organizational work can later be combined using search tools to retrieve data based on the presence or absence of

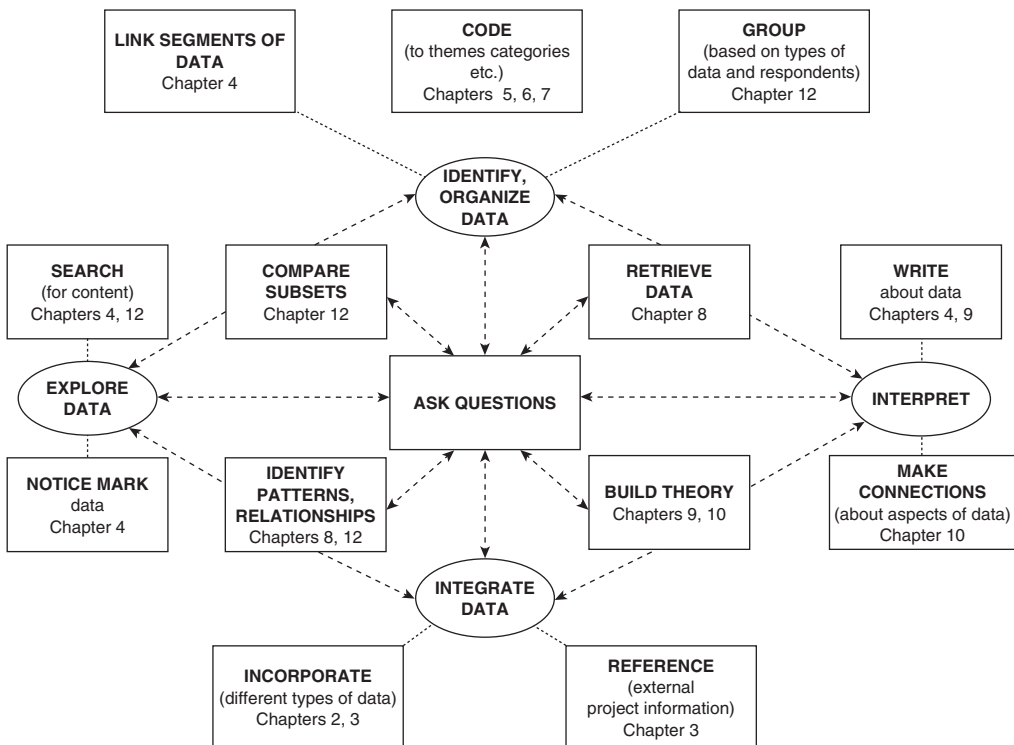


Figure 19.1 Basic functionality of CAQDAS packages (Lewins and Silver, 2007)

Source: Lewins and Silver (2007) *Using Software in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage

codes and known characteristics (e.g. socio-demographic variables).

CAQDAS has been criticized for acting as an artificial barrier between the researcher and the data. However, as argued by Lewins and Silver (2007), and illustrated below, software actually brings the researcher much closer to the data, allowing flexible manoeuvring between combinations of source data, conceptual codes, analytical memos, illustrative maps and output. Although these software packages are usefully referred to as qualitative data *analysis* programs, they are essentially project management tools, providing a container for different aspects of qualitative work, and enabling flexible handling and integration of data.

Using qualitative software encourages researchers to be clear about their reasoning. It is useful to be able to re-trace one's steps by means of an 'audit trail'; helping researchers see how they built up a particular line of inquiry. This helps the analytic process be more transparent, and therefore accountable to others, particularly important in fields whose legitimacy is contested. Being able to demonstrate precisely how an analytic point was derived is to make apparent the rationale for analytic work, and that can be important in meeting criticisms, both of specific analyses and more general criticisms based on scepticism about particular approaches to research methodology. There is considerable testimony in disciplines like anthropology and sociology of the gain in credibility and perceived legitimacy associated with the use of software to support qualitative work.

To the myths we earlier mentioned may be added a possibly apocryphal story concerning a major research funding agency that developed a policy to the effect that all qualitative research that it sponsored had to use qualitative software; in particular, doctoral research would not be accepted that had not been conducted using such software. That approach is as worrying as the approach that shuns software on principle because it represents 'quantification' or the de-contextualization of qualitative data. Both positions work from ignorance. We reiterate that simply using

CAQDAS does not mean the whole analytic process, or even its most important parts, occurs 'within' the software, or that software necessarily improves the quality of analyses. The best way to see what the software can and cannot do is by way of example. To such examples we now turn.

EXEMPLARS: INDICATIVE APPLICATIONS OF CAQDAS

CAQDAS packages are used across a wide range of academic and applied settings, in disciplines including psychology and sociology, business and management, government research, health studies, geography and art history. Here we take three analytic approaches commonly used in psychology and illustrate how software can facilitate their processes and tasks. These are Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis and Hyperlinking. Rather than following or promoting a prescribed process, we aim to illustrate the flexibility software provides for supporting varied approaches to qualitative data. We discuss some generic possibilities rather than suggesting necessary stages or tasks. Given the variability between and within these approaches, we focus on selected aspects of each rather than providing an exhaustive account of how to conduct an analysis when applying one of them. We encourage critical evaluation of software tools and their flexible use throughout the research process by individual users and teams. To continue the car analogy, you would not need to use wind-screen wipers when the sun is shining, nor wish to drive your convertible Ferrari with its top down in a thunder storm. Just as a software package should be chosen according to the needs of the researcher and the data, so the tools within individual packages will be more or less useful for analytic tasks undertaken in specific methods.

Example 1: Inductive coding strategies in Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is an inductive method of conducting qualitative research in which

data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. The aim is to develop theory from the data level which requires close contact with source data in order to verify developing interpretations (Chapter 14).

Grounded coding strategies

Core to grounded theory is the idea that the generation of codes or categories should come from the data itself rather than from pre-existing ideas, hypotheses or theories. Strauss and Corbin (1998) distinguish between three kinds of coding which they suggest occur in sequence and lead to the development of theories which explain processes identified in the data. These are 'open coding', 'axial coding' and 'selective coding'. We illustrate how these and their accompanying analytic tasks can be supported by CAQDAS packages.

The first phase of coding is referred to as 'open coding' and requires the researcher to carefully read through the data in sequence, and generate and apply as many codes as needed to catalogue what is seen to be 'going on' in the data. All CAQDAS packages support the generation of codes as interesting aspects of the data are identified. Codes can be created and linked to the data which prompted them in a quick and easy process. Any number of codes can be generated in order to capture the variety of ways the data can be read. The size of the data segment to be coded is defined by the researcher and the same data segment (or overlapping segments) can be assigned as many codes as relevant. Line by line analysis is therefore facilitated. Codes can also easily be created directly from language or terminology used in the data (termed *in vivo* coding in grounded theory). It is usually very easy to define codes as they are generated, and to add to those definitions as the meaning and application of codes changes. These definitions can be accessed at any point within the CAQDAS program, and outputted to a word processing application or printed.

Constant comparison is a key aspect of this stage of grounded theory. Data segments are compared with each other in order to

ensure codes are assigned to all relevant data. In most CAQDAS packages the responsibility for doing so remains solely with the researcher. However, a key feature of the package Qualrus is its 'artificial intelligence' in terms of 'suggestive coding'. The software will suggest codes to the researcher based on a number of computational strategies, one of which is the theory of constant comparison. On selecting a text segment for coding, the researcher is reminded of the codes applied to the previous coded segment in order to assess whether this segment is also relevant to those codes (see Figure 19.2). The researcher remains in control of which codes are applied, but this may help ensure coding is rigorous. It does not, however, negate the need to return to previously considered data when a new code is identified.

The next coding stage, 'axial coding', involves returning to the codes and the data to which they have been applied to rethink, revise and develop higher order categories. The basic functionality of 'code-and-retrieve' as discussed above is a key aspect of this work. All CAQDAS packages provide very quick ways to retrieve all data so far coded at one code. Some packages (e.g. NVivo) initially lift coded data out of its original source context, whereas others (e.g. ATLAS.ti) always locate coded data within the source context. MAXqda provides both options simultaneously. In addition, 'query' or 'search' tools can be used to retrieve data electively using various analytic strategies (such as a comparison between views expressed by males and females).

Work with codes often leads to a need to revise codes, either globally or as they apply to particular segments. Examples include to increase or decrease the amount of data coded a particular point, to uncode a data segment where it is now deemed not to be relevant, and to rename codes to more adequately represent the nature of the data coded at them. All of these tasks are part of the axial coding process and simple to execute within CAQDAS packages. As illustrated in Figure 19.3 these tasks are facilitated by flexible retrieval options.

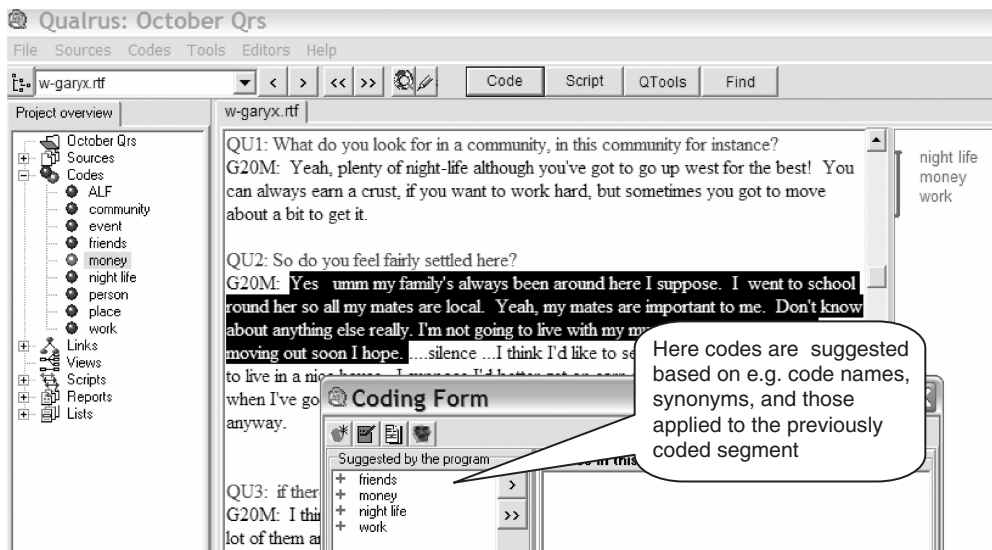


Figure 19.2 Suggestive coding in Qualrus

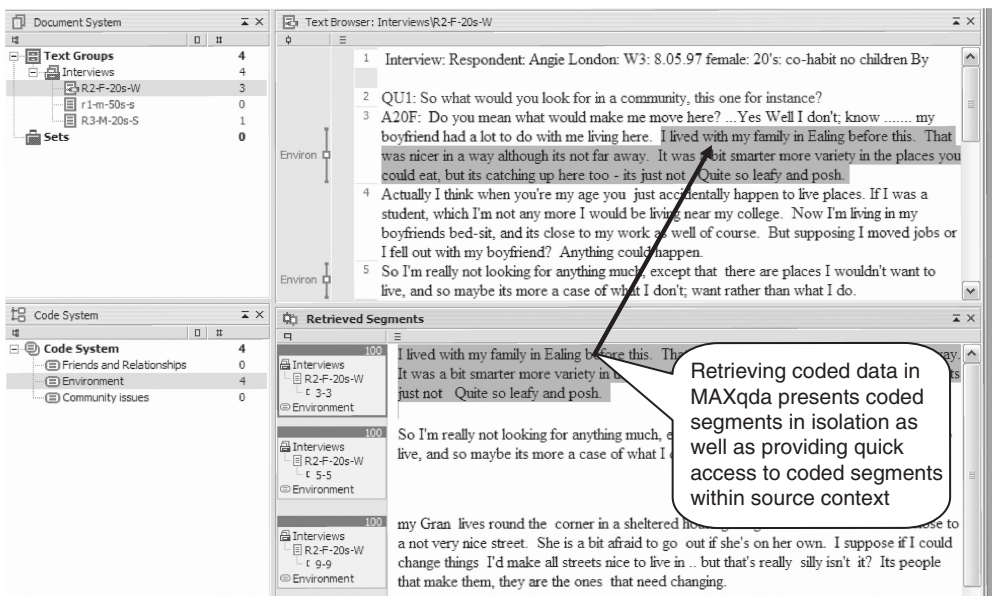


Figure 19.3 Basic retrieval in MAXqda

The process of open coding often yields large numbers of codes, some of which are similar in various ways. The need to group codes according to these similarities, and to thereby isolate them from other concepts is a key aspect of the axial coding process.

This may be achieved by grouping codes into hierarchies, or looser collections of codes. This allows all the data coded at any of the grouped codes to be retrieved together within the software, or outputted from the software. Such processes facilitate interpretation at a

higher level of abstraction while maintaining easy access to source data and supports the establishment of higher order categories.

Codes can also be linked to one another in a more abstract way, perhaps by generating a map, model or network. Links created between codes are defined by the researcher. There is usually a stock of commonly used relationships to draw from, but also the ability to create and define them according to specific needs. Linking and mapping devices provided by CAQDAS packages are discussed in relation to Hyperlinking below.

The third stage of coding, 'selective coding' focuses on verifying the patterns and relationships identified. This may require comparing data coded at particular themes or concepts across different subsets of data in order to validate conclusions and further illustrate the developing theories. At any stage, different data sources can be organized by known characteristics, such as socio-demographic variables, contexts, etc. Search tools provided by CAQDAS packages can be utilized to compare instances of similarity and difference which can be outputted for the purposes of illustration in the final written product. Search operators differ between packages, but the Boolean operators AND, OR and NOT and proximity operators such as NEAR and CO-OCCUR are usually provided. The whole database – or parts of it – can therefore be searched for the position of two or more codes in the data, or for example, where certain code(s) occur within certain types of data (e.g. amongst respondents with particular socio-demographic characteristics, or data derived from various empirical contexts). In addition, frequency information concerning, for example, the application of (selected) codes across (parts of) the dataset can help visualize which categories are more or less prevalent in certain contexts. Any such information can be outputted to file or printed for consideration away from the computer, or incorporated into the final written research report.

Alongside these coding tasks it will be important to note insights, thoughts, questions and interpretations as a crucial part of

the analytic process. Software tools support writing in different ways and places are discussed in relation to analysing discourse and creating hypertext environments below, but are just as relevant to conducting Grounded Theory.

Example 2: Annotation, memoing and word searching in analysing discourse

Discourse Analysis is the study of how language and discourse produce versions of social phenomena. Like Grounded Theory it is an approach to conducting research rather than simply an analytic strategy. Narrative analysis, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis and semiotics have shared features with discourse analysis. In psychology two frequently used methods are 'discursive psychology' (Chapter 5) and 'Foucauldian discourse analysis' (Chapter 6). The former focuses on talk, or discourse as *action* and is concerned with interpersonal communication. The latter focuses on the role of language in constructing social and psychological life, with an emphasis on the role of discourse in legitimation and power.

Whatever the specific form of discourse analysis conducted, language, terminology, discourse, narrative and communication are the foci. Historically discourse analysts have been relatively reluctant to use CAQDAS, generally because of a perception that it relies too heavily on code and retrieve functionality. Recent developments, however, such as increased power and flexibility of text searching tools, more flexible annotation and memo tools and increasing ability to integrate multiple data types within one software project, mean that researchers embarking on the analysis of discourse need to reconsider the options. Here we focus on textual exploration, searching and annotation tools to illustrate how CAQDAS packages may support analytic techniques undertaken during discourse analysis. (see also section on Hyperlinking below).

Early exploration: Reading, marking and annotating data

Close reading of primary data sources and annotation of data segments is a key task of discourse analysis. Indeed, the process of writing about what is seen in the data often constitutes the analysis itself. For example, writing in reference to discursive psychology, Willig (2003: 170) states that 'analysis is really a deconstruction (through the identification of interpretive repertoires and discursive constructions that make up the text) followed by a reconstruction (through writing about and thus re-creating the constructions and functions that characterize the text) of discourse, and writing itself is an essential part of this process'. There is a clear need to remain located in the whole source context of the text at the same time as commenting on particular instances and constructing detailed interpretations through writing. Many CAQDAS packages provide flexible ways in which to do this, but different packages provide alternative tools for working in these ways. The discourse analyst, in evaluating the utility of software, must consider their appropriateness for particular methodological approaches and styles of working.

When working without the support of a customized software program the process can be messy in terms of the management and organization of annotations. Whether working with paper or using a word processing application, it becomes visually messy when additional comments are made and there is a need to flesh out the analysis in more lengthy written commentaries. In particular, however, linking together relevant aspects of work, for the purposes of subsequently re-constructing is difficult to manage. These are the aspects of CAQDAS packages which can be potentially invaluable to the discourse analyst.

Annotation can take different forms. Marking text thorough sophisticated transcription protocols, for example the system widely used in Conversation Analysis (Chapter 4), is just one. Qualitative researchers engaged in manual coding often mark data using different coloured highlighter pens, and annotate

text in the margin of printed transcripts. Most software now handles rich text format (RTF) data files, which allows the editing of transcripts within the CAQDAS application. This can be a useful task whatever the methodology, although it may also be seen as obscuring the 'natural' flow of the narrative. MAXqda, however, provides a functional early marking and sorting method. Using four colour codes the user can mark text for different reasons with a colour code which is later retrievable. This allows 'interesting' text segments to be visually marked quickly and easily without requiring the researcher to create or define a code label, or comment on the data immediately.

Deconstruction can be facilitated by annotating individual passages of text where they are seen to represent an instance of, for example, a particular discursive construction. Similar examples may be linked by means of coding, but this is not always desirable or necessary. ATLAS.ti for example, allows quotations identified by the researcher to be treated in isolation, and viewed together with their annotations. Implicit in approaches to discourse analysis is that what is not said and what is read between the lines are as important as the actual content of the text. Annotation tools provide places to write about these absences and to consider their implications, with the facility to return to the whole, unaltered data source at any point. In addition, these quotations can be linked together by means of hyperlinking (see Figure 19.4), and broader memos where commonalities and differences are explored through writing can be retrieved in flexible ways.

Early exploration: Word searching

Depending on the focus of the study there will be an interest in elements of text or talk including the context, stylistic and grammatical features, metaphors, variability and construction of interaction, conversation, etc. Identifying these structures and interpreting how they are organized and used to construct discursive features clearly requires close and repeated consideration of the inherent nature of the text. CAQDAS packages

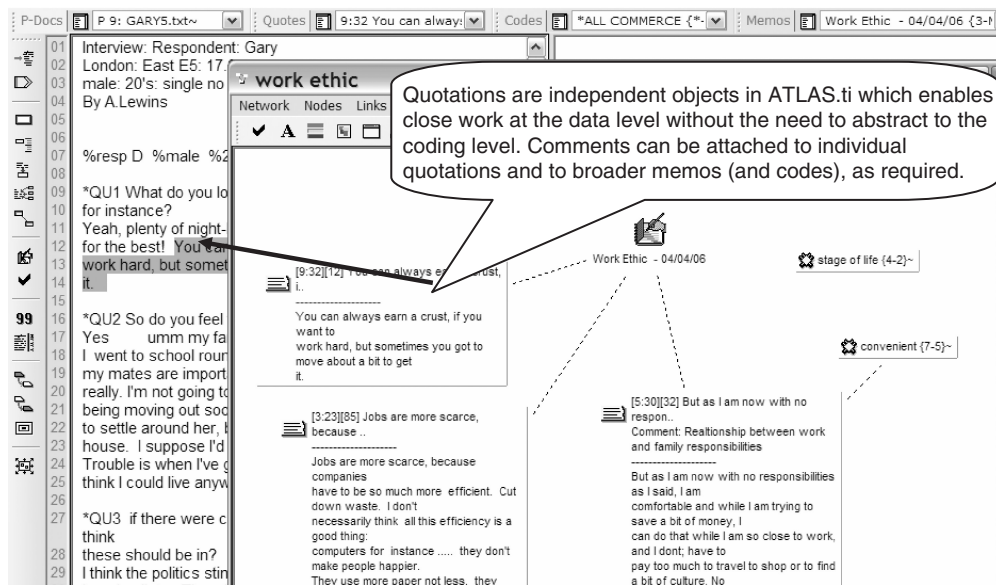


Figure 19.4 Working with and annotating quotations in ATLAS.ti

offer deductive word searching, indexing and categorizing tools which can provide an additional dimension to analytic work on discourse. While it is important *not* to see these tools as analytic techniques in their own right, or to rely on them solely, they can help identify occurrences of word usage which can be useful indicators.

Word frequency tools differ between packages. For example, ATLAS.ti generates a spreadsheet file readable by external applications counting every word by (groups of) document. MAXqda with MAX Dictio add-on provides an index of words (by groups of documents) enabling Key Word in Context (KWIC) retrieval (see Figure 19.5). QDA Miner with the add-on module Wordstat, provides a comprehensive quantitative content analysis and text mining module – with lemmatization, stemming, stop lists, hierarchical categorization of words, word patterns and phrases, KWIC lists, links to lexical databases, vocabulary and phrase extractors. Qualrus allows code words to be assigned synonyms, one of the bases upon which the suggestive coding facility operates.

Tabular information can usually be outputted from the CAQDAS package to a spreadsheet application. Such tools can be useful for exploring data for content, the more sophisticated tools allowing patterns of discourse to be identified. Key words may be used for identifying potential code labels, but the results of searches need not be coded, perhaps simply acting as an indicator to content.

Focus on the role of language and talk in constructing social reality, word frequency and searching tools represent important ways in which CAQDAS can add to the kind of work discourse analysts may practicably undertake. All CAQDAS packages enable work exclusively at the level of the text, without abstracting to the coding level, although they vary in the ways they do so. There may often be a continued need to conduct some analytic work outside of the software. However this does not negate the potential utility of CAQDAS for facilitating aspects of discourse analysis. Even if relatively few tools are utilized, the storage and accessibility of data and interpretations is a basic, but

Word frequency tables can be created across all or selected text documents using MAX Dictio. Here an index of one word has been created to locate finds in context (KWIC).

Results can be marked, annotated, coded and exported to a statistical application as required.

Text	Search String	Paragraph	Hits
Interviews/R3-M-20s-S	suppose	9	1
Interviews/R3-M-20s-S	suppose		1
Interviews/R3-M-20s-S	suppose		1
Interviews/I1-m-50s-s	suppose		1
Interviews/I1-m-50s-s	suppose	4	1
Interviews/I1-m-50s-s	suppose	5	1
Interviews/I2-F-20s-W	suppose	9	1

Figure 19.5 Word frequencies and Key Word in Context (KWIC) retrieval in MAXqda (with MAX Dictio add-on module)

important advantage. Discourse analysts can manipulate software to suit particular needs, choosing relevant tools and applying them in a variety of ways.

Example 3: Hyperlinking and mapping in creating and tracking associative trails

Some approaches to qualitative data analysis view coding as limiting because it fragments and reduces the data to an extent which obscures the dialectic relationship between reading text (or viewing multi-media data) and writing. As discussed in relation to discourse analysis above, but equally pertinent for all approaches to qualitative data analysis, interpretation through writing is the essence of working qualitatively. Hypertexts are electronic multi-dimensional documents in which several writing spaces are viewable simultaneously, and multiple paths through the data are offered. The emphasis is on non-linear sequencing whereby nodes and the links created between them is the means of organizing data rather than coding procedures such as those discussed above. Such approaches have their roots in ethnography

and creating hypertexts is often deemed to be as much about displaying data to the reader as it is about the analysis of qualitative data.

Associative trails through data are created rather than collecting similar segments at thematic or conceptual codes. Coding and subsequent searching for their distribution across (subsets of) data is seen as rooted in a quantitative rather than qualitative paradigm (see Weaver and Atkinson, 1994). In these approaches the analytic focus is the relationships between topics or objects rather than codes or concepts, or how well represented they are across data. Proponents often equate the processes of qualitative data analysis with those of human cognition, viewing the creation of hypertexts as emulating human mental processes. Construed as a 'brainstorm' procedure, such work is best supported by simple hyperlinking and annotation tools. Hyperlinking is a 'free association' approach to building up an analytic chain of reasoning which forms the hypertext. It facilitates an unstructured, non-linear approach to an identifying, writing about and linking ideas, whereby multi-directional associative trails can be created, for example

tracking horizontally and vertically through data as well as sequentially. These conceptual relations are seen as part of the process of theory building and developing thick contextual description, and some commentators therefore see the creation of hyper-texts through hyperlinking as more akin to the nature of qualitative work than coding (Weaver and Atkinson, 1994: 145–6). Hyperlinking tools may be used to track processes as diverse as narrative, sequence, time and interaction.

Software applications which reflect these needs have been categorized as falling into two broad categories; ‘those which see it primarily as a tool for the presentation of knowledge which is already – to some extent – codified and defined (educational packages, graphic design presentations); and those applications that see it as an aid for the accumulation of knowledge about a subject that exists only as “data” (CAQDAS approaches)’ (Dicks and Mason, 1998). Customized software packages are available which enable the creation of hyper-texts, some developed by academics, such as GUIDE and others commercially developed, such as Storyspace. These developments have occurred separately from CAQDAS. However, CAQDAS packages now also provide facilities for working in alternative ways, with many leading CAQDAS packages including linking devices and integrated mapping tools alongside code and retrieve, searching and memoing tools.

Just like Grounded Theory or Discourse Analysis the need to remain ‘close’ to the data and view the whole context of the text is paramount. The non-linear and associative character of hyperlinking readily permits the recovery of context, although as seen above, other analytic processes provided in CAQDAS packages also provide flexible in-context retrieval. The need is to integrate a qualitative understanding of relations between ideas into the process of marking text and representing data. In this sense many of the elements discussed above in relation to annotating data in CAQDAS packages are relevant.

Many CAQDAS packages now provide ways to hyperlink textual data segments to one another, although in most cases these are an additional function which do not provide the visually dynamic environment required in creating hypermedia. For example, in MAXqda it is possible to link discrete pairs of segments which may be useful in linking a trigger and a reaction, or contradictory/confirmatory statements. The tool is restricted however, in that onward links are not possible. NVivo7, allows the creation of ‘see also links’ which can be used to track onward processes, but they are a complement to code-based work which characterizes the software and are not very flexible or easy to use. ATLAS.ti5 however, provides flexible and manageable multi-directional hyperlinking through qualitative data, and in simultaneously interpreting through writing. The main benefits are that segments of multi-media data can be marked and linked in the same ways as text and that hyperlinking can occur in isolation of coding procedures, or be fully integrated with them. Figure 19.6 illustrates this.

The ways in which CAQDAS packages allow the visualization of hyperlinks affects their utility for moving around the database. ATLAS.ti5 shows where hyperlinks are embedded in the data in the margin view (in the same way as codes, memos or annotations are shown). The data itself remains unchanged through the process of inserting a hyperlink and the margin can be removed from view. This enables the whole text to be viewed in full at any time without being obscured by the various trails that exist within it. When following a hyperlink trail, segments are always located within their source context, although they can also be visualized within a network view, or outputted to a text file when there is a need to isolate them or think away from the software. The different aspects of work are fully integrated in that it is always easy to flick between the source data itself and the different representations of it. At any point quotations which make up a particular associative trail can be

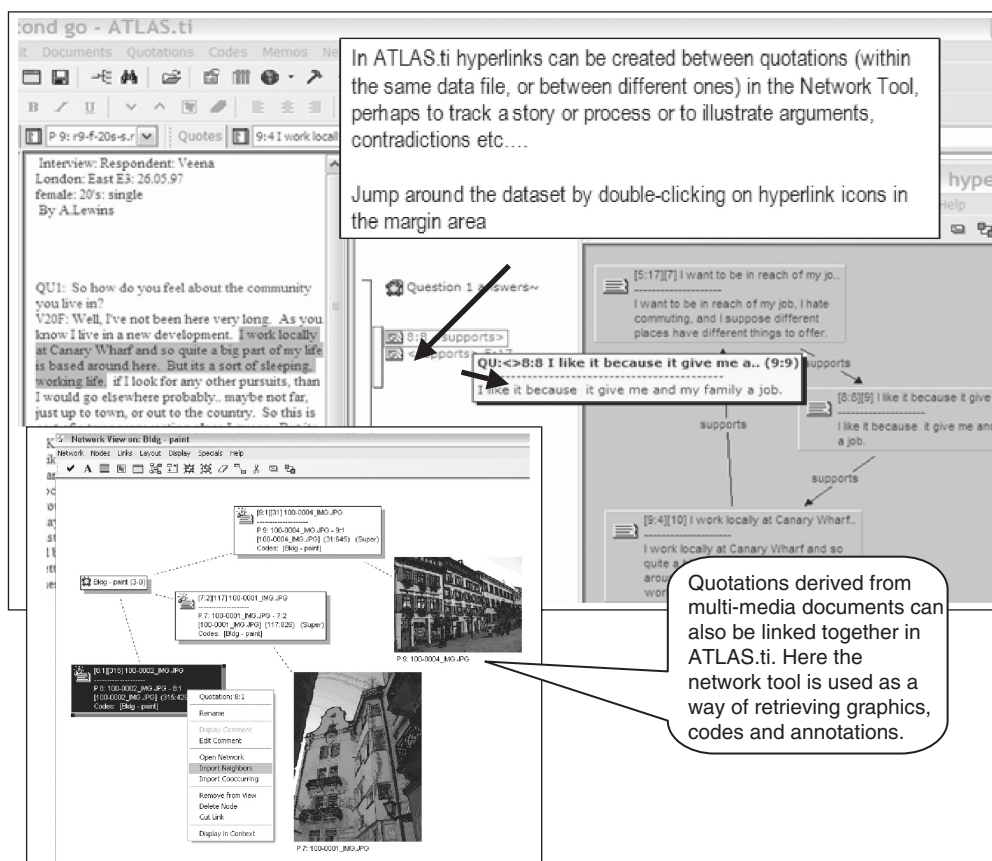


Figure 19.6 Hyperlinking between quotations in ATLAS.ti

annotated in full view of the data segment in its context, and other segments to which it is linked. As illustrated above, memos can be linked to individual quotations, or to particular points in a hyperlink trail. The ability to link quotations and codes to each other and themselves, and particularly, to view these relationships together offers a holistic approach to analysis and representation. For those seeking hyperlinking abilities and coding processes within the same software, ATLAS.ti5 provides a good choice because they have a similar *status* within the software. Being able to undertake analytic tasks in isolation or to integrate them at any point, offers a high degree of choice in tools and convergence of approaches (Lewins and Silver, 2007).

Integrated mapping tools are now a common feature of CAQDAS packages and used in tandem with either or both coding and hyperlinking, can reflect and support the dynamic and interconnected process of qualitative data analysis. These tools, however, vary considerably between packages and therefore careful consideration of practical and methodological requirements for mapping is required if choosing between products. In general terms most packages allow for a graphical representation of the codes used in the database, and options to link between concepts and categories to facilitate thinking about how they are related. In some cases, such as MAXqda, these links are simply visual representations, in the sense that they only hold true for the map in which

they occur. In other cases the links are functional in the sense that coded data can be retrieved, based on the links between them (e.g. ATLAS.ti, NVivo, Qualrus). Such differences in functionality have their pros and cons and clear effects on the ways tools may be utilized throughout the research process. Here we comment on a few additional examples.

The 'hypothesis test feature' in HyperRESEARCH (one of the few CAQDAS packages developed for MAC as well as PC platform) allows users to hypothesize a relationship between the occurrence of a given entity in the data and the occurrence of another (*if 'this' then 'that'*). When the two entities co-occur this can be made part of another hypothetical relationship. To construct testable hypotheses, users may need several 'if' and 'then' rules, each using code-words assigned to the data. The hypothesis test searches for cases where the codewords occur in the combinations the proposition requires. If they do, that case supports the proposition. To support such an approach

users have to satisfy themselves that the data supporting the hypothetical relationships are comparable and that coding has been done in a commensurate fashion.

Relationship nodes in NVivo7 provide an alternative means by which to link categories through user-defined relationships and code the evidence. This facility is rather different from the creation of hypertexts through hyperlinking, but may offer an alternative route through the data from that provided by traditional code and retrieve processes (see Figure 19.7). In contrast to packages including ATLAS.ti5 and Storyspace, linking in NVivo7 is based on coding, with the relationship itself acting as a code. The value is in keeping track of evidence for the statements embodied in and coded at the relationships, in order to easily check for the validity of interpretations (see an example in Figure 19.7). It remains to be seen if researchers will adopt this type of coding process as an alternative or supplement to traditional coding or hyperlinking.

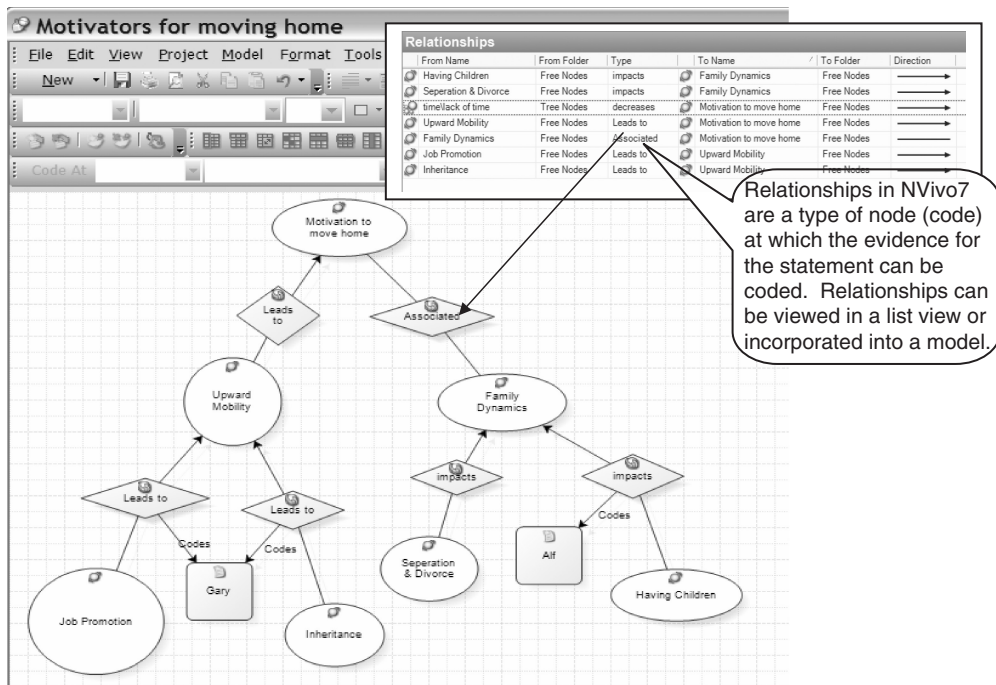


Figure 19.7 Relationships between codes in NVivo7 illustrated in a model

ATLAS.ti5 provides the ability to view linked quotations within a network, thus acting as a representation of linked data (see Figure 19.6). Network views have full interactivity with other windows. Linking codes together is functional in that quotations can be retrieved based on the properties of the relational links between the codes they are assigned to. As illustrated above, quotations derived from different source media (text, visual, graphic) can also be treated without coding the data. Coding and linking devices offer different levels at which to work. They can be integrated and provide systematic yet flexible ways to view and interpret data.

Ethical considerations

While the use of qualitative software imposes few ethical considerations beyond those generally associated with qualitative research (Chapter 15), there may be concerns about anonymity and confidentiality when holding data electronically and in a more accessible format than manual records. However, such concerns apply also to word processor files and any other electronic form of storage, and there are probably few researchers that do not nowadays use some form of electronic storage. It is worth ensuring that one practises regular password rotation and other forms of electronic 'good housekeeping', and, where projects involve transmitting data amongst team members across networks, thought should be given to measures such as encryption of any files containing real names.

Research funders and other bodies increasingly encourage the archiving of qualitative data with a view to its availability for secondary analysis. Archiving services such as Qualidata in the UK advise that demand is generally for 'raw' data rather than datasets that appear in analysed form within qualitative software but thought should be given when archiving as to whether data could be manipulated using the analysis features of qualitative software as a way to reveal respondent identity. This usually happens where a respondent has some distinctive characteristic. An example is the case of the oldest holder of a driving licence in a US state

who resided in a very depopulated county. Aligning this information with publicly available official information on welfare recipients would enable identification, although qualitative software was not used in the case in question.

A further consideration is where qualitative software is used to present findings and warrant analyses. This can be a very effective presentation device, especially to sceptical audiences, but researchers should not only take extra care over anonymization in such cases but remember to note this possible use when seeking informed consent during fieldwork.

Summary

We have taken three rather different approaches to analysing qualitative data to illustrate some of the ways CAQDAS can support different methods and applications. We have not presented an exhaustive illustration of how to 'do' any form of qualitative analysis, nor a comprehensive description of any software package, but we hope to have demonstrated that many CAQDAS packages may be usefully applied in different circumstances. The researcher is responsible for choosing between packages and manipulating tools for their specific purposes. Despite the perceived dominance of coding processes in CAQDAS packages, software can be used to manage the lower-level work with text characterized by approaches to discourse analysis and hypertext. The researcher need not abstract to the level of coding. Just because CAQDAS packages are good at coding does not mean this is all they are good at, or that coding processes need or should be utilized. That said, we encourage the critical and flexible use of codes in CAQDAS packages to perform tasks which are not limited to the thematic fragmentation of data for the purposes of identifying patterns and relationships or building theory. CAQDAS has been perceived as being dominated by code and retrieval, a task criticized for over-fragmenting data. A code in a CAQDAS package is merely a container for linking

segments of data. How they are used is not pre-defined by the software. It is also worth noting that the process of annotating, memoing, hyperlinking and mapping are essentially also in the business of reducing large amounts of data into concise interpretations. Whatever strategies employed or tools used, fragmentation in terms of viewing and considering data in isolation is an inevitable task. The benefit of using a software package to facilitate qualitative work lies in the interactivity it enables between the data and the various tools being used to see meaning in it and to represent aspects of it (see Lewins and Silver, 2007 for a more detailed discussion of flexible and critical uses of CAQDAS).

THE FUTURE: ADVANCED USES AND EMERGENT FEATURES

We have commented that developments in software lead to increased variety in tools provided by CAQDAS packages. This trend stretches both existing software typologies and methodological boundaries in new ways. Despite the need for method to come before software use, software encourages the researcher to challenge the boundaries of methodological convention and to document their work. CAQDAS developed around the needs of analysing textual data but qualitative research often draws on an eclectic range of information sources. Dependent on research design, it may seek to collate, manipulate and analyse documents collected in or about field settings, notes of observations and informal interviews made in the field, transcripts of formal interviews, audio and visual records of interaction, symbolic representations of data or conceptual schema, such as those expressed graphically, and numerical/statistical information, such as proportions of a sample associated with a given view, or psychometric and demographic information about participants. Thus, not all data are textual, and they vary in how 'raw' or constructed they may be. The ability to directly incorporate and analyse multimedia data in packages such as ATLAS.ti5

and Transana may have an impact on the type of work being undertaken, particularly as other packages follow suit. This is especially relevant to psychology where communicative interaction is often of interest. New grid-computing technologies offer the ability for research teams to co-analyse data across networks in real time without having to meetup.

A recent means of interrelating qualitative and quantitative data that embraces Caracelli and Green's integrated approach has emerged largely by stealth. This is the development of quantification routines within CAQDAS (Lee and Fielding, 1991). Most qualitative software counts 'hits' from specified retrievals (e.g. all single female interviewees who commented on divorce), and encourages triangulation by offering a port to export data to SPSS and import quantitative data tables. Some argue that such facilities represent a hybrid methodology transcending the quantitative/qualitative distinction. Bazeley (1999) suggests a 'fusion' of quantitative and qualitative data, Richards (2000) a 'dialectic' of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and Bourdon (2000) refers to a new, 'quantilative', form of method.

These claims relate to software that enables statistical information to be imported into qualitative databases and used to inform coding of text, with coded information then being exported to statistical software for further quantitative analysis. Many allow tabular import of for example, socio-demographic information relating to the qualitative data. This can enable the comparative interrogation of large amounts of data, for example open ended answers to surveys. CAQDAS packages usually also provide tabular information concerning how data have been coded, or the frequency of codes amongst different data. Some packages also have a command language for automating repetitive or large-scale processes, allowing autocoding of data. Quantitative data can be imported to inform interpretation before detailed coding, such as divisions within the sample that emerged from survey response.

Possibilities for interrelating data range from simple sorting of qualitative comments

by categorical or scaled criteria to incorporating the results of qualitative coding in correspondence analysis, logistic regression or other multivariate techniques. Categorized response sets exported to a statistics package for analysis are still linked to the qualitative data from which they were developed. For example, a matrix intersection tables in NVivo and MAXqda provide access to qualitative data from each cell of the matrix produced when a cross tabulation-type search is performed across data files. This enables users to show, for example, socio-demographic characteristics against any number of selected codes. Supplementing counts of hits, colour-graduation of table cells flags the density of coding in each cell. Analytic searches can thus be composed of combinations of interpretive coding and coding representing socio-demographic details.

In a study of compliance with vaccination programs discussed in Bazeley (1999), parents were asked to describe their thought process about immunization of their children. The narratives were qualitatively analysed to develop a model of decision-making. Coding related to features in the narratives was then used in a logistic regression, with 'immunization compliance' the dependent variable. This provided an evaluation of the (log) odds of compliance for each feature considered by the parent, controlling for the effect of other features. An alternative procedure here might be to use the dichotomous codes to construct truth tables following the technique of 'Qualitative Comparative Analysis' (Ragin, 1987), which produces one or more logically minimized sets of response configurations of causal variables associated with an outcome, and can be used with smaller data sets than are needed for multivariate statistical analysis (Fielding and Lee, 1998).

As well as differences in approaches discussed above, there is also a fundamental distinction between analysis based on *codes* and analysis based on *cases*. Case-oriented approaches, the basis of analytic induction, suit some analytic purposes. Analytic induction considers instances where some

phenomenon of interest is present, on the basis that it only occurs when particular conditions apply. The idea is to isolate the essential conditions determining the phenomenon. In fact, analytic induction also needs to consider cases where the phenomenon is *not* present, to be certain there are no cases where the conditions postulated for the phenomenon to occur appear in the absence of the phenomenon (Hicks (1994) called this 'neo-analytic induction'). Neo-analytic induction is useful in analysing dynamic processes, especially where there is an interest in causality. The approach called 'Qualitative Comparative Analysis' (Ragin, 1987) thinks in terms of outcomes, comparing outcomes across multiple cases. Cases are literally recognized as such from the different outcomes they display. Cases are differentiated by the relationship between their outcomes and the components they share with other cases having different outcomes. Qualitative Comparative Analysis uses mathematics to systematically identify 'universal conditions' which are always present in particular combinations when the phenomenon occurs. The 'QCA' software analyses conjunctures of particular elements of cases which bear on the outcome of a process.

These and other current developments indicate the way that CAQDAS has adapted to user requirements, and offers both novice and established researchers innovative ways of engaging with qualitative data. Many different types of software have been developed to support the analysis of qualitative data. These packages vary in specific functionality and as illustrated in this chapter, the suitability of given products for facilitating certain methodological and analytic strategies inevitably differs. Regardless of discipline and setting, researchers must assess the needs of their research projects in making informed choices about which package(s) will be most appropriate, if at all. The range of tools provided by CAQDAS packages continually increases as software develops and new tools extend possibilities in terms of handling, integrating and analysing qualitative data. Methodologists and researchers

remain responsible for using software tools in appropriate ways to support their analytic needs, and in documenting the strategies they use or develop. However, the addition of new possibilities in terms of available software tools can stretch established methodological approaches both in productive and less productive ways. It remains the case that there is no substitute for researchers making discriminating choices of the tools that are most fit for their purposes.

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Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: A Pragmatic Approach

Lucy Yardley and Felicity Bishop

INTRODUCTION: THE PERILS OF COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

As qualitative methods have become more widely accepted and used in psychological research, interest has naturally grown in combining the use of these methods with the quantitative methods more commonly used in psychology over the past century. If both qualitative and quantitative methods are acknowledged as valid and valuable, it is not immediately obvious why combining them should pose any problems, or indeed should merit a chapter devoted to the topic. Ostensibly, it should be a simple matter of selecting and implementing whatever method can best address a particular research question. No books on quantitative research methods find it necessary to include a chapter on the problems associated with combining descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing in a single study, or an experimental design

with questionnaire measurement! Moreover, it could be argued that there is at least as much diversity *within* the categories quantitative and qualitative methods as between them (Hammersley, 1996). A realist interview-based description of the beliefs of a particular group of people has more in common with a survey of their beliefs than it has with a discourse analysis of the socio-political functions of the discourses and concepts reproduced in the interviews or survey.

So why is combining qualitative and quantitative methods potentially difficult and contentious? The reason is that the differences between qualitative and quantitative researchers do not, fundamentally, centre on whether the interview or questionnaire is the best method of eliciting views, or whether thematic coding or numeric scoring is the best way to summarize data. The methodological disagreements that historically have led to a rift between qualitative and quantitative research emanate

from more profound differences in the theoretical perspectives and paradigms on which each type of research is typically based. Whereas qualitative research is typically associated with 'interpretive' or 'constructivist' paradigms, quantitative research is generally associated with 'scientific' or 'positivist' paradigms. Although this chapter will make the case that the differences between these approaches have been greatly exaggerated, and can be overcome, it is nevertheless vital to be aware of them. If the different assumptions and aims of qualitative and quantitative research are not acknowledged, research that mixes these methods is likely to inadvertently violate the assumptions or fail to realize the aims of one or other of these approaches.

Because the scientific/positivist approach is dominant within psychology, when the potential problems posed by mixing methods are overlooked this is often because the scientific/positivist approach is simply adopted by default, in ignorance of the significance of alternative paradigms for qualitative research (Rabinowitz and Weseen, 2001; Sale et al., 2002). Lack of awareness of interpretive and constructivist approaches to qualitative research can result in a variety of problems and deficiencies in the use of qualitative methods. The researcher may apply irrelevant and inappropriate criteria for validity to the qualitative part of the research, such as reliability, objectivity, or the use of a large, random sample. Alternatively, even where more appropriate forms of validation are employed, such as purposive sampling and triangulation, these may be applied in a formulaic manner in order to 'establish' validity, rather than being used as a means of explaining and interrogating the research process (Barbour, 2003). When analysing the data, a researcher who has an implicit realist approach may fail to fully realize the interpretive potential of qualitative methods, taking statements at face value rather than considering their contextual and symbolic meanings and functions. Most seriously of all, conclusions may be drawn that cannot be justified using

qualitative methods – for example, that causal relationships or differences between populations have been demonstrated. Although less common in psychology, lack of awareness of the assumptions of quantitative research is of course equally problematic, if it leads to a failure to meet the requirements of the quantitative part of the research (such as a sufficiently large and representative sample, reliable measures, and appropriate statistical tests).

Even if the researchers are sufficiently expert in both methods to avoid these pitfalls, the lack of an explicit theoretical framework that can embrace both approaches equally may lead to problems in integrating the findings of each method. If an implicit quantitative/positivist perspective dominates the research, then qualitative research may be viewed as having only a supporting role (Foss and Ellefsen, 2002). Qualitative methods may be restricted to preliminary stages of the research – for example, to develop questionnaire items to use in quantitative surveys, or to suggest hypotheses that are then tested quantitatively. When qualitative research is carried out in parallel with the quantitative research, it may be employed merely to elaborate and illustrate quantitative findings. While these approaches to mixing methods can actually work well as long as the findings from both methods are congruent, difficulties may arise if the qualitative and quantitative findings appear to contradict each other. If the quantitative/positivist paradigm is dominant then when conflicting results emerge the qualitative evidence is likely to be discounted or discarded as less rigorous and objective, rather than being regarded as a different kind of evidence that may reflect a different and important kind of truth. Moreover, when qualitative research is treated as merely an adjunct to quantitative research, the scope for it to challenge and therefore enrich the research process is diminished. For example, interpretive/constructivist qualitative research should be able to question the meaning and validity of the concepts and measures used in the quantitative research,

rather than treating these as pre-determined objective realities.

If qualitative and quantitative methods are to be combined most productively, it may be helpful to identify or develop a theoretical framework that is able to embrace and integrate these different perspectives. The first half of this chapter paves the way for a common theoretical framework by arguing that the opposition between the interpretive/constructivist paradigms associated with qualitative research and the scientific/positivist paradigms associated with quantitative research is maintained by misleading conceptions of both 'science' and 'constructivism', often held by both the supporters and the opponents of each approach. After outlining these stereotypical conceptions of qualitative and quantitative approaches, we consider how pragmatic theory can help to deconstruct the differences between interpretive/constructivist and scientific/positivist approaches to research, and so provide a rationale and a framework for combining qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry.

In the second half of the chapter the ways in which qualitative and quantitative methods can be fruitfully combined are then considered. A variety of ways of combining and validating mixed methods research are outlined, and a 'composite analysis' approach is suggested as a means of integrating the findings from studies that utilize different methods. The final section provides a reflexive example of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, based on the shared research experience of the co-authors.

CONTRASTING THE SCIENTIFIC/POSITIVIST AND INTERPRETIVE/CONSTRUCTIVIST PARADIGMS

The scientific approach to knowledge creation can be traced back to the beginning of the industrial era, when rationalist, mechanistic thinking was becoming increasingly popular and successful. At this time the

philosopher Descartes suggested an epistemology (i.e. a theory of how best to gain knowledge about the world) that was compatible with a growing appreciation that many aspects of the world are amenable to rational analysis and manipulation (Yardley, 1999). His famous tenet '*Cogito, ergo sum*' (I think, therefore I am) expressed a belief that the only direct knowledge we can have is of our own mind, and that all other knowledge of the world must be obtained by observation. Consequently, it is vital to make observations that are as accurate as possible in order to gain a correct understanding of the world. The scientific method can be seen as a way of achieving the most accurate possible observations, by using controlled environments to eliminate the multiple sources of variability present in the world, and precise (quantitative) measures in order to avoid the inaccuracy associated with subjective impressions. This method has of course been spectacularly successful in helping us to understand and control the physical world. It is therefore not surprising that in psychology scientific methods have been employed to try to understand the factors that influence thought and behaviour.

However, in the latter half of the twentieth century the belief in the possibility of 'objective' knowledge was increasingly challenged and replaced by a view of knowledge as a way of perceiving and relating to the world that is inevitably shaped by pre-existing concepts, shared assumptions, and habitual or 'taken-for-granted' ways of doing things. This 'constructivist' perspective argues that our awareness of the world is completely mediated by our particular subjective and socio-cultural experiences. It is therefore not possible for any humans, including scientists, to set aside the socio-cultural assumptions and values which form their identity and guide their activities; hence it is impossible to achieve 'objective' knowledge. From this viewpoint, the scientific method can still be seen as a useful tool for analysing physical processes, but is not an appropriate method of gaining some other types of understanding. In order to understand how we relate

to the world we need to critically examine the normative concepts and habitual practices that shape our perceptions – including the assumptions and practices of scientific psychological research itself (Gergen, 1985; Sampson, 1993; Yardley, 1997).

It is easy to see why the aims and methods of these two approaches might be seen as fundamentally incompatible. From a constructivist perspective, controlled experimental studies of psychological behaviour are artificial environments that strip participants of the very agency, individuality and social context which gives their activities meaning. Similarly, the reliable, pre-determined self-report measures used to measure attitudes and beliefs prevent respondents from expressing alternative or contradictory viewpoints, and therefore impose the researcher's conceptions on their responses. At best, scientific psychological research therefore risks simply creating unnatural situations in which behaviour can be predicted and controlled but that have minimal relevance to the processes operating in non-experimental contexts. At worst, scientific psychological research may thereby deflect attention from important socio-cultural and political influences on the ways in which humans think, talk and act (Gergen, 1992).

Conversely, positivists are concerned that when constructivists reject the ideal of objectivity, and affirm the ubiquity and importance of social values in research, they open the door to the radical relativist position that all beliefs (and therefore analyses) are equally valid – or worse still pave the way for partisan advocacy of a particular subjective viewpoint. Positivists argue that if the attempt to ground research in objective reality is abandoned then there are no grounds upon which researchers can base their claims that their analysis is relevant to others, or is superior to alternative interpretations. Consequently, constructivist research lacks any credibility as empirical investigation. From a positivist point of view, this lack of scientific validity is reflected in the failure of most qualitative research to introduce rigorous ways of identifying and excluding opinions, whether of the

investigator or the participants, which may be idiosyncratic, 'biased', or incorrect.

PRAGMATISM: A BASIS FOR COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE INQUIRY

While these viewpoints may appear diametrically and irreconcilably opposed, a philosophical basis for inquiry known as 'pragmatism' has been suggested as a framework which has the potential to embrace both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Fishman, 1999). Pragmatism addresses the concerns of both qualitative and quantitative researchers by pointing out that *all* human inquiry involves imagination and interpretation, intentions and values but must also necessarily be grounded in empirical, embodied experience. For pragmatists, the aim of inquiry is not to seek a truth that is independent from human experience, but to achieve a better, richer experience – whether through scientific analysis, artistic exploration, social negotiation, or any productive combination of these different approaches (Maxcy, 2003).

The early pragmatist John Dewey proposed that commonsense, scientific and moral judgements are *all* based on knowing what things are good for, and what changes need to be made (Hickman and Alexander, 1998). According to Dewey, knowledge is therefore intrinsically linked to intentions and actions, and takes its meaning from our evaluation of its effects: 'The right, the true and good, difference is that which carries out satisfactorily the specific purpose for the sake of which knowing occurs' (Hickman and Alexander, 1998: 129). This is a functional definition of knowledge and truth, which is grounded in external reality but also relativist, since truth is defined in relation to a particular goal in a particular context rather than by correspondence to an ideal of universal, objective 'truth'. All actions (including the acts of observing and interpreting, or 'knowing') are evaluated as being more or less 'right' depending upon the extent to

which they achieve their goal – whether this goal is to cure cancer or to change our views of what the roles of older people in society should be. Hence, any evaluation of the ‘rightness’ of the actions *must* refer to the test of external consequences. However, the relevant consequences, and the best method of evaluating them, will differ greatly depending on the type of knowledge/actions concerned. Knowledge/actions intended to cure cancer should be evaluated by their effects on tumours and life expectancy. Quantitative methods such as laboratory experiments and randomized controlled trials undoubtedly lend valuable precision for establishing the effectiveness of the cure – although in the early stages of experimentation and hypothesis development there is likely to also be an element of qualitative observation and interpretation of the effects of the new process. Knowledge/actions intended to change our views of what roles older people should play in society must be evaluated by the extent to which they are found persuasive by members of that society and lead to real social change. Qualitative methods are particularly well suited to gaining an in-depth understanding of the moral reasoning, experiences and social practices of members of a society that will shape views of older people’s capabilities, desires, and responsibilities – although quantitative surveys could also be used to assess changes in views and activities.

Rorty (1982: xxix) summed up the pragmatic definition of valid knowledge in the statement ‘there is no pragmatic difference, no difference which makes a difference, between “it works because it’s true” and “it’s true because it works” ... there is no pragmatic difference between the nature of truth and the test of truth’. It is easy to see that this pragmatic definition of knowledge is highly compatible with constructivist approaches. Kvale (1992: 32) writes that in a postmodern approach to psychology ‘knowledge becomes the ability to perform effective actions’ and is legitimated by how effectively it is communicated and the impact it has on practice. Dewey himself proposed the constructivist

view that through social transactions we come to understand multiple subjective realities while seeking agreement on shared experience that can form a basis for (inter)action (Maxcy, 2003). Moreover, Dewey also took a constructivist view of the research process as a means of *creating* form and structure rather than discovering pre-existing form and structure. Hence, the scientific approach can also be understood from a pragmatic perspective as just another form of purposive, constructive activity which ultimately shares the same fundamental test of validity as any other form of human inquiry: What happens if ...?

The history and philosophy of science support a reconceptualization of science as a very human enterprise characterized by uncertainty, faith and passion, rather than a neutral process of objective observation. Kuhn (cited in Fishman, 1999) noted that the fundamental assumptions about the world which provide the foundation for scientific paradigms are themselves untestable – we will simply never be able to objectively evaluate the extent to which we have unbiased knowledge that is independent of our own activities and perspective. Potter (1996) points out that positivism is actually pragmatic in its approach, since only testable hypotheses are considered able to generate reliable knowledge. Post-positivist scientific thinking has increasingly abandoned any conception of verifying absolute truth, seeking instead to try to ‘falsify’ or *disprove* our current best working model of reality. Indeed, it is perfectly possible to use the technology of quantitative methods with a constructivist perspective, provided that the researcher is reflexively aware of and open about the way in which the findings of the research are influenced by the assumptions and constraints of the research methods used (Gergen, Gloger-Tippelt and Bertowitz, 1990).

The history and philosophy of science also suggest that both quantitative *and* qualitative modes of analysis are essential to scientific research. Dewey observed that:

‘Scientific’ thinking ... never gets away from qualitative existence. Directly, it always has its own qualitative background; indirectly it has that of

the world in which the ordinary experience of the common man is lived.

Hickman and Alexander (1998: 205)

Quine (cited in Fishman, 1999) noted that when an experiment yields surprising data we must *interpret* whether these are due to error or an artefact of the method, or whether we must change our theories to account for these observations (Fishman, 1999). It is essential to use our qualitative understanding of the context of an experiment, based on prior experience, common sense and interpretation, to decide when findings are likely to be trustworthy or distorted by some spurious feature of the experimental procedure (House, 1994). Moreover, in practice the conduct and interpretation of an experiment is not a matter of cold calculation, but is influenced by our personal knowledge and vision of reality, our aspirations and commitments, and the relationships of trust which allow us to draw on other people's research when interpreting our own (Thorpe, 2001). Experimentation can be viewed from a pragmatic perspective as a dramatic social exhibition of theory in practice (Wertz, 1999), even though by convention it must be presented as an unambiguous demonstration of objective 'facts'. Anyone who has carried out quantitative research will be aware of the numerous uncertainties, complexities, and errors that must inevitably be excluded from the short experimental report, helping to create an idealized but unrealistic impression of scientific research as an almost mechanical demonstration of rational propositions (Rabinowitz and Weseen, 2001).

In summary, from a pragmatic perspective there is no fundamental contradiction between the basic objectives and characteristics of qualitative/constructivist and scientific/positivist research, even though the methods of inquiry and validation appropriate for each approach are very different. However, while pragmatism may appear to offer a way to end the quantitative versus qualitative 'paradigm war', not everyone regards it as a convincing solution. Most quantitative researchers readily acknowledge that

they can never attain an accurate knowledge of the world, but many still consider this a vital ultimate goal. Researchers who retain the ideal of seeking objective truth often reject the proposition that all human endeavours necessarily have pragmatic aims, and that knowledge is therefore fundamentally shaped by intended actions and shared evaluations. Conversely, while the relativist nature of pragmatism is more acceptable to constructivist qualitative researchers, the political dimension of pragmatist theory is not widely appreciated. Consequently, a pragmatic approach is often equated with an instrumental or utilitarian approach, i.e. a focus on practical, limited objectives that detracts from attention to the wider socio-political concerns that have shaped these objectives. However, Dewey explicitly rejected the idea that research could be isolated from such concerns, asserting that:

The entire operation of individual experimentation and soliloquizing has been influenced at every point by reference to the social medium in which their results are to be set forth and responded to.

Hickman and Alexander (1998: 331)

Dewey emphasized that all creative pragmatic inquiry must therefore constantly bring to light the conflicting interests and ideologies and question the contemporary social conventions that influence the aims of research and our understanding of what is 'good' and 'true'.

Even those who welcome mixing methods warn of the danger that, since the quantitative paradigm remains dominant, the distinctive contribution of a qualitative perspective could become lost if the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches are disregarded (Rabinowitz and Weseen, 2001; Henwood, 2004). Moreover, a pluralist epistemology can create diverse forms of knowledge that are then difficult to integrate (Wertz, 1999). Consequently, while adopting a pragmatic epistemological framework, the following section considers how best to combine very different kinds of research without compromising their integrity.

FROM MIXING METHODS TO COMPOSITE ANALYSIS: USING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS AS COMPLEMENTARY MODES OF INQUIRY

Advantages of combining qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry

It could be argued that it is not simply advantageous but actually *necessary* for psychologists to use both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain a complete understanding of humans. House and McDonald (1998: 184–5) propose that:

A morally and politically sensitive science has to take account of the ways that descriptions of humans as physical objects or biological organisms are value-laden. Likewise, our accounts of ourselves as moral agents will have to give due account to our physical embodiment.

If we want to understand all aspects of human existence, from our brain processes to our moral agendas, it is likely we will need to draw on a wide variety of methods in order to do so. In order to understand how qualitative and quantitative methods can offer complementary modes of inquiry, it may be helpful to consider what different approaches are particularly good for.

Quantitative methods have high levels of ‘internal validity’, which means that strong conclusions and often causal inferences can be drawn from them (McGrath and Johnson, 2003). This type of validity is achieved by using precise, reliable, replicable measures and samples and tightly controlled experimental conditions, to reduce variability in the data due to factors considered irrelevant to the hypothesis that is being tested. The advantage of high internal validity is that it is possible to make strong claims about what has been demonstrated, since alternative explanations have been excluded or controlled. However, increases in internal validity often come at the cost of decreases in ‘external validity’ – the extent to which

the findings of the research correspond to conditions in everyday life. The use of artificial settings or measures such as laboratories and questionnaires, while permitting precision, control and economy, may thus affect the extent to which these strong claims can actually be extended to target ‘real-world’ contexts. In contrast, qualitative research typically attempts to situate data collection and interpretation of data in context, sacrificing precision and control in order to do this. Examination of phenomena in context permits identification of meanings, processes and relationships that may be crucial in real-life situations, but that the quantitative investigator may not have anticipated and therefore included in the controlled experiment. Combining the internal validity of quantitative methods with the external validity of qualitative research can thus be a very productive way of mixing methods. For example, quantitative randomized controlled trials to evaluate the efficacy of an intervention can be combined with qualitative studies of the context and process of the intervention implementation in order to gain insights into why and how the intervention may or may not work in practice for different people and in different situations (Pope and Mays, 1995; Hawe et al., 2003).

Investigation of naturally complex and changing real-world environments using qualitative methods of observation makes it impossible to isolate the effect of any particular factor and assign a definite causal status to it, and so qualitative methods are inappropriate for deductive (i.e. theory-based) hypothesis testing. However, using this approach it is possible to examine a great many factors simultaneously, and to consider holistically how they may relate to each other and change over time (Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003). Quantitative research in psychology is very tightly constrained by the requirements of statistical testing: only a limited number of variables can be assessed at a limited number of time-points or the number of participants and measures needed for reliable analysis rapidly becomes impractical.

Although (or rather because) qualitative research is also very resource intensive, the depth and breadth of the data gathered from any sizeable sample is typically vast, permitting multiple analyses of numerous simultaneous processes and interactions. Consequently, qualitative research is an ideal method of inductive (i.e. data-based) hypothesis generation, since it is unnecessary to identify in advance which factors will prove relevant. Qualitative research can therefore be used as a means of carrying out more systematically the qualitative theory-building process that must inevitably precede quantitative hypothesis testing.

A related way in which qualitative and quantitative methods can complement each other is that whereas quantitative research provides relatively 'thin', norm-referenced data that can be compared to data from different people and populations, qualitative research yields 'thick' data about individual experience. In order to achieve statistical reliability, quantitative research must ignore or eliminate variability and inconsistency between and within people's experiences, whereas qualitative research can explicitly explore unusual or apparently contradictory experiences. As a result, a numeric questionnaire based rating of, say, 'anxiety' may usefully indicate how close or far a person (or more often a group of people) is from this state, but qualitative data is better able to capture the diverse, complex meanings of the subjective experiences and social situations of different anxious people. The difference in the utility of the two types of information can be likened to the difference between a map of the location of a city and a video of a visit to a city. If these were the only sources of information available then *both* would be vital to a decision as to whether to visit the city. Only the video (despite being subjective and selective) could give an impression of what the city would actually be like to visit, but without the map it would be impossible to tell how to get there and how long it would take to do so. Similarly, when developing a new intervention

for anxiety, for example, case studies might provide the most useful illustration for practitioners of how the intervention works with different clients (Fishman, 1999). However, policy-makers are likely to require quantitative data on the prevalence of anxiety and cost-effectiveness of the intervention in order to be convinced and to persuade others of the necessity and utility of the proposed intervention, and in order to manage provision effectively on a large scale (Griffin and Phoenix, 1994).

The relative advantages of qualitative and quantitative methods therefore depend on the purpose and also the topic of inquiry. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for inquiring into subjective meanings and their socio-cultural context, if these meanings are seen as malleable, negotiable interpretations which people offer themselves and others to make sense of their feelings and actions rather than as causes or mechanisms that can be scientifically proven. However, if we wish to study how these subjective experiences are linked to the biological dimension of our lives it may be necessary to use numbers (such as questionnaire scores) as an approximate index of subjective experience so that we can relate these to numeric indices of physiological functioning.

In summary, by mixing methods it is possible to arrive at a richer and more complete description of a phenomenon than by using a single approach. However, it should never be assumed that the insights derived from these different methods will necessarily converge – Reichardt and Rallis (1994) points out that one of the greatest advantages of mixing methods is that the quantitative and qualitative approaches are both particularly expert at critiquing the methods and conclusions of the other approach! The purpose of good qualitative/constructivist research is often to question taken-for-granted concepts, and to highlight and examine exceptions, inconsistencies and suppressed meanings – and as a result the findings of the quantitative component of the research may need to be questioned and qualified (Barbour, 1998). Similarly, experiences described in

qualitative research may be shown by quantitative methods to be atypical, and perceived links between aspects of that experience suggested by interviewees may not be confirmed by correlational analysis or experimental testing.

Ways of combining qualitative and quantitative modes of inquiry: From mixed methods to composite analysis

Given the range of qualitative and quantitative methods, and scientific and interpretive/constructivist approaches, the ways in which they can be mixed are virtually limitless. Nevertheless, in designing mixed methods studies it is helpful to consider a number of key questions (see Creswell et al., 2004). The researcher should be clear about the reasons for mixing methods, and the aims to be achieved by each component of a mixed methods study. It should also be clear what paradigms are being used, how these are to be integrated, and whether priority is given to either the qualitative or quantitative component of the research. Questions about how the mixed methods research will be put into practice also need to be addressed. What types of qualitative and quantitative data will be collected? In what sequence will the qualitative and quantitative studies be conducted? At what phase of the research will the qualitative and quantitative data be related to each other?

A variety of ways of representing the designs of mixed methods studies have been suggested. An economical form of notation has been proposed (Creswell et al., 2003) whereby whichever method is given priority is represented in capital letters (using the abbreviations 'QUAL' or 'QUANT'). A plus sign indicates that both methods are employed simultaneously, while an arrow indicates a sequence of studies. For example, Ziersch, Baum, MacDougall and Putland (2005) carried out a large survey to determine relationships between perceived quality of neighbourhood life and perceived health, and followed this up with interviews with

40 of the survey respondents in order to elaborate on the relationships found in the quantitative analysis and explore the complexities of neighbourhood life. In this study the quantitative analysis was given priority and was carried out first, and so the design would be represented as:

QUANT → qual

In contrast, Deren and colleagues (2003) carried out an ethnographic study in parallel with a survey to examine HIV-related risk behaviour in drug users. They gave equal priority to both methods. For example, an early finding from the qualitative research that risk-taking was greater when pooling money to buy drugs led to inclusion of additional questions in the survey concerning the prevalence of this behaviour. Conversely, ethnographic methods were used to follow up a surprising finding from the survey that living with family in Puerto Rico was associated with more risky behaviour (ethnography revealed that this was due to having no private space in which to inject at home). This study could be represented as:

QUAL + QUANT

Alternatively, diagrams can be used to represent study designs in more detail (Creswell et al., 2003). As an illustration, Figure 20.1 shows the relationship between qualitative and quantitative research questions, data collection, data analysis and interpretation in the research programme described in the following section.

While the widely used term 'mixed methods' has been employed above, it may also be valuable to consider the extent to which the quantitative and qualitative components of a research programme can and should genuinely be 'mixed'. It has been noted above that preserving the distinctive character of different qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches is the key to maintaining their integrity and thus maximizing their different contributions to knowledge. Consequently, it could

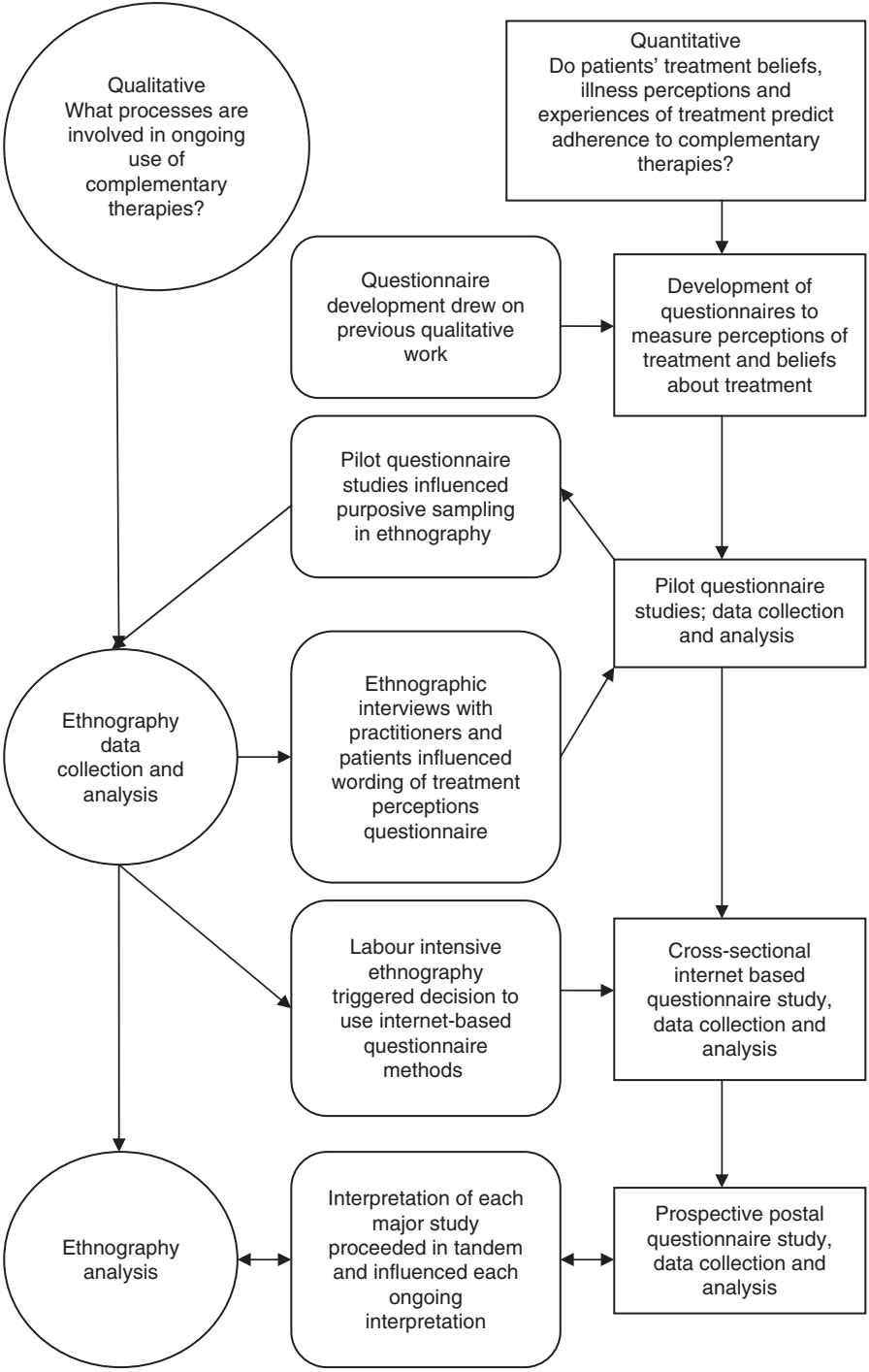


Figure 20.1 The relationship between qualitative and quantitative aspects of the mixed methods research programme

be argued that research programmes that employ both quantitative and qualitative methods should seek to integrate the findings from component studies rather than mix their methods. Moreover, the term ‘mixed methods’ implicitly perpetuates the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research, emphasizing the distinction between numerical and non-numerical analysis while ignoring the enormous diversity present within qualitative (and quantitative) paradigms and methods. On a practical level, although journals are now beginning to accept and even encourage ‘mixed methods’ studies, it is extremely difficult to do justice to substantive pieces of qualitative *and* quantitative research within the space constraints of a single journal article. Consequently, when qualitative and quantitative studies are carried out as complementary pieces of research it is usually necessary to publish each separately. While the term ‘mixed methods’ may describe the design of research which aims to combine the insights from qualitative and quantitative studies, ‘composite analysis’ may be a useful way of describing how the findings from different methodological approaches can be integrated in a manner that respects their unique characteristics, and thus exploits their potential to yield complementary insights. The term ‘composite analysis’ recognizes

that the analysis is composed of independent parts, but that the whole is greater than the sum of these parts.

The ‘composite’ rather than ‘mixed’ character of research that employs disparate methodologies becomes particularly pertinent when considering how to establish the validity of the various components of the research. It is essential to maintain coherence between the aims of the research method and the means that are employed to ensure and demonstrate that the conclusions are valid. Consequently, the *methods* of demonstrating validity will be different for the different parts of the study, consistent with their different objectives. A variety of methods of validating qualitative and quantitative research are described fully in textbooks relevant to each kind of research, but Table 20.1 illustrates some of the different ways in which quantitative and qualitative researchers may seek to validate their research. While some broad approaches to validating research can be briefly summarized, these inevitably subsume important differences between different qualitative (and quantitative) methods (for a more complete consideration of what different methods of validation are appropriate for different research methods, see Yardley, 1997, 2000, 2007). For example, when seeking to validate a researcher’s interpretation of a segment of text, for a realist

Table 20.1 Different methods of enhancing validity in qualitative and quantitative studies

<i>Quantitative studies</i>	<i>Qualitative studies</i>
Clear testable hypotheses specified, derived from relevant theoretical models and empirical literature	Study informed by in-depth knowledge of context (e.g. from immersion in context, socio-cultural theory, theoretically relevant qualitative research)
Sample is statistically representative of population to which researchers wish to generalize findings	Sample represents range of people whose views and experiences are important to fully understanding the phenomenon
Appropriate procedures are used to reduce systematic bias in observations (e.g. blind and/or automated data collection; standardized measures and measurement procedures)	The possible influences of the researchers on the data generated are reflexively considered and appropriately managed (e.g. setting for interviews; age, gender of interviewer relative to interviewee)
Internal validity is maximized (e.g. reliability of measures established; extraneous sources of error controlled)	External validity is maximized (e.g. interview schedule encourages unconstrained responses; real-world data collection)
Statistical analyses performed with appropriate attention to meeting assumptions (e.g. distributions of data; power of analyses; treatment of missing data and outliers)	In-depth analysis carried out using rigorous, transparent procedures (e.g. negative case analysis; comparisons between different coders; respondent validation)

content analysis one might calculate inter-rater reliability, for a phenomenological analysis one might check the interpretation with the interviewee, while for a discourse analysis one might present the text so that the reader could contest the interpretation given. It is also important to appreciate that if different methods of inquiry are used, with different forms of validity, they may yield different but equally important kinds of 'truth'. For example, if a healing relationship produces a 'placebo' effect, patients' first-hand accounts of the interactive process which enhanced subjective wellbeing may be as important to effective health care as the hard quantitative evidence that physiological status remained unchanged.

Although the ways in which qualitative and quantitative researchers must seek to validate their research differ, several authors have noted that often these different methods serve a common purpose (e.g. Elliott et al., 1999) – which is not surprising if the common pragmatic goal of all research is acknowledged. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers share a belief in the fallibility of knowledge, the need to link theory and empirical observation, the obligation to carry out research rigorously and conscientiously, and the necessity of critique and dissemination of research (Sale et al., 2002). Both kinds of research require a varied sample that is adequate to allow generalization to a wider group of people with specified characteristics, and strategies for attaining sufficient distance from the data to be able to abstract analytical patterns (Malterud, 2001). Common dilemmas also include how best to represent data and to reflexively consider the way in which it may have been influenced by the methods used (Henwood, 2004). In addition, both qualitative and quantitative researchers must ensure that their research can be seen to be coherent, comprehensible and convincing, sensitive to context, and above all (from a pragmatic perspective) to have real importance, whether for advancing theoretical understanding or for practical purposes (Yardley, 2000, 2007).

A REFLEXIVE ILLUSTRATION: UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS OF COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY

An overview of the research programme

The overall aim of the mixed methods research programme discussed here was to identify why people adhere to complementary therapy. The philosophical rationale for combining methods was based on a pragmatic standpoint (as outlined above). The initial decision to combine methods stemmed from a desire to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of why people adhere to complementary therapy than could be achieved through relying on one single method. It was necessary therefore to select methods which had complementary strengths and weaknesses and could be used to investigate complementary aspects of the research question. Two main methods were chosen, qualitative ethnographic research and quantitative questionnaire research. The relevant strengths of ethnographic methods include: ability to access habitual and non-verbal aspects of behaviour (through observation); more naturalistic; offer a means to focus on dynamic processes involved in behaviour; focus on meanings, experiences and concerns of individuals within a specific context; can situate analyses of behaviour in the broader socio-cultural context. The complementary strengths of prospective questionnaire methods include: ability to investigate which factors predict behaviour over time; can suggest the extent to which different concepts are important; permits testing of hypotheses; ability to make systematic comparisons between groups of people.

This programme of research was inspired by a previous programme of research (combining a grounded theory study with a longitudinal qualitative and quantitative study of perceptions and adherence to therapy; Yardley et al., 2001) which had generated hypotheses about how experiences of therapy might influence adherence that required further exploration and testing.

The self-regulation framework (Leventhal et al., 1992) was used to guide the research. The framework makes specific predictions about the factors and processes that influence ongoing use of complementary therapy, and these predictions were explored empirically through qualitative and quantitative research. The ethnographic work investigated the processes involved in decisions to continue using complementary therapy among a small purposive sample of 46 participants. This resulted in the development of a process-oriented model of complementary therapy use which suggested ways in which people experience and evaluate complementary therapies, and highlighted the way in which individuals' health care decisions are embedded in the immediate context of the clinics and the wider socio-cultural context. The questionnaire work focused on the relative strength of associations between relevant attitudes and beliefs and adherence to complementary therapy. Two new questionnaire measures were developed and employed in a prospective study with 240 participants which showed that positive experiences of treatment were stronger predictors of adherence to complementary therapy than treatment and illness beliefs.

While the research programme was designed to allow (as far as possible) each part of the research to inform and be informed by the other parts of the programme, a 'composite analysis' approach was adopted to ensure that each component of the programme could be validated in its own terms and presented as an internally consistent and complete piece of research. This also made it possible to present the findings of each component study in a meaningful way to different groups with different interests. For example, the studies developing the questionnaires were presented to those (clinicians and researchers) interested primarily in measuring attitudes to complementary therapy, the quantitative studies were presented to those interested mainly in testing the self-regulation framework, and the qualitative studies were presented to those interested in developing and elaborating

theory concerning the use of complementary therapy.

Consideration of problems and advantages of combining these methods in this study

Having developed a rationale for combining ethnographic and questionnaire work, the first problematic issues encountered were deciding which approach, if any, should take priority and how the methods should be combined in terms of a time-frame. As the ethnographic and questionnaire work were intended to examine different aspects of the same phenomenon, they were given equal status in the programme as a whole. However, it did not necessarily follow that the different strands of work should proceed in parallel or be kept apart until completed. Indeed, in order to maximize the benefits of using two methods we intended findings from each to feed into the development of the other during the evolution of the project. Figure 20.1 illustrates how this was achieved in practice over the course of the research programme.

While the precise timing of each phase of each strand of research may be planned in advance, the real world does have a tendency to alter the course of any research project. By conducting two major studies together any such alterations to one study will necessitate corresponding alterations to the planning of the other study. In this case, there was an unavoidable delay in the initiation of the ethnography, which meant that qualitative observations would not be available to inform the development of the questionnaires as had been originally planned. Instead, existing qualitative literature (including the findings from the previous research programme) was used to inform the development of the questionnaires. Having developed draft questionnaires before the ethnography started meant that qualitative feedback on these questionnaires could then be obtained from participants in the ethnographic work. A key issue in the development of the questionnaire that measured patients' perceptions of therapy

was finalizing which term to use to refer to practitioners in items that asked patients to rate their perceptions of their practitioners' competence, expertise and communication. Discussions with practitioners and users of a range of complementary therapies who were participating in the ethnography contributed to the decision to use the term therapist rather than alternatives such as practitioner or provider. Certain terms were seen as more appropriate for specific complementary therapies (such as practitioner for osteopathy) and there was a general preference among the practitioners for the term practitioner. However, patients found the term therapist easier to understand and it was seen by both patients and practitioners as a descriptor which was applicable to a range of complementary therapies. Thus it was still possible, albeit to a lesser extent and in a different way than originally planned, to use the ethnographic work to inform the questionnaire development.

One researcher (FB) took the lead role in all of the data collection and analysis in this research programme. In practice this led to some difficulties in managing the interplay between the different approaches, owing to problems such as relative timing of the labour intensive aspects of each part of the research. The ethnographic field work involved spending a period of three months in two complementary therapy clinics and required immersion in the settings and the emerging data and analysis. During this period therefore it was not possible to devote any time to the questionnaire research. However the questionnaire research needed to be taken forward at this stage of the project in order to complete the prospective study in the given time-frame. This difficulty was resolved by using the internet to collect cross-sectional questionnaire data to provide an initial test of the quantitative hypotheses (once initiated this means of data collection requires no input from the researcher). Nevertheless, there were advantages of one person leading on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Observations from one approach are more likely to be recognized

as relevant to the other approach, and may be easier to integrate given familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For example, one of the pilot questionnaire studies showed that patients who were seeing their therapist for ongoing treatment had more positive perceptions of their therapist and therapy than patients who had only seen their therapist once. The study also alerted us to the difficulty of recruiting new patients compared to returning patients, a difficulty which was anticipated to recur in the prospective questionnaire study. This pilot study thus emphasized the need to purposively interview both new and returning patients in the ethnography both on theoretical and practical grounds. Having first-hand knowledge of both research processes can also facilitate the comparative evaluation of the findings from each process.

Part of our rationale for combining methods was that qualitative and quantitative approaches can complement each other by providing a balance across the strengths and weaknesses of different studies. This was indeed the case, in that rather different questions were addressed concerning the same phenomenon, and relating these findings provoked suggestions for future research. For example, the prospective questionnaire study included people who were new to complementary therapy and those who had used it before but could not test differences between these groups because the number of new patients recruited was too low. However, from the qualitative study it appeared that people are often unwilling to commit to evaluating their experience of treatment after only one consultation, wanting to 'wait and see' before passing judgment on a treatment. Thus an important issue for future research is to examine the role of experiences of the first consultation only and to systematically compare this to the role of subsequent consultations in decision-making. Similarly, the questionnaire study was limited to testing *a priori* hypotheses concerning the relationship to adherence of particular aspects of patients' beliefs and experiences previously identified as potentially important

to adherence to therapy in general. The qualitative study was able to balance this limitation by incorporating therapists' perspectives in addition to patients' perspectives, and by including inductive analyses of the impact of the immediate clinic setting and the wider socio-cultural context. For example, the qualitative study suggested that complementary therapies were used not only as health care in response to illness, but also as luxurious treats directed at maintaining or improving general wellbeing, a health behaviour that is more consistent with the private sector than the National Health Service. This concept of complementary therapies as luxuries was not predicted by previous research or theory and so is unlikely to have been documented in purely quantitative research.

Our mixed methods programme was also advantageous in the opportunities it afforded in relation to theory development. By using a single theoretical framework it was possible to examine the applicability of that framework in two ways: firstly to test the validity of the predictions concerning the factors hypothesized to predict behaviour and secondly to examine whether and how the processes suggested by the framework worked in the specific context of interest. The prospective questionnaire study showed that, as predicted by the theoretical framework, treatment beliefs and illness perceptions predict adherence to complementary therapy. However, questionnaire studies are not well-suited to suggesting why such variables are predictors of behaviour. The self-regulation framework suggests that people attempt to achieve common sense coherence between their representations of illness and treatment, and that this drive to coherence is a mechanism through which people decide to initiate and adhere to specific forms of treatment. By focusing on individuals' experiences and taking an inductive data-led approach the ethnographic study suggested that this drive to coherence was occurring in patients' decision-making about complementary therapies. Patients selected therapies based on the degree of coherence between what they felt

they needed from a therapy and what they believed a specific therapy could provide for them. They evaluated their use of therapy with reference to their ongoing needs and their beliefs about therapies, beliefs which often changed based on their own personal experience and their discussions with their therapists.

An important and daunting challenge facing mixed methods researchers is the possibility that qualitative and quantitative methods elicit findings that might appear to be incompatible. In our programme, this initially seemed to be the case. In the ethnography, when participants talked about their expectations and evaluations of complementary therapy, they often drew comparisons between complementary therapy and conventional medicine. However, attitudes to general practitioners were not consistent predictors of adherence to complementary therapy in the questionnaire studies. At first glance these findings might appear contradictory; however, by taking into account the context of each finding it was possible to suggest that previous experiences of and beliefs about conventional medicine allowed participants to develop their talk about complementary therapy, but that these experiences were not necessarily key determinants of adherence. Furthermore, the way in which the qualitative study was able to take into account the wider social context of health care suggested that complementary therapy use might be very different to conventional medicine use. Complementary therapy use was talked about as a luxury, and people talked about using it for health problems that were not deemed serious enough for conventional medicine. In this case then, the apparent incompatibility between quantitative and qualitative findings highlighted a hypothesis for future research, that people who use complementary therapy might not be dissatisfied with their experiences of conventional medicine per se but rather might be dissatisfied with the scope of treatment available through conventional medicine.

Combining methods in a programme of research is not simple and does involve

difficult decisions and careful planning. There are often eventualities such as apparently or actually conflicting findings which cannot be easily anticipated. However, we believe that by combining questionnaire and ethnographic methods and taking into account their different strengths and weaknesses we achieved our aim of generating a more comprehensive understanding of attitudes and behaviours surrounding complementary therapy use than would have been achieved by a single method design. The combination of these methods meant that it was possible to ground contextualized understanding of process in the lived experience of a small number of participants and to test the relative importance of the factors that appeared to be influencing that process in a larger sample of participants.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to show that since every perspective and every method reveals some things and conceals others, the pragmatic question answered by mixing methods is simply 'what can we learn from each perspective?' (Eisner, 2003). Examples of good mixed methods research are not yet common in the literature. This may be due partly to many authors actually adopting a 'composite analysis' approach, reporting separately studies that were carried out as part of a programme of mixed methods research. However, it is also because, although extremely rewarding, mixed method research is not easy to do well. In order to fully realize the benefits of mixing methods, it is necessary to appreciate the different paradigms, aims, procedures and methods of validation that are appropriate to qualitative and quantitative means of inquiry. To have sufficient expertise in each method requires extensive experience of both, or a team of people with expertise in each method who can work together closely, appreciate each other's perspective, and thus communicate across the artificial but persistent

qualitative–quantitative divide. Nevertheless, as increasing numbers of researchers are educated in both qualitative and quantitative methods, it is likely that there will be a growing appreciation that the ultimate pragmatic test of the value of any study is not what methods are used, but whether it exhibits the fundamental characteristics of good research: commitment and rigour in execution; analytic sensitivity to theory and data; transparency and coherence in presentation; and importance to future human activity (Yardley, 2000).

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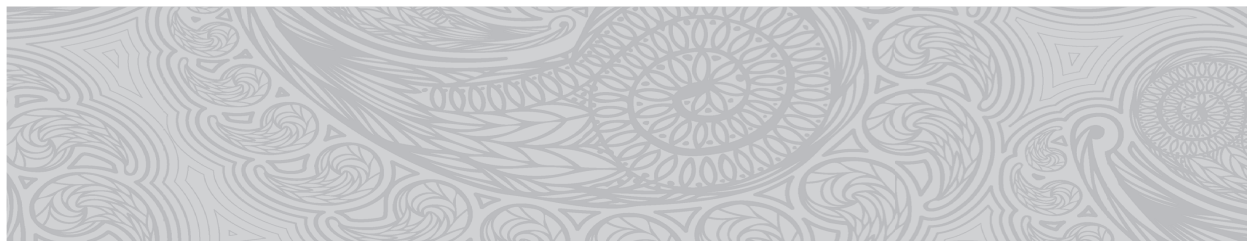
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SECTION III

Applications



Social Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Most traditional histories of social psychology single out two key works in the late nineteenth century as the founding moments for the discipline – Le Bon's study of crowd behaviour and Triplett's experimental research on social facilitation. Le Bon's (1895) *The Crowd* is a dense 'philosophical' treatise on the 'minds' and 'opinions' of crowds. This is illustrated by observations the author makes on the events around the fall of the Paris Commune. In stark contrast, Triplett's (1898) work is a more modest attempt to understand 'competitiveness' – how the presence of others seems to encourage individuals to apply greater efforts in the accomplishment of some task. Whilst reference is made to bicycle racing competitions, Triplett's work uses an experimental design where two children are engaged in a somewhat bizarrely staged task involving fishing reels.

What is interesting about these two works is how very different they seem. Le Bon uses 'real world' examples, but only as a way of illustrating a theory of crowd behaviour he has already worked out in advance

(i.e. a 'deductive' procedure). Triplett uses experimental data, but treats this data as a window onto 'natural laws' which he does not know in advance (i.e. an 'inductive procedure'). On another level, whilst Le Bon has a clear political position – 'mobs' are dangerous and need to be controlled by the state – Triplett seems to have very little sense of there being any link between the behaviour of individuals and the social and cultural milieu they live within.

The point we want to make is that from its very inception social psychology has been a wildly diverse field. In *formal terms* it has veered between a taste for grand theorizing (e.g. Self-Categorization Theory) and a preference for pointing out small regularities in human behaviour (e.g. Fritz Heider's work on errors and biases). In *methodological terms* it has embraced both large scale observational work (e.g. Festinger's classic study *When Prophecy Fails*) and the design of highly intricate and at times controversial experimental settings (e.g. Zimbardo's notorious Stanford Prison Experiment). And in *political terms*, social psychologists appear torn between making explicit statements (e.g. Tajfel's work on categorization and

prejudice) and denying that the political has any relevance to their individual research programmes (see Frances Cherry's marvellous 1995 analysis of this tendency).

In this chapter we want to show how qualitative methods fit into this very confusing and contradictory field. We will evaluate the place of qualitative methods according to the three criteria used above – formal, methodological, political. Or put slightly differently: what do qualitative researchers claim they are doing, how do they go about doing it and what do they see as the relevancy of their work? What we hope to show is that whilst qualitative methods do in many ways differ from the quantitative and experimental techniques which have dominated social psychology (notably US social psychology) over the past 60 years, these differences also mark some points of deep similarity.

In the first part of the chapter we will put these differences and similarities in context by showing how two rival versions of 'social psychology' grew up in psychology and sociology. We will then describe how the so-called 'crisis' in European social psychology brought the two 'social psychologies' back into contact. In the main part of the chapter we then outline the different qualitative methods which were developed in (psychological) social psychology as a consequence of this renewed contact. By way of conclusion, we will assess the future prospects for qualitative methods in social psychology. At the end of the chapter we have included a worked example where we contrast the various approaches.

THE TWO 'SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIES'

In his historical work, Robert Farr (1995) points out that there are two distinct traditions of work which call themselves 'social psychology'. One is the well-known branch of psychology which we have been describing. But there is a second and wholly separate branch of sociology also called 'social psychology'. We will offer a brief characterization of each in turn.

The first social psychology (or 'psychological social psychology') has its origins in European psychology. Historically, psychology in Europe has experienced considerable difficulty in establishing its place in the broader divisions of knowledge and academic life. The subject matter of psychology – human activity and mental life – suggests that psychology has its place amongst the humanities as a form '*Geisteswissenschaft*' (the study of culture). But European psychologists at the turn of the nineteenth century sought to align the fledgling discipline with the more powerful disciplines and faculties of medicine and exact science as a form of '*Naturwissenschaft*' (the natural sciences).

By and large, social psychology has followed the path of its parent discipline. Whilst early European work in social psychology (e.g. McDougall, 1925; Bartlett, 1932) explicitly drew upon work in other humanities such as anthropology, by the 1950s psychological social psychology was dominated by a natural science orientation towards experimentation and quantification. At the same time, the research agenda for the discipline was set by social psychologists based in the USA (such as Allport, Asch and Festinger). This dominance of North American research was further extended in the period immediately after the end of the second world war, when US finance and expertise was brought into Europe in an attempt to unify the research community split asunder by the turmoil of war years and the flight into exile of many former leading lights (such as Kurt Lewin and Fritz Heider). It was also hoped that this would serve as part of the intellectual buttress against communism that the USA was then desperate to enable in Western Europe. Between 1950 and 1975 it is fair to say that psychological social psychology was an experimental science dominated by the overarching model and ideology of North American psychology.

In the case of the other social psychology (or 'psychological sociology'), the situation is curiously reversed. This tradition emerged in US sociology, mostly around the

'Chicago School' which flourished around George Herbert Mead and his successors. Working within a discipline which is central to the study of culture, sociologists have traditionally not suffered from the same 'identity problems' which beset psychologists. They have instead been concerned with the best means to study 'social forces'. Classically large samples of statistical data on, for example, suicide rates, household consumption patterns, voting preferences, have been the mainstay. These samples are used as the basis to impute regularities in social structure which are then 'reproduced' or 'lived out' by individuals who take on certain characteristics and viewpoints as a consequence (as in Max Weber's 'ideal-typical' forms). This kind of approach reached its height in the functionalist system theory of Talcott Parsons in the 1950s.

But a counter-trend in sociology has emphasized the importance of approaching social forces in a different direction, by looking at how individuals make meaning and sense out of the social structures they inhabit. The generic term for this approach is 'micro-sociology'. Mead's work, for example, emphasized that an individual's personal understandings emerged through a kind of dialogue with the people and broader world around them or 'symbolic interactionism'. Studying such understanding required the use of different methodologies, such as in-depth interviewing, observation and ethnography. In the post-war period, this kind of work was given additional impetus by the rediscovery of a branch of European philosophy called 'phenomenology'. Sociologists such as Alfred Schutz developed phenomenological terms such as 'lifeworld' to show that whilst there may be general laws of society, at a micro level what matters is how persons interpret their world by drawing on local rules and rationalities. This insight was developed further in the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel (1967). Between 1950 and 1975 it is then more or less accurate to describe psychological sociology as a minority voice arguing against the overarching model of a quantitative

structural-functionalism derived from classical European sociology.

THE 'CRISIS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY'

During the 1970s these two versions of social psychology unexpectedly came back into dialogue with one another. The period is usually referred to as 'the crisis in social psychology'. It was sparked by the near simultaneous publication of three texts.

In the USA, Kenneth Gergen's article 'Social Psychology as History' (1973) presented a blistering attack on the dominant experimental model in social psychology. He noted that the reliance on supposedly value neutral 'objective' methods led social psychologists to be blind to the cultural and historical factors that shape social behaviour. He argued that to understand social processes we need to study how they have operated and changed over history – how social actions are fluid and dynamic – and how in particular the practices of social psychology have changed and adapted over time. Gergen's attack was particularly powerful since the author had been trained in precisely those methods he attacked so virulently.

Rom Harré and Paul Secord's (1972) *The Explanation of Social Behaviour* argued against the 'mechanism' of much contemporary psychology. The authors – both philosophers – took issue with the default model of the person used in psychology (notably behaviourism). This model suggested that individual behaviour was the product of generic features of human nature which were essentially beyond the control of the person. The task of the social psychologist was then to uncover these generic features through experimental investigation (i.e. through 'positivism'). Harré and Secord argued instead for a model of persons as wholly rational, complex agents whose behaviour was a product of their own contemplation and attempts to understand their world. They pointed to the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the symbolic interactionism of Mead and Erving Goffman as

good examples. The task of the social psychologist would then be akin to that of an anthropologist, who would seek to discover the local rules in play in a given community and how these rules were interpreted by community members.

In Europe, Israel and Tajfel (1972) edited a series of essays on *The Context of Social Psychology*, which similarly echoed the call to engage with wider social and cultural forces and to look beyond the narrow confines of experimentalism. Tajfel's own contribution ('Experiments in a vacuum') neatly summarized the dangers that resulted from treating social psychological experiments as ends in themselves rather than as the starting point for developing propositions about social behaviour which would then have to be refined in dialogue with other social sciences. More seriously, this edited book reflected a sense on the part of many European social psychologists that US research had achieved such a level of dominance that it was able to erroneously assume that it provided universal insights into general human nature, rather than very specific insights about North American culture. The formation of a distinctive European Association for Experimental Social Psychology (EAESP) was then an attempt to 'reclaim' a form of social psychology uniquely suited to European cultures and societies. The EAESP also opened up dialogue with social psychologists in the USSR and Eastern Bloc states, where very different kinds of psychology were being pursued, which emphasized collectivity and materialism over individualism and cognitivism.

All three texts then echoed one another's call for a change in the formal, methodological and political basis on which social psychology was to be conducted. The 'crisis' which subsequently followed involved a great deal of public debate about the strength and weaknesses of these arguments and about what the implications might be of putting these changes into practice. It was within this context that a number of qualitative approaches became adopted. We will refer to these as the 'first wave' of qualitative methods.

THE 'FIRST WAVE': 1975–1990

The key texts of the crisis literature had all called for change in social psychology. To some extent 'experiments' became seen as emblematic of all that was wrong with the discipline. The search for new methods then became at the same time shorthand for doing social psychology differently. However, the majority of the crisis literature proved to be very thin in terms of specific recommendations for appropriate methodologies. This left a generation of researchers in the unfortunate position of being 'against' experiments but with little sense of the alternatives (i.e. what they were actually 'for'). In the late 1970s the 'ethogenic' and 'hermeneutic' approaches came to fill this void, followed in the mid-1980s by Q-methodology and discourse analysis.

Ethogenics

The 'crisis' created a schism in the UK social psychology community. This was demonstrated most starkly at Oxford University in the early 1970s where two versions of social psychology were pursued in parallel. Based in the Department of Experimental Psychology, Michael Argyle worked out a programme of research in interpersonal behaviour using classic experimental paradigms. Literally up the road, at Lineacre College, Rom Harré worked out an alternative version of social psychology based around what he termed 'ethogenics'. In formal terms, ethogenics is an attempt to develop an empirical programme for social psychology along the lines of the 'philosophical anthropology' promoted by Wittgenstein. Crudely this means uncovering the local, culturally specific 'rules of production' which persons draw upon to render their world meaningful. As Parker (1989: 21) and others have noted, ethogenics has three main principles: 'the idea of an expressive order; a description of that order as drama; an understanding of social rules'.

According to Harré, social life can be divided into two very different realms – a

'practical order' which covers physical needs and the actions which are required to satisfy them, and an 'expressive order' which covers social needs such as self-esteem. It is this latter realm which is the proper subject matter for social psychology. Harré argues that the expressive order is best approached through the 'dramaturgical model' of social life developed by Goffman, amongst others. This model sees social behaviour as akin to a 'performance' which social actors must learn to acquire in order to successfully accomplish various activities. These performances are in turn governed by local rules which establish what can be counted as 'proper' and 'improper' acts. For example, in Marsh, Rosser and Harré's (1978) study of football hooliganism, the focus is on the 'moral careers' of football fans. Here becoming a football fan is seen as a complex dramaturgical performance, where individuals have to learn the 'social rules' which govern fan behaviour (e.g. showing the 'right' amount of aggression, but also knowing the limits). The data for the study were drawn from participant observation along with interviews with fans. As a consequence the researchers faced the immediate problem that there appeared to be a gap between how fans described their behaviour at football matches, emphasizing their own violent conduct, and the actual behaviour typically seen at such events. Marsh et al. resolved this by claiming that fans improve their own standing as 'hooligans' by colluding in the pretence that football violence is disorderly when they are aware, in some sense, that actually their behaviour follows social rules. The broader and somewhat conservative political point that Marsh et al. make is that ultimately social life consists of rule-following, although it is often useful for individuals to deny this to themselves, in order to feel like free, creative agents (see Parker, 1989).

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a philosophical tradition concerned with the reading and interpretation of texts, typically sacred works such as

the Jewish Talmud or the Christian Bible. The fundamental principle of hermeneutics is that the meaning of a text is interrelated with the historical conditions and local practices in which the text is constituted. Since these conditions and practices are not available in the same way to readers as time passes, they must be 'reconstructed' in order to uncover the layers of meaning which the text acquires (i.e. the Talmud as it is read by contemporary readers is the product of centuries of interpretative traditions which are 'layered' on top of one another). In the late 1970s, John Shotter, working as a developmental psychologist in the experimental psychology department at the University of Nottingham, saw a new way of applying hermeneutics to psychological data. Shotter worked with video recordings of mother-infant interactions. Traditionally, developmental psychologists would 'read' the behaviour of infants and mothers by drawing on existing theories, such as Piagetian structural-development theory. For Shotter, this was rather like the situation where a reader interprets a novel or a scripture in their own terms without paying any attention to the context in which the text was itself written. The hermeneutic approach would then reconstruct the context in which the behaviour of mother and infant makes sense to one another, rather than 'reading' their behaviour through an external theory. Shotter's work attempted to develop theories of 'play' and 'maternal interaction' from the bottom up by reconstructing the context of behaviour in this hermeneutic fashion (Shotter and Gregory, 1976).

Gergen, Fisher and Hepburn (1986) extended this work by observing that social psychologists fail to appreciate how their own methods and measures may themselves be interpreted. Gergen et al. asked student participants to look at items drawn from the Rotter locus of control scale which had been randomly assigned to a variety of personality traits. Participants were able to make highly articulate claims about why each item might plausibly be seen as evidence of a particular personality, despite the fact

that the associations were entirely random. Gergen et al. claimed that this demonstrated the sophisticated ways in which persons could reconstruct contexts to make these links meaningful. The political point here is that academic psychology is just one hermeneutic practice amongst others. It is a way of 'reading' behaviour, but one which fails to recognize that the particular interpretations it makes are just that – rather partial and limited readings based upon a reconstruction of context.

Q-methodology

As we have seen in the case of hermeneutics, many social psychologists who looked towards qualitative methods in the late 1970s and early 1980s were working in traditional departments of psychology where experimental methods were dominant. At the University of Reading, Rex Stainton Rogers had also developed a hermeneutic approach to personality testing (Semin and Rogers, 1973). Stainton Rogers was similarly concerned with showing that the interpretative powers of ordinary persons far exceeded the rather limited models used by social psychologists, but was also concerned with the means by which this could be systematically demonstrated through a method capable of representing the complex structure of lay or everyday interpretations. In order to capture this, Stainton Rogers drew on the notion of 'operant subjectivity' (see Brown, 1980) originally devised by William Stephenson (Chapter 13). Stephenson had treated 'personality' as a constellation of possible opinions and responses which a person might make, whose precise form shifted according to the context in which the person found themselves. Hence at any given moment someone's expressed (or 'operant') position on a topic represents a conscious choice (hence 'subjectivity') out of a range of possible positions. The task of the social psychologist is then to map the contours of this constellation, in relation to specific issues and concerns, and to demonstrate how persons shift between positions.

Stephenson had developed an unusual written statement sorting task called a 'Q-sort' as a device for capturing operant subjectivity. In collaboration with Wendy Stainton Rogers, Q-methodology was developed into a social psychological technique. Studies were conducted ranging from expressed subjectivity in relation to politics (R. Stainton Rogers and Kitinger, 1985), health (W. Stainton Rogers, 1991) and emotions (Stenner and R. Stainton Rogers, 1998). Some of the best known work in this tradition is Celia Kitinger's (1987) studies of lesbian identities. Kitinger used Q-methodology as a way of sampling the diversity of possible ways in which lesbianism might be 'constructed' (that is, described and understood) ranging from sexual identity as personal preference to radical lesbianism as a strategic political choice. Q-methodology, as developed by the Stainton Rogers, was a curious mix of the old and the very new. Q-sorts themselves resemble traditional personality techniques, and indeed are in part quantitatively analysed. But since they allow for a vast number of possible connections to be made between statements, Q-sorts are able to reveal extremely complex interpretative structures and define the differences between distinct structures. Moreover these structures are themselves interpreted as cultural and historical artefacts (see Curt, 1994). To this extent Q-methodology is seen as compatible with 'social constructionism'.

Discourse analysis

The seminal text that brought discourse analysis into social psychology was Potter and Wetherell's (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, coming near the end of the first wave of qualitative methods. Discourse analysis as both a theoretical stance and a methodological perspective had a basis in sociology, in particular Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) work in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK), which had originally formulated the idea of interpretative repertoires (discrete sets of rhetorical formulations and concepts organized around a core metaphor) which Potter and Wetherell

put at the heart of their version of discourse analysis. The method was promoted as a way of re-interpreting the subject matter of psychology itself, beginning in this instance with attitudes, but extended in later years to topics such as motives and intentions, emotions and cognition and memory. Formally, discourse analysis shared with all the other first wave methods the ambition of treating psychological processes as flexible, sophisticated everyday practices through which persons made sense of their social worlds. Methodologically, the approach insisted (as sociologists like Garfinkel had done) that rather than search for the supposed 'causes' of behaviour, social scientists ought to look at the rational 'accounts' persons give of their own conduct.

Potter and Wetherell claimed that since discourse analysis involved the close scrutiny of language, then any 'text' was potentially analysable in this way. However in practice much of their data was derived from interviews (notably a study of racism in New Zealand, published as Wetherell and Potter, 1992) or from easily transcribed sources such as television programmes or newspaper articles. Discourse analysis differed from the other first wave approaches by taking a 'hard-line' approach to language. Whilst the other approaches had prioritized language use as the public means through which meaning and understanding is organized, they had nevertheless retained a role for traditional concepts such as historical and social forces, and even for cognition itself. Potter and Wetherell claimed that it was possible to 'bracket out' all such factors – in particular mental phenomena – since they could demonstrate that social life could be analysed as it is organized through language and conversational interaction entirely without reference to any other process. This resulted in an almost immediate backlash against the approach from both psychologists and sociologists who saw discourse analysis as offering little to their respective projects. More importantly it resulted in the charge that discourse analysis was politically impotent, since it could not offer analyses of large scale social and historical processes.

THE 'SECOND WAVE': 1990–2005

By the late 1980s, a range of qualitative techniques had begun to appear in social psychology. The common thread shared by all techniques was a commitment to a model of persons as sophisticated language users able to flexibly interpret and understand their social worlds. At the same time, the researchers using these techniques were engaged in a wholesale rejection of experimental methods and indeed, to some extent, the discipline that went with it. By the early 1990s, however, the range of qualitative techniques in use and the growing tradition of studies made it a very real prospect to talk of a 'qualitative social psychology'. One crucial marker was the decision by the British Psychological Society to include the teaching of qualitative methods as a compulsory requirement in all UK psychology undergraduate degree programmes which it accredited. By the turn of the millennium, qualitative social psychological studies routinely featured in mainstream journals such as *British Journal of Social Psychology* and *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* as well as specialist journals such as *Discourse & Society*. Whilst techniques such as Q methodology remained vibrant, the 'second wave' of methods mostly focused on the technical analysis of discourse, but with very different aims.

Discursive psychology

The application of discourse analysis to the study of psychological phenomena picked up speed in the early 1990s. Much of the work in this area came from a group of researchers in and around Loughborough University in the UK including Michael Billig, Derek Edwards, Jonathan Potter, Margaret Wetherell and Charles Antaki, who collaborated as the Discourse & Rhetoric Group (DARG). The term 'discursive psychology' was coined in a 1992 book by Edwards and Potter, who extended the hard-line stance of Potter and Wetherell. Whereas *Discourse and Social Psychology* had merely suggested the bracketing of mental process,

Edwards and Potter aimed to show how the entirety of social psychology (and much of psychology to boot) could be reconstructed as the study of talk-in-interaction. In doing so, Edwards and Potter were effectively repeating the similar provocation which Harvey Sacks made to sociologists by claiming that the social order could only be empirically recovered through the analysis of ordinary, mundane conversational interactions. Psychological strongholds such as memory and cognition (Middleton and Edwards, 1990; Lynch and Bogen, 1996), emotions (Edwards, 1997, 1999; Locke and Edwards, 2003), attributions (Edwards and Potter, 1992) and identity (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998) were subject to a thorough reworking from a discursive point of view, with the result that ascriptions of mental states were considered for their role as interactional currency.

The focus of discursive psychology (Chapter 5) changed over the period from 1990 to 2005. In 1992, the focus was on fact construction, stake management and accountability (see also Potter (1996) for work along these lines) encompassed in the (decidedly ironic) construction of the Discourse Action Model (DAM), published in the heartland of mainstream psychology, *Psychological Review*. A more comprehensive account of discursive psychology was provided in Edwards (1997), where the influence of conversation analysis is more firmly felt, and more recently in Edwards and Potter (2005) whereby three overlapping strands of discursive psychology are outlined. These ranged from a discursive reworking of traditional psychological models, to looking at the interactional uses of psychological terms, and finally studying where psychological states are implied in discourse. Here the study of talk-in-interaction in its own right is seen to not merely revolutionize social psychology, but to potentially do away with the need for the discipline at all. Indeed by 2005, Wooffitt (2005: 129) was given to note that 'on occasions it would seem that the methodology of discursive psychology is hard to distinguish

from that of CA' (see also Silverman (2006) for similar sentiments). In other words, discursive psychology had become, for many, a branch of conversation analysis (Chapter 4). This is reflected in the increasing 'ratcheting up' of the methodological standards of discursive psychology, such that by the mid-1990s, interviews and focus group material were of interest merely as peculiar interactional settings with the use of naturally occurring data considered as the gold standard (see Puchta and Potter, 2004; Potter and Hepburn, 2005). For critics of the approach, the political questions of what exactly a fine-grained attention to transcripts of conversation adds to analysis of pressing social and political questions remains ever more pertinent. The debate as to the *actual* differences between much of the work coming under the labels of discursive psychology or conversation analysis (aside from one method being mainly used by psychologists and the other by mainly sociologists) still continues (see Wooffitt, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Kitzinger, 2006; Potter, 2006 for recent work linking to this debate).

Foucauldian discourse analysis

In the late 1970s a group of psychologists and sociologists began publishing a journal *Ideology & Consciousness* which explicitly aimed to develop the ideas of the French philosopher Michel Foucault in relation to psychology. In a series of articles (e.g. Adlam, Henriques, Rose, Salfeld, Venn and Walkerdine, 1977) they argued that since our thinking is intertwined with the historical development of social practice and state power, it follows that our self-reflections on what we ourselves are (or 'subjectivity') is similarly structured. Hence the entirety of psychology must be considered from the perspective of the power mechanisms and structured modes of thinking with which they are associated (or 'discourses' for shorthand) that have made us what we are. Nikolas Rose developed this approach most extensively (see Rose, 1985, 1989). The critical question then is – how does power produce subjectivity and how might we develop new

forms of subjectivity that resist power (see Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984). In a piece of subsequent work, Wendy Hollway (1989) proposed an approach to the analysis of interview texts which would focus on the 'subject positions' that discourses allowed persons to adopt. This approach gave rise, in part, to what is sometimes called 'Foucauldian discourse analysis' (FDA) (Chapter 6).

In truth there is no clear set of methodological principles which unites work in the FDA tradition, beyond the common use of the term 'discourse' to refer to those understanding which are made available by a particular social practice existing within a given field of power. The work of Ian Parker and Erica Burman (collaborating as the Discourse Unit at Manchester Metropolitan University) has contributed most to the development of this approach (see Parker and Burman, 1994; Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network, 1999). Parker and Burman insist that since power subsumes the entirety of any social world one can analyse practically any material, from government reports to interviews with professionals through even (notoriously!) to the instructions on a tube of children's toothpaste (see Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall, 1989), for evidence of the 'subject positions' we are forced to adopt to understand ourselves. However, for the most part, FDA work tends to be interview based, and broadly resembles the approach taken in early discursive psychological work. But it differs through its commitment to locating the analysis within a broader social theoretical framework derived from Foucault's work. During the 1990s there was a series of fiercely argued exchanges between the Discourse Unit and DARG members, with the former arguing that the latter had reneged on any sense of the political, which was met with the counter-charge that FDA was methodologically unsophisticated and unable to provide the empirical evidence for the political claims its authors wished to make (Parker, 1990, 1999; Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edwards, 1990; Potter, Edwards and Ashmore, 1999).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis

One way of considering all of the qualitative work in the 'second wave' is to see it as the renewal of social psychology by sociological thinking. Thus discursive psychology took inspiration from the sociology of accounts (e.g. Garfinkel) and conversation analysis (e.g. Sacks) and FDA drew heavily on then previous sociological interpretation of Foucault's work (e.g. Turner, 1996; Rose, 1989). There was one other major sociological tradition which influenced social psychologists – the 'grounded theory' approach developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. Grounded theory (Chapter 14) is a method which aims to provide a systematic process for inductively deriving 'categories' which can be developed into coherent theories. It demands that researchers minutely break down the transcript of an interview into tiny fragments of meaning (or 'codes') which are then assembled into broader 'themes'. This process is repeated for every interview, with themes being continually revised, until the researcher feels that the themes properly capture the substance of what participants are describing.

Despite its widespread use in sociology, few psychologists have attempted to adopt grounded theory in its entirety (see Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; Pidgeon, 1996; Chamberlain, 1999 for exceptions). However Jonathan A. Smith did develop, along with collaborators, an approach which was broadly in line with the spirit and general approach of grounded theory, but which placed far less constraints on the researcher, and which as a consequence could be readily taught to under- and postgraduate students. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Chapter 11) works with texts, usually transcripts of interviews with carefully selected participants. It requires researchers to make notes on the transcript, then to systematize these notes into 'themes' which are then clustered together and subsequently compared across interviews to form 'master themes'. IPA work grew rapidly in the

late 1990s, dealing mostly with health related themes (e.g. sexual health, chronic pain, maternity). One impetus for its growth was the promise that it was possible to treat the texts that it studies as 'windows' onto participants' cognitions. In this sense it is 'phenomenological'. However such cognitions are inevitably mediated by both language and by the interpretive role of the analyst. In this sense the approach is 'hermeneutic'. But as critics (e.g. Willig, 2001) came to note, this view of language is not especially phenomenological, since phenomenologists have a radically different view of thinking from cognitive psychologists. Moreover, the hermeneutic aspect of the approach rather pales in comparison with the wholesale attempt to reconstruct context in first wave hermeneutics and second wave FDA.

FUTURE PROSPECTS: 2005+

The dominant contemporary qualitative approaches in social psychology are versions of 'discourse analysis' and versions of 'grounded theory'. Discursive psychology and Foucauldian discourse analysis remain the best examples of the former, whilst interpretative phenomenological analysis and the newly emerging thematic analysis remain the most common instances of the latter. However, it is fair to say that in the past few years there has been an increasing diversity in how approaches are actually implemented. For example, it is common to see work using ideas derived from Potter and Wetherell's version of discourse analysis married with a concern with power that is close to Parker and Burman's notion of discourse. In general, qualitative work in social psychology seems, with some notable exceptions such as discursive psychology, to be becoming more heterogeneous and diversified rather than homogeneous and methodologically 'purist', as one might typically expect as a research tradition grows. In this section we will point to some of what we think are the most significant emerging trends.

Thematic analyses

Thematic analyses have been around for a long time in a variety of forms, particularly, for example, in health psychology. Thematic analysis shares close links with content analysis in that both are concerned purely with topic. However, thematic analysis is less concerned with representing frequency of participant themes. Classic texts around such analyses are by Miles and Huberman (1994), Boyatzis (1998), and more recently work by Joffe and Yardley (2004). In such methods, topics of concern are noted by going through the data, typically line by line, such that these topics can then be placed into larger categories or themes and sub-themes. As Joffe and Yardley (2004) note, the themes that are produced can be either inductive or deductive. Deductive coding would be where the researcher codes the data in the light of a previous theoretical model. Once the theming of data has occurred, it is typical to compare coding with others in order to obtain inter-rater reliability.

One reason why thematic analyses have come back into vogue is arguably that they are able to sidestep tricky epistemological concerns regarding constructionism or interactionism. Such thematic analyses are particularly useful for those qualitative researchers who operate within an applied and practical domain and want to analyse their qualitative data for topic content without considering any methodological horrors (Woolgar, 1988). Their continued existence, and now resurgence, is arguably a product of a desire by researchers not to become enmeshed in the formal epistemological concerns which have marked much of the debate around first wave and second wave methods, and also part of a political ambition to deliver straightforward answers to complex social psychological questions. It is not then surprising that thematic analyses are current taking off in the health-related end of social psychology. Thematic methodologies also enable researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative research – often seemingly without question. However, as some researchers have

noted (e.g. Wood and Kroger, 2000) such analyses can be considered as being more quantitative than qualitative in nature and spirit, and adopt what Kidder and Fine (1987) have called a 'little q' perspective on research.

Psychosocial research

The hope of a dialogue between the two forms of social psychology is that it will be possible for to create a genuinely 'social' version of psychology. However, for some researchers this is a forlorn hope. Frosh (2003) doubts whether any amount of 'social analysis' will transform how psychology thinks about 'individuals', and equally worries that a turn towards 'sociological reductionism' is scarcely an improvement on the 'psychological reductionism' of traditional social psychology. For Frosh the problem is how to see 'the individual' and 'society' as genuinely intertwined. The psychosocial approach developed by Frosh (Chapter 7), along with other researchers such as Anne Phoenix, Margie Wetherell, Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson starts from the same assumption as practically all qualitative methods in social psychology, that thinking and action are shaped by society and culture. But it grafts onto this the notion from psychodynamic theory that unconscious dynamics are a key motivational factor, albeit one that is in continuous dialogue with social forces. In practice what this means is viewing persons as shifting between different 'subject positions' in 'discourse', rather in the same way that Foucauldian discourse analysis proposes, in which they 'invest' unconsciously.

Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) Free Association Interview technique is currently gaining some ground. The method draws upon psychodynamic theory by making the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee central. The feelings and associations produced by the interviewer (what psychoanalysts usually call 'counter-transference') are seen to be analytically significant. Methodologically this is problematic, not least because all of the first and

second wave approaches were united in their rejection of any form of 'depth psychology' (i.e. claims to read unconscious processes in empirical material). However not all psychosocial research is so deeply influenced by psychodynamic theory (see Wetherell, 1998, 2005). Indeed some discursive researchers such as Mick Billig (1999) have proposed alternative ways that Freudian concepts might be used to enrich conversation and discourse analysis. Nevertheless, all psychosocial research is committed to the notion that social psychology, as it stands, has failed to provide a means of genuinely engaging with the social basis of individuality.

Post-Foucauldian analysis

During the 'crisis', many social psychologists were forced to clarify how they thought the discipline ought to fit with both general psychology and with the social sciences in general. A common view, following Tajfel (1980) was that social psychology was a set of 'mid-range' theories, covering the area somewhere between the individual and society. But this view suggests that we already understand both 'individuals' and 'society', and simply need to join the two pieces of the puzzle together. Contemporary social theory (e.g. Hardt and Negri, 2000) suggests the reverse is true, that working out what kind of 'societies' we live in and what 'individuals' can be is the most pressing political set of questions. Few social psychologists have responded to this view, since it requires, at the very least, seeing the discipline as in perpetual dialogue with other approaches.

One exception is the work of Valerie Walkerdine, who has shifted through a series of collaborations with educational researchers ('Counting Girls Out' and 'Democracy in the Kitchen'), media theorists ('Mass Hysteria') and with culture studies ('Growing up Girl'). A key thread in Walkerdine's research is that the basic categories of social psychology – identity, emotion, development – are all mediated by the cultural 'technologies' which our contemporary societies provide. Thus gender, for instance, is not a neutral peg

around which it is possible to develop some social psychological approach, but rather a contested political site which is being continually redefined with reference to the cultural dynamics in which women participate. Social psychologists then need to understand the changes which are being enacted around gender rather than come up with their own clear 'concept'. Similarly, Middleton and Brown (2005) explore remembering as a set of changing processes rather than a clear cut field of enquiry. Post-Foucauldian analysis is then not so much an approach as a body of research united in the ambition to study what it means to be a person and how this is rapidly changing in the complex geopolitics of the early twenty-first century. Methodologically, most work in this area is highly varied (and thus not systematic or refined with respect to common criteria) drawing equally on interviews, naturalistic data, and increasingly internet based data. However, politically the work shares the common perspective that it is the duty of the social researcher to invent concepts which not only capture the vicissitudes of contemporary life but also create new possibilities for thinking that life.

Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) (Chapter 4) is certainly not a new methodology, nor is it a new discovery for social psychologists (Edwards published a comprehensive introduction in 1994!). As we have described, conversation analysis has been critical to the development of discourse analysis and discursive psychology. However, as we have also noted, some social psychologists now regard themselves as having become conversation analysts, and correspondingly see social psychology itself as having its legitimate destination in this approach. The initial ideas of CA were of course developed by Harvey Sacks up until his death in 1975 (see Sacks, 1992) and have since been developed into a more concrete methodology by names such as Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Sacks' original work proposed a

conversation analysis that looked at both the sequential components of talk and the categories that were utilized in talk (membership category devices). Interestingly in the years since his death, this second focus has developed into what some would regard as a separate methodology of membership category analysis (MCA) one which is sometimes, though not always, tied to (sequential) CA. Mostly when people talk about using CA, they are referring to the sequential analysis of typically naturally occurring conversation.

The idea that social psychology ought to end up as a branch of CA is obviously problematic. If we consider that social psychology still needs to consider something 'mental' within it, what can a specific CA analysis offer that a DP analysis cannot? Social psychology by its very nature focuses on people, mental states (including discourses of) and social issues surrounding identity. CA in its purest form, cannot add anything to this argument and to social psychology as a specific discipline in as much as psychology is by definition interested in mental states. However, there is ongoing debate as to the political potential of CA. This emerged in feminist psychology from the work of Kitinger, Speer and Stokoe who have all demonstrated that issues around sexuality and gender can be studied at a micro-level of negotiation (and coercion) through CA (see Speer, 1999; Kitinger, 2000; Stokoe, 2000).

SUMMARY

From a perspective of over 30 years onwards, we may now see that what the 'crisis' achieved for social psychology was twofold. Firstly, it enabled social psychologists to consider the cultural and historical constraints and influences on its ideas and theories. Secondly, it enabled a more ecologically valid study of people in their natural environments, explaining and accounting for their actions and decisions. This was accomplished through introduction and flourishing of a range of qualitative methods, over three

successive waves. However, it is important to note that this only one half of the story. Experimental social psychology not only survived the crisis more or less intact, but is currently 'in a state of rude health' (Brown, 2002: 70). Indeed journals such as the *European Journal of Social Psychology* publish experimental work almost exclusively, reflecting a broader picture in northern Europe (with the exception of the UK), where social psychology is formally defined as much the same quantitative study of 'social cognition' that it has been since the 1950s.

Should we then conclude that the situation in the UK is a special case? Some commentators, not least the powerful panel of eminent psychologists charged with overseeing the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (an audit of UK higher education research) certainly thought so. Their report concluded that social psychology was now split entirely between qualitative and experimental work, to the detriment of all. A working group set up by the British Psychological Society in 2004 to encourage dialogue across the rival camps was more optimistic, although many participants commented on the yawning chasm between their basic concepts and ideas of how to approach social phenomena (see the special issue of *The Psychologist* of 2005 on 'Dialoguing Across Divisions').

We want to conclude our survey of qualitative methods in social psychology on a different note. We have used three criteria to discuss approaches: *formal* (i.e. epistemology), *methodological* (i.e. technical) and *political* (i.e. relationship to broader social world). Seen in these terms, it is clear that qualitative methods do not form a homogeneous whole (see Box 21.1 for an illustration of how different qualitative research methods may approach a social psychological research topic in rather different ways). For example, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) makes completely different assumptions about mental life and its relationship to language to both discourse analysis and discursive psychology, yet many aspects of its technical procedures are striking similar to

the initial stages of an early (i.e. Potter and Wetherell, 1987) form of discursive analysis. Moreover, in terms of its political ambitions to deliver specific policy oriented findings to a selected audience, the applied aspects of IPA share much with some versions of Foucauldian discourse analysis, even though their formal theoretical basis could not be more different (Foucault famously rejected any form of phenomenology)!

We suggest that if these same three criteria are applied across the supposed qualitative/quantitative divide then a better rounded picture of social psychology emerges. Rather than see work as split across a single division, in which all sorts of immensely varied issues are subsumed, we can see contemporary social psychology as a mosaic of approaches, with some far closer than is usually suspected. For example, conversation analysis seemingly stands in stark opposition to social cognition, with the former in the main virulently against any reference to 'mental states' other than as rhetorical formulations (see the special issue of *Discourse Studies* on 'Discourse, Interaction and Cognition' (2006) for a larger debate on the role of cognition in conversation analysis), and the latter insisting that the broader social world only comes to exist for the individual in terms of cognitive representations. But methodologically the two approaches are strikingly similar – both involve the close analysis of complex datasets which can only be assembled from particular authorized sources purged of outside influence. The 'naturalistic data' on which the conversation analyst insists is the inverted mirror image of the 'experimental data' that the social cognition researcher demands. Politically the two approaches are also bedfellows, in that they place priority on progress being made in the research programme itself above a concern with connecting findings to social policy. Indeed, one could argue, that to read a piece of conversation analytic social psychology, replete with technical details and typically culminating in highly specific points which are only explicable with reference to a very narrow tradition, is to be immediately reminded of

BOX 21.1 Researching Social Psychologies: Identity Transitions in a Memory Museum

(The following example is a composite that draws upon themes from ongoing research by Brown in collaboration with the Universiteit voor Humanistiek and Humanitas, Rotterdam)

Karin is a Dutch woman in her late forties. Her mother, Maria, is approaching 80 and is now living in an elderly care home facility – Humanitas – in Rotterdam. Over the past two years Maria has been displaying symptoms of dementia including memory loss and confusion. In recent months Maria's memory lapses have been particularly acute and she sometimes confuses Karin with other people from her past or fails to recognize her altogether. Karin finds these occasions difficult to manage, in part because she does not know how to relate to her mother when she is not recognized as her daughter, and more importantly because these lapses make the ultimate loss of her mother seem closer. Karin also worries about how her children – Annemarie and Maarten – will cope with seeing their grandmother decline. Annemarie is now pregnant (her first child) and Karin wonders whether her own mother will see the baby, and if she does how she will respond. Humanitas has recently opened a 'memory museum' on site. This is a series of rooms which have been designed to resemble traditional Dutch homes and shops from the 1940s and 1950s. The 'living room' for example, is filled with ornaments, pictures and fittings all designed to evoke memories of the time. The 'shop' is filled with goods – tins, adverts, jars of sweets – which have long since disappeared from everyday Dutch life. The elderly people at Humanitas and their families visit the museum together. Karin has visited the museum with Maria along with Annemarie and Marteen. She finds the visits enjoyable, since Maria is particularly animated and reminisces about times from her youth, but also deeply troubling because Maria makes little reference to their common family history, which she feels is gradually slipping away.

Ethogenics. From an ethogenic perspective, what is of interest are the systems of rules that underpin social behaviour. A family has its own rules governing morally appropriate behaviour, for instance. Here interviews might be used to elicit from Karin why she is troubled by Maria not remembering the family past, and how this is related to the expansion of the extended family with the birth of her grandchild. Do families have a 'duty to remember'? When are there exceptions?

Hermeneutics. There are clearly multiple layers of meaning at stake in the relationships within the extended family. Some of these are determined 'officially' – such as by Maria's medically authorized status as 'suffering from dementia'. Video recordings of interactions between the family members both inside and outside the museum might help peel apart some of these layers. For example, do the family members switch between treating Maria as a 'patient' who needs help and as a senior member of the family whose reminiscences should be valued and listened to uninterrupted?

Q methodology. Q-sorts are best suited to exploring the ecology of cultural understandings that are brought to bear to understand a social phenomenon. Here a Q-study might reveal the various ways in which 'dementia' is constructed. We would expect there to be a 'medical' construction, but are there other more personal constructions such as 'dementia as loss of family' or 'dementia as moral passage'? The approach here would be to ask Karin and her family to complete the sort, along with other families.

Discourse analysis. Interviews with Karin and family members – perhaps even with Maria herself – would be transcribed and then analysed to recover the 'interpretative repertoires' which are culturally available to make sense of dementia and ageing. These are likely to be clustered around a core metaphor – such as 'ageing as increasing medicalization' or 'ageing as natural deterioration'. It would be of particular interest to identify at what points in interviews family member switch between various repertoires and what social acts they may be thereby accomplishing (e.g. excusing guilt, justifying ill-feeling, etc.).

Discursive psychology. From this perspective the relevant questions would be around the talk-in-interaction which occurs within the memory museum. High quality recordings transcribed to a very detailed (Jeffersonian level) would be required. The precise questions to be asked would be determined inductively as the analysis proceeded, and guided by traditional themes such as 'stake inoculation', 'categorization' and 'making mental ascriptions'. However the discursive psychologist would be immediately drawn to any sign of 'trouble' in the interaction – that is moments where there are pauses, interruptions, or speakers repairing their own talk. What kind of social 'business' occurs in the memory museum? How is identity discursively managed and accomplished in the local interaction?

Foucauldian discourse analysis. Power and subjectivity are the key concerns here. Maria is clearly embedded in some complex sets of power relations with the care home, including the 'pastoral power' of medicine and social welfare. What forms of subjectivity are granted to Maria as a 'dementia patient'? Does she manage to resist or subvert this classification in any way? Identifying the relevant discourses in play could be done either through interviews or through recordings of interaction (including interactions with care staff), but this would need to be supplemented with a broader historical and cultural analysis of Humanitas as a social institution.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis. IPA would approach the study of identity with regard to looking at how it is personally negotiated for those involved and would typically use semi-structured interviews as the preferred method of data collection. For example, repeated interviews with Karin over time might recover some key themes which indicate the changing ways she comes to think about Maria and what is happening to her. Does she feel a conflict between her 'responsibility as a daughter' and her 'becoming the senior member of the extended family'? IPA would assume that the interviewers' own understandings inevitably inform the analysis.

Thematic analysis. The approach here would be to recover broad themes that encompass the experience of ageing. This could be accomplished by assembling a broad corpus of interviews with people like Maria and their respective families. These would be loosely transcribed and analysed for key terms. For example, is there a sense of 'guilt' at having an elderly family member transferred to a care home? How is this then managed? The assumption would be that there are a limited set of key issues which it is possible for the analyst to recover from interviews which then account for the greater majority of the experience.

Psychosocial research. Psychosocial approaches combine the social with the psyche and personal, although as we noted earlier some researchers operating from this perspective embrace psychodynamic sympathies more than others. The types of data used could vary from free association interviews to other sources of data including media data (see Wetherell, 2006). The questions would be determined by an initial inductive search through the data, guided partly by looking for occasions where the interviewee displays 'conflict' of some sort. Does Karin's conduct on her visits to Maria actually cover up a range of unconscious conflicts around her mother and indeed her own role as a mother (and soon to be grandmother)? In what discourses of ageing does Karin invest?

Post-Foucauldian analysis. Although there is no unified methodological approach here, the basis would begin by identifying the sort of 'problem' which ageing and dementia constitute. How is dementia configured socially? How does Humanitas as a social body facilitate the 'performance' of particular versions of ageing? Interviews, transcriptions of interactions and quasi-ethnographic notes taken by observers could all be used as the empirical base here. However one substantial part of the analysis would be trying to connect what is observed at Humanitas to broader theoretical debates across the social sciences.

Conversation analysis. Based on ethnomethodological principles, the conversation analyst would regard Karin and Maria's identities as accomplished in interaction and hence to be fluid and indexical (that is, not separable from their context of utterance), rather than being fixed. In this way, conversation analysts would use 'real' or natural data of actual conversations in the memory museum and ask questions such as 'how is Maria's identity being negotiated, constructed, and at times, resisted, across the turn-taking of this conversation'? Ideally video recordings of the interaction would be used to pick up on how gestures and movement contribute to the interaction.

the kind of classic experimental social psychology which provoked the crisis in the first place.

We end, then, with a plea. Whilst qualitative methods clearly have the potential to deliver detailed, contextually grounded, socially oriented and politically informed analyses, the mere choice of a method does not guarantee this. Methods alone determine neither the type of approach nor the political ambitions. By the same token, merely saying that a method is able to indicate underlying cognitions or reveal the social order in the form of talk-in-interaction does not guarantee that it will ultimately provide the evidence to demonstrate such claims. Ultimately technical choices around methodology are only a small part of the broad range of choices which confront us as social psychologists. Qualitative methodology does not guarantee

the quality of research. That, as ever, is determined by a far wider set of concerns.

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Health Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Health psychology was formally established in the 1970s when a group of psychologists met in the USA to discuss the relevance and application of psychology to issues of physical health, and formed the Health Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association. A definition of health psychology was subsequently presented at the Division's annual meeting in 1979, which essentially defined health psychology as the contribution of all the educational, scientific and professional aspects of psychology to any and all areas of physical health, and specifically included health promotion and maintenance, illness treatment and prevention, and the role of psychological factors in health and illness (Matarazzo, 1980). Later, the definition was extended to identify a role for health psychology in improving health care services and policies (Matarazzo, 1982). This definition of health psychology remains commonly in use today, although the degree to which health psychologists attempt the additional tasks of policy development and improving health care is limited. Kaptein and Weinman (2004: 6) refer to the components

in this definition as the four 'core elements of health psychology' and Sarafino (2005: 14) identifies them as the four 'goals of health psychology'.

Health psychology: Diversity in the field

The scope of health psychology research and intervention can be overviewed by examining the nature of research conducted across these four 'core elements' or 'goals' of health psychology, as identified through Matarazzo's definition. The research examples used below to illustrate these goals cover a range of theoretical, polemical and empirical papers using a wide variety of methodologies, qualitative and quantitative.

The first core element is the concern to *promote and maintain health*. Research in this area is directed towards ensuring good health, and typically focuses on maintaining positive health behaviours and changing negative health behaviours, usually in healthy people. An example is Kok, Schaalma, Ruiter, van Empelen and Brug's (2004) presentation of a protocol for health promotion campaigns, which suggests explicit procedures

to utilize health psychology theory in promotional programme materials and activities. Examples of more specific applications are provided by Young, Logan, Lovato, Moffat and Shoveller (2005) in a project examining the role of the family in promoting sun protection behaviours in adolescents, or by Klein-Hessling, Lohaus and Ball's (2005) research examining how psychological factors, such as self-efficacy and coping, impact on positive and negative health behaviours in children.

Second is the concern to *prevent and treat illness*. This is a substantial area of research, usually focused on people who are at risk of illness or who are ill. This area includes studies to understand the experience of illness, such as exploring meaning for people with breast cancer (Collie and Long, 2005), children's concepts of injuries and contagious and non-contagious illnesses (Myant and Williams, 2005), or the social meanings of artificial limbs (Murray, 2005). It also includes research into treatment, such as the use of complementary medicine in illness (Cartwright and Torr, 2005), or adherence to medications by HIV-positive youth (Hosek, Harper and Domanico, 2005). This area may also include intervention studies, such as, for example, intervening to change health behaviours for people with type 2 diabetes (Clark, Hampson, Avery and Simpson, 2004).

The third core element involves examination of the *etiological and diagnostic correlates of health and illness*. This area probably includes the largest arena of health psychology research. It involves research examining such issues as risk factors for continued illness among Gulf War veterans (Hotopf et al., 2004) or the role of loneliness and social support in immunological response to influenza vaccination (Pressman et al., 2005). Included here also is research examining psychological factors in illness, such as the influence of control on quality of life for people with chronic headache (Tenhunen and Elander, 2005), how illness representations impact on adjustment to arthritis (Groarke, Curtis, Coughlan and Gsel, 2005), how identities are managed by people with diabetes (Peel, Parry, Douglas

and Lawton, 2005), or how support obtained through on-line self-help groups assists breast cancer patients (Lieberman and Goldstein, 2005).

The fourth core element involves concerns with *health care systems and health care policies*. This includes research that explores such issues as factors influencing the uptake of immunization programmes (Bekker, Gough and Williams, 2003) or the gendered nature of interactions with health professionals about contraception (Lowe, 2005). It also includes research into how stigma about AIDS can influence health policy (Herek, Capitanio and Widaman, 2003), how health psychology can contribute to public health initiatives (Vinck, Oldenburg and van Lengerke, 2004), and how community-based health psychology programmes can promote and facilitate social change (Campbell and Murray, 2004).

Of course, there is also research within health psychology that extends beyond these areas, examining issues such as whether video games can be good for your health (Griffiths, 2004), the role of the media in health (Hodgetts and Chamberlain, 2006), how perspectives on menopause have changed historically (Murtagh and Hepworth, 2005), and the relation of food to health (Chamberlain, 2004a). An examination of the references cited in the paragraphs above quickly reveals the diversity of research approaches, and epistemological assumptions, underpinning the research undertaken in contemporary health psychology.

Within the field of health psychology, several different approaches to the study of health and illness have developed. Marks (2002) argues that four different approaches can be identified – clinical health psychology, public health psychology, community health psychology, and critical health psychology – each operating in different settings, with different values, assumptions, objectives, and research practices (see Table 22.1; and see Marks (2002) for a detailed discussion of these). In this chapter, our interest is more specifically in the research orientations

Table 22.1 Characteristics of differing approaches to health psychology

<i>Research issue</i>	<i>Approach to health psychology</i>			
	<i>Clinical</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Critical</i>
Theory	Biopsychosocial model: health and illness are a result of combined biological, psychological and social factors	No single theoretical frame: draws on public health promotion and prevention approaches to bring about health improvements	Social and economic model: invokes the interdependence of individuals and communities in developing change strategies for health	Analysis of society and the values, assumptions, and practices of health professionals and those they aim to serve
Values	Increasing or maintaining the autonomy of individuals	Mapping the health of the public as basis for policy, health promotion, and intervention	Creating or increasing autonomy of disadvantaged and oppressed groups through social action	Understanding the political nature of human existence; freedom of thought; compassion for others
Context for research	Patients in the health care system (e.g. hospitals, clinics, health centres, etc.)	Schools, work sites, media, and population segments (e.g. youth, elderly, etc.)	Families, communities, and other local populations within their social, cultural and historical contexts	Social structures, economies, government, and commerce; sites where power and knowledge operate
Research methodology	Efficacy and effectiveness trials; quantitative and quasi-experimental methodologies	Epidemiological methods; large scale trials; evaluation methodologies	Participatory action research; coalitions between researchers, practitioners and communities; multiple methodologies	Critical analysis combined with any of the methodologies of the other approaches
Quantitative and qualitative balance	Almost entirely quantitative, with some qualitative beginning to emerge	Mostly quantitative, but some limited qualitative where relevant	Mix of qualitative and quantitative, although frequently qualitative	Mix of qualitative and quantitative, although mostly qualitative

Source: Adapted and extended from Marks (2002).

taken under these approaches, which are relatively different from one another (see Table 22.1), and reasons for these different research agendas.

An alternative classification of health psychology, based largely on the type of research approach, distinguishes between 'mainstream' health psychology and critical health psychology (e.g. Crossley, 2000). This distinction is particularly pertinent to a consideration of the differing epistemologies and research methodologies adopted and used within health psychology.

Mainstream health psychology takes a conventional 'scientific' approach to the field. It assumes that knowledge can be uncovered through traditional scientific research processes, and that it is fixed, independent

of the context in which it is found and of the methods used to reveal it. Mainstream health psychology focuses on measuring, predicting and changing health and illness behaviours, and seeks to discover the 'truth' about psychological factors and health. The approach draws on the biopsychosocial model, and has developed a variety of social cognition models of health behaviour. It focuses strongly on the individual, and assumes that people behave in rational, thoughtful, and predictable ways. These assumptions and the use of traditional scientific methods serve to legitimate mainstream health psychology as a professional adjunct to biomedicine. This is the approach presented in most health psychology textbooks, such as Sarafino (2005) or Taylor (2006), and the basis for most

peer-reviewed research publications in health psychology.

Critical health psychology, in contrast, challenges many of the assumptions and practices of mainstream health psychology. The critical approach argues that people are complex, changing and multifaceted, rather than fixed 'objects' that can be studied 'scientifically'. Critical health psychology generally assumes a social constructionist position on knowledge – that knowledge is variable and changing, and always a product of the historical, social and cultural context in which it is located. Critical health psychology seeks understanding and insight into, rather than prediction of, human conditions and practices, and it generally uses qualitative interpretative research methods, although is not restricted to these. More fundamentally, critical health psychology seeks to challenge assumptions, including its own, and is concerned to identify how forms of knowledge can empower or disenfranchise different people. This approach is represented in some research publications, and textbooks taking this perspective are beginning to emerge (Murray, 2004; Lyons and Chamberlain, 2006).

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: ITS PLACE IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

The development of health psychology did not occur independently of developments within the discipline of psychology and the broader field of health. The mainstream approach within psychology in the 1970s, assuming positivism and the scientific study of behaviour, and emphasizing the rational individual, cognitive processes, fixed variables, measurement and statistical analysis, was transferred directly to the study of psychological issues in physical health. Connections between health, medicine and psychology have been proposed and examined for centuries, but these became more explicit with the development of biomedicine and psychology. Psychosomatic medicine, which considered particular health problems

such as ulcers, asthma, migraine and arthritis to have psychological causes, developed in the 1930s, strongly influenced by psychoanalytic theory. Behavioural medicine, drawing from the keen interest in behaviourism and the experimental analysis of behaviour in psychology, developed as an interdisciplinary approach to health issues in the 1970s. Mainstream health psychology has its roots in both of these developments, but differs from them in having a strongly psychological, rather than interdisciplinary, focus and also in encompassing a broader range of issues within its research and theorizing (Sarafino, 2005). Liaison psychiatry, a specialized sub-discipline of psychiatry concerned with psychiatric problems experienced by patients in medical settings, also developed alongside health psychology. Again, mainstream health psychology can be differentiated from this approach by its broader remit of research and theory (Kaptein and Weinman, 2004).

As health psychology developed, critical influences within psychology were brought into play. In particular, these related to challenges made about the directions and nature of social psychology (e.g. Parker, 1989), the rising influence of critical theory and post-structuralism on psychology (e.g. Sampson, 1978, 1983), the engagement with social constructionism (e.g. Gergen, 1985), and the increasing turn to language and discourse (e.g. Billig, 1982; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Antaki, 1988). These influences and directions percolated into other areas of psychology, including health psychology. As a consequence, some health psychologists began to consider alternative methodologies for addressing health-related questions. They also began to ask different questions about health issues, questions that required different methodologies and methods to provide such understandings. This led to a rise in the use of qualitative methods in health psychology.

However, prior to the formal rise of health psychology, some early studies by psychologists had demonstrated the value of qualitative methods in health research.

One was Herzlich's (1973) classic study of social representations of health and illness in France, based largely on semi-structured interviews. This work built upon the earlier work on social representations of psychoanalysis conducted by Moscovici (1961), which used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Another important early study was conducted in the USA by Stephenson (1963), who used Q methodology to explore popular images of health.

During the 1990s there was a noticeable surge in qualitative research activity in health psychology, and this has increased in momentum since then. One of the first published research texts to take an unabashed qualitative approach to health issues was that of Stainton Rogers's *Explaining Health and Illness: An Exploration of Diversity*, (1991). Others followed a few years later, including the influential text *Making Sense of Illness* by Radley (1994), and texts by Yardley (*Material Discourses of Health and Illness*, 1997), Murray and Chamberlain (*Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and Methods*, 1999) and Crossley (*Rethinking Health Psychology*, 2000). Articles promoting the use of qualitative methods in health psychology also began to appear around this time (Stainton Rogers, 1996; Chamberlain, Stephens and Lyons, 1997; Murray, 1997, 2000; Yardley, 2000; Willig, 2000) and the first special issue of a health psychology journal devoted to qualitative research appeared (Murray and Chamberlain, 1998). Interestingly, Rennie, Watson and Monteiro (2002: 185, Table 5) identified two health psychology journals (*Journal of Health Psychology* and *Psychology & Health*) in their listing of the 32 psychology journals that had published five or more qualitative papers before 2000. In 1999, the first International Conference on Critical and Qualitative Approaches to Health Psychology was held in Canada at St John's, Newfoundland. This meeting attracted health psychologists from all over the world, reflecting the increasing interest in these issues and approaches, and led to the founding of the International Society of

Critical Health Psychology (www.ischp.org) two years later.

It is noticeable that this early work does not arise out of the USA, but is largely centred in the UK with contributions from the rest of Europe, Canada and Australasia. Kidd (2002), on identifying the paucity of qualitative research publications in selected APA journals, argues that there is a contradiction between the publication strategies of these journals and the aspirations of researchers at large. Although publications in qualitative research are increasing, this was not found to be the case for fifteen APA journals where qualitative research could be appropriately published (*Health Psychology* was not included as one of these) (Kidd, 2002). For health psychology, this is reflected clearly in the recent series of papers published in a special section of the APA journal, *Health Psychology*, reviewing 25 years of progress in health psychology and considering the future of the field (see Smith and Suls, 2004). Amongst the eight papers in this feature, only one (Yali and Revenson, 2004: 150) makes any mention of qualitative research, briefly noting its potential value and suggesting that 'Health psychologists seeking to contextually anchor their research may want to consider using qualitative methods'.

In practice, many health psychologists have progressed far beyond merely considering the methods, and are actively using various forms of qualitative research practice to investigate a wide range of questions, questions that are made amenable to investigation specifically through the use of such methodologies. These topics have central relevance for a psychology of health. Apart from the more obvious concerns to reveal participant understandings and social practices, qualitative research opens possibilities for examining issues of embodiment, including disfigurement, stigmatization, and illness portrayal, issues of materiality, such as poverty and socio-structural effects on health and illness, and issues of culture and location, including migration and marginalization.

Table 22.2 Qualitative methodologies commonly used in health psychology

<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Grounded theory</i>	<i>Discursive psychology</i>	<i>Critical discourse analysis</i>	<i>Interpretative phenomenological analysis</i>
Description of use	Identifying a local and specific theory of a phenomenon, usually focused on the processes involved	Identifying the function of talk, and how it constructs objects (e.g. the doctor), positions, and rights	Identifying how knowledge and power are constructed, circulated, and contested, and how practices are located in ideologies	Identifying in detail personal understandings of experience and interpreting them to provide an account of experience
Example paper	Hopia, Paavilainen and Asted-Kurki (2005); examining the processes involved for families when a child has a chronic condition and is hospitalized, and documenting the impacts for the individuals and the family involved	Peel et al. (2005); explore gendered and multiple constructions of dietary practices, and their implications for compliance, by people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes	Rich and Evans (2005); examines ethical concerns and discriminatory practices that arise around discourses of obesity and their implications for health	Lavie and Willig (2005); exploring the experiences of, and meanings given to, inorgasmia by women, and the implications of these for relational experience and identity
Core references	See Chapter 14	See Chapter 5	See Chapter 6	See Chapter 11

Most research articles published in health psychology either identify or claim the use of a specific methodology for the research. In Table 22.2 we outline the major qualitative methodologies used in health psychology, grounded theory, discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis, and interpretative phenomenological analysis, along with an example of research from each approach. However, this listing does not do justice to the diversity of qualitatively-based practices in health psychology in several ways. First, there are other methods that are used less commonly, some of which are identified in Table 22.3 (narrative inquiry, phenomenological analysis, action research, and critical ethnography). Other methodologies, although relatively uncommon in health psychology, could be identified here including case study (see Radley and Chamberlain, 2001), memory work (e.g. Gillies et al., 2004; Stephenson, 2005), biographical research (e.g. Zinn, 2005) and Q methodology (e.g. Risdon, Eccleston, Crombez and McCracken, 2003). Second, some researchers use aspects of a specific methodology without using

the complete practices specified for the methodology (e.g. Werner, Isaksen and Malterud, 2004). Third, many research projects use more than one methodology (e.g. De Souza and Ciclitira, 2005; Gillies et al., 2005), and the practice of mixing qualitative methodologies is increasing. Fourth, other researchers, although clearly taking a qualitative orientation to their research, do not explicitly identify their methodology, and it can be difficult to classify their methods into one particular methodological form (e.g. MacPhee, 2004; Radley, 2004). Regardless, the use of qualitative research in health psychology is clearly increasing, both in usage and complexity. That in turn gives rise to a range of issues and potential concerns about how and why it is used.

UNDERSTANDINGS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Qualitative approaches provide a means to research a wide range of different issues in health psychology, and to address some

Table 22.3 Qualitative methodologies less commonly used in health psychology

<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Narrative inquiry</i>	<i>Phenomenological analysis</i>	<i>Action research</i>	<i>Critical ethnographic methodology</i>
Description of use	Identifying the storied nature of accounts and how storying provides meaning and coherence	Identifying the essential nature of experience	Identifying ways in which social change can be effected in partnership between researchers and people affected	Identifying, largely through participant methods, a descriptive account of the field of interest, and ways in which it may be changed or altered to improve health
Example paper	Gray, Fergus and Fitch (2005); showing how narrative methodology reveals the complexity of the interrelation between race and health and illness in the context of prostate cancer, and consequent implications for intervention	Struthers and Peden-McAlpine (2005); showing how phenomenology enables understanding of the implicit meanings of health-related experiences in indigenous cultures	Dobinson, MacDonnell, Hamson, Clipsham and Chow (2005); using action research techniques to identify issues in public health services for bisexual people in a region of Canada, and to determine ways to improve both access to, and the quality of, public health services for this group	Cook (2005); documents how ethnographic approaches can be used to inform health promotion research and practice
Core references	See Chapter 9	See Chapter 10	See Chapter 3	See Chapter 2

traditional issues in new ways that reveal the depth and complexities associated with health and illness. Qualitative research has been used to address very diverse issues. We have summarized them into four broad areas: to understand meanings and experiences of health and illness; to reveal contradictions and complexities in health and illness; to examine and expose social processes around health and illness; and to promote change within social contexts. We discuss each of these areas in turn below, presenting specific examples of recent research to illustrate the application of qualitative research methods in these areas. It should be noted that these areas are not independent, but overlapping, and the illustrative studies discussed often reflect more than the issues under discussion.

Examining experience

Much qualitative research in health psychology is oriented to understanding the

experience of health and illness. It is conducted using a range of methodologies, with grounded theory, phenomenology and narrative as the most prominent. To a considerable extent, this research uses methods of individual interviews and focus group discussions for data collection, but as these examples show, other methods can be used.

Dabbs et al. (2004) explored the processes through which symptoms were experienced and understood after surgery for lung transplantation. They used grounded theory methodology, and conducted face-to-face in-depth interviews with 14 people who had undergone lung transplantation. In accordance with grounded theory principles of purposive and theoretical sampling, they selected participants to ensure maximum variability on factors associated with the procedure, including gender, age, time since transplantation, and prior history of rejection. They also supplemented their interview data with clinical information from patient records. These patients all understood

that organ rejection was an almost inevitable but unpredictable outcome of their treatment. The researchers found that the experience of symptoms following transplantation went through four stages: naivety, where symptoms were ignored or minimized; vulnerability, characterized by symptom vigilance after experiencing a rejection episode; discovery, when it was recognized that rejection episodes could occur without characteristic symptoms and vigilance needed to be about change from a baseline condition; and insight, where participants gave up on full independence and embraced some interdependence with the transplant team. Understanding the progression through these stages allowed the researchers to propose stage-specific interventions to promote improved symptom recognition and reporting. More generally, Dabbs et al. proposed that these stages were linked by a general process of striving for normalcy – the core social process that grounded theory seeks to identify. These patients were continually striving to manage their symptoms so they could live a normal life, moving from attempting this naively but hopefully through to managing themselves insightfully.

In a rather different approach to understanding illness experience, Hardey (2002) looked at how illness stories are presented on the internet (Chapter 18). There are many forms and sources of illness narratives, available through interviews, life histories, letters and diaries, popular books, and television documentaries. Hardey chose the personal web page as his data source, using systematic search strategies of internet content to identify web pages that were both personal and gave accounts of illness. He located 132 pages for analysis, which was conducted thematically. He also sent an open-ended email questionnaire to all web page authors who provided an email address, and included their comments in the analysis. He found that these personal illness accounts were structured in four quite different ways. One was to present an account where authors explained their personal illness experience and its effects on themselves and others

(my story and explanation). Another type involved the authors as experts on the illness, offering advice from their experience to others with similar conditions (my story and advice). A third type drew on the illness experience to promote a particular health regime or approach to coping with illness (my story and my solution). The fourth type involved authors drawing on their illness experience to recommend and supply health care products and treatments (my story and my products and services). These illustrate the diverse ways in which illness experience can be storied and used to different ends. As Hardey notes, these accounts document new forms of appropriation and representation of health and illness. Although the internet appears to offer an easy access to data, Hardey also notes a range of issues that complicate its use. It blurs the boundaries between the public and the private, is dynamic and interactive, and in constant change and revision. There are also difficulties in analysing the rich use of colour, image and sound that may be included on web pages.

Revealing contradiction and complexity

Health and illness are complex, and not easily captured in any single research study. Qualitative approaches to research in this field offer possibilities for making sense of the contradictions and complexities that are integral to the nature of health and illness, and to related processes of treatment, care and recovery.

Such issues are illustrated in a study by Bishop and Yardley (2004) who explored how people with various forms of cancer discussed their experiences of treatment with both orthodox and complementary medicine. They were particularly interested in how treatment decisions were made and how the responsibility for such decisions was attributed. They discursively analysed focus group discussions, conducted with people who were attending patient support-group meetings, and looked particularly at the rhetorical strategies, choice of vocabularies,

ways of speaking, contradictions, omissions and inconsistencies that structured these discussions. Their analysis showed how responsibility produced an ideological dilemma for these group members. In their discussions, these participants presented contrasting positions that involved either being a patient (a more passive role that attributed expertise and responsibility for treatment to medical professionals) or being an autonomous individual (a more active role that invoked personal expertise about and personal responsibility for treatment). These positions were both highly problematic. Adopting a passive patient role violated the expressed cultural value of agency in everyday life – that one should take personal responsibility for one's health and be morally accountable for doing so. Adopting an active agentic role produced converse dilemmas – in being active one must accept responsibility for health and treatment decisions, and also claim expertise in a realm that is held to be the domain of professionals. The participants negotiated their positions in relation to these dilemmas. Their use of complementary medicine, for example, provided a means to disclaim full responsibility for decision-making around treatment, as they could undertake that in partnership with providers while at the same time giving agency to orthodox treatment providers. This study reveals clearly how the issue of responsibility is very complex and must be continually negotiated if people are to present themselves as worthwhile moral persons who are (and are not) responsible for staying healthy and treating illness appropriately.

In another study, Gough (2006) undertook an analysis of a special feature in a leading UK Sunday newspaper on men's health. The analysis was discursive, and Gough notes that the data, although drawn from one issue of one newspaper, was dense and rich. His analysis of this text argued that the ways in which men's health was discussed and represented is based on taken-for-granted stereotypes about men and masculinity. These present and construct all men as similar, ignoring social differences in class, age,

and sexual orientation. More importantly, it constructs men as invulnerable, emotionally repressed, detached from health concerns, and disinterested in caring for their health. Consequently, this led to a construction of health services as needing to adapt their processes in order to reach men. Women, in contrast, were represented and constructed as carers for men's health, reinforcing traditional understandings of men as detached and women as agents of care. This raises further complexities, in that the positioning of women as carers constructs them as strong and rational in relation to health, attributes usually associated with traditional views of men and masculinity. Gough documents the stereotypical representations often presented in media health stories, but his analysis also illustrates how such representations cannot avoid complicating the meanings of health.

Qualitative researchers have not only developed our understandings of health from the textual analysis of media messages but have also explored how these messages are taken up by different audiences. For example, Hodgetts and Chamberlain (2003) presented televised health documentaries to lower socio-economic status audiences. These were followed by focus group discussions about the meanings of the programme content. Analysis of the documentary texts, focus group transcripts and their interrelationships revealed that participants engaged in a process of communal reworking of the media messages. They were very adept at making sense of abstract health concerns covered in the documentaries and grounding these within their own life worlds. Interactions between audiences and media texts were situated in a dialogical relationship with previous television viewings, the specific perspectives of the documentaries and the viewers' health biographies.

Social processes, subjectivity and power

Qualitative research in health psychology is also concerned with achieving an

understanding of social processes, such as medicalization (see Clarke, Fishman, Fosket, Mamo and Shim, 2003), and how subjectivities are constituted and power infused through such processes. Much of this research attempts to connect professional and lay understandings of health and illness with the political, historical and cultural context.

For example, Holt and Stephenson (2006) were concerned with the ways in which the 'psychologization' of HIV impacted on the lives of sufferers. Psychologization is concerned with the ways in which the discourses of psychology and associated disciplines (psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis) permeate and influence understandings and practices. As Holt and Stephenson note, these ways of understanding illness can be functional, leading sufferers to be more reflexive about their practices and to learn ways of coping and adjustment to their illness. However, psychologization can also have negative consequences, positioning affected people as responsible for their illness, accountable for their treatment, and open to moral judgement about their lives. Politically, Holt and Stephenson argue, this meets the needs of neo-liberal democracies to ensure that citizens are autonomous and engaged in practices of self-regulation and self-management. Further, they argue that this is part of an historical shift that casts individuals as responsible for their own welfare and thereby downplays the role of social forces in producing health and illness.

Holt and Stephenson used memory work as their method (see Stephenson, 2005) to investigate how psychological discourse, HIV status and health were linked in accounts given by HIV-positive gay men of their lives and treatment. Small groups of men met on several occasions to discuss memories based on agreed cue topics such as side effects of drugs, social discrimination, or feeling infectious. Holt and Stephenson found that these HIV-affected people did draw on psychological discourse and understandings, but they also expressed scepticism about this knowledge and reworked it into their accounts in ways that diverged from 'expert' accounts but

which served their own needs. The findings showed how 'disobedient or irreverent readings' (Holt and Stephenson, 2006: 228) of psychological discourse could be used pragmatically to re-conceptualize the self and yet resist the disciplinary pressures of such discourse. They also recognized the potential dilemma raised by the use of such discourse, querying whether it could be used productively in community strategies to assist HIV-affected people and, at the same time, promote critical relationships to psychological expertise. They concluded that 'if psychological knowledge is to be utilized by people with HIV in ways that do not threaten social connectedness or a sense of community, then we need to continue to explore how it is taken up and reconfigured' (Holt and Stephenson, 2006: 229).

Social action and change

Increasingly qualitative researchers are exploring how their work can contribute to various forms of collective health action. This often involves participatory action research (Chapter 3) designed to work with individuals and communities to increase social and health awareness and to promote personal and social transformation. Participatory qualitative research connects with the long tradition of popular education, including the work of Paulo Freire (1972/1993) who argued that the goal of education should be both critical thinking and action. Using this methodology the qualitative researcher moves from being an observer to being a facilitator of personal and social change. However, the practice of this work reveals a range of tensions.

Campbell (2003) conducted an extensive study of a community-based intervention designed to raise awareness of the transmission of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. This intervention adopted a peer education strategy in which local people in the community were trained in how to educate their peers on the risks involved in unprotected sex. The aim of this strategy was to get the residents to collectively take ownership of the problem, begin to act in health-enhancing ways and to take

broader social action to promote healthier communities. However, Campbell identified five key obstacles in the implementation of this intervention: variable commitment by key players, inappropriate conceptual frameworks, lack of appropriate capacity; lack of organizational infrastructure; and lack of systems for ensuring stakeholder accountability. Campbell concluded that to be effective health action programmes need to build and support the commitment of key players, challenge the individualistic and biomedical model of disease transmission, ensure appropriate resources and infrastructure, and ensure the accountability of stakeholders.

In their study of a sex-worker-led HIV prevention project Cornish and Ghosh (2006) explored the challenge of engaging communities. The original intervention involved regular meetings with sex workers designed to raise their social and political awareness and the value of collective action (Cornish, 2006). Although the project was very successful in terms of behaviour change, detailed ethnographic work and individual interviews with a range of stakeholders showed how the project was shaped by different interest groups in the community. For example, to gain access to the red light district the project workers had to negotiate with local men's clubs and brothel managers. They concluded that the 'community' that led the health promotion project was much larger than the localized group of sex-workers. Thus if we are to engage communities in a process of change researchers need to be aware of power differentials within communities and the need to develop alliances between groups to facilitate change.

Similarly in a critique of community based health promotion projects in The Netherlands, Jacobs (2006) conducted interviews with key players in eight different interventions. She found that although the projects were all committed to developing different strategies to promote collective health action they differed substantially in their values and goals. In particular, a tension existed between the ideal of participatory bottom-up approaches on the one hand and the top-down structure

of these programmes in practice. In her review Jacobs found that not one of the projects adopted fully a programme of self-mobilization. Instead they all involved some degree of professional leadership. Jacobs concluded that while in the ideal world self-mobilization may be the aim, in practice there are many compromises between that aim and complete control by the professional.

Finally, Murray and Tilley (2006) conducted a study designed to raise broad awareness of safety in three fishing communities. After discussion with community members it was agreed to develop a range of artistic activities that would engage a large number of community residents. There is increasing interest in the arts not only as a form of entertainment but as a medium of social transformation (e.g. Thomas and Rappaport, 1996). Through participation in community arts activities people can share their ideas about particular issues and begin to explore transformation strategies. In this study local residents developed a wide range of artistic activities including drama, music and visual art. The aim was to increase pride in the fishing industry and reduce the fatalism traditionally associated with accidents in that industry. It was concluded that the success of the programme was due to a variety of factors including a clear community development conceptual framework, identification of local capacity, sharing of expertise, flexibility in planning, and sharing of responsibility. Most important was the means of encouraging community reflection through the arts. This was especially important in communities with low levels of written literacy and a strong oral and musical tradition. Together these studies show how qualitative research enables health psychologists not only to develop community health interventions but also to uncover the processes underlying their implementation.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

There are several issues that complicate the use of qualitative research in health

psychology and limit its acceptance. The prominence of positivist approaches to research operates to sustain dominant paradigms and 'orthodox' beliefs about health and how health should be researched (Dean, 2004). This also means that many health psychologists are trained solely within that perspective, and lack opportunities for qualitative research methods training and experience, although this is not unique to health psychology (see Rennie, Watson and Monteiro, 2000). This is often accentuated by a lack of expertise in qualitative research methods by those involved in the graduate training of psychologists (see Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Madill, Gough, Lawton and Stratton, 2005), and the tensions around introducing qualitative courses into the curriculum (see O'Neill, 2002; Stoppard, 2002). At the same time, much of the demand for learning about qualitative research comes from younger health psychologists who are dissatisfied with the status quo of research in psychology.

A related issue is the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These are often placed in opposition, and presented as separate components of courses or in separate methods courses (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Wiggins and Forrest, 2005), rather than being regarded as different but complementary methodologies used to address different types of questions. Viewing these approaches as separate and disparate is counterproductive; health psychology researchers need to be fluent in both approaches, functioning competently as 'pragmatic researchers' (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005), and able to use appropriate forms of methodology in relevant ways. Such methodological pluralism functions to increase the competencies of researchers, ensures that issues of epistemology are addressed, and helps to ensure more reflexive research practices (see Chamberlain, 2004b; Yanchar, Gantt and Clay, 2005).

Further, health psychologists taking up qualitative research methodologies often have difficulty in moving into more constructionist epistemologies (Stoppard, 2002;

Walsh-Bowers, 2002; Navarro, 2005). The 'hazards of orthodoxy' (Stoppard, 2002) are not easily avoided and the legacy of the hypothetico-deductive approach, with its structured approach and strong focus on methods, variables and statistical analysis (Danziger, 1990), has an ongoing influence on qualitative research practice (Yardley, 2000). This is evidenced in the restricted use of theorizing in health psychology research (see Stam, 2000), and in researchers seeking the 'proper' way to undertake research, falling victim to methodolatry (see Chamberlain, 2000). Also, qualitative research in health psychology frequently falls short of providing an in-depth interpretation of the data, offering little beyond a thematic analysis of the data content (see Parker, 2005).

In health psychology, there is a need to find ways to promote more engagement with interpretative research. There is also a need to ensure that researchers do not become entrenched in the specifics of methodology, and feel free to develop and extend innovative methods for the exploration of psychological issues in health and illness.

WHERE TO NOW?

Earlier (Table 22.1) we reviewed Marks' (2002) model of different approaches within health psychology – from the clinical to the critical. While these approaches can be conceptualized as distinct, it is our contention that we need to seek linkages between them. As Kincheloe (2001, 2005) has argued, qualitative researchers need to become bricoleurs, researchers who can operate interdisciplinarily, innovate and combine methodological strategies as necessary in the context of the research. Such a perspective gives attention to the complexity of social processes and the lived world, and ensures a thoughtful approach to research methodology. Kincheloe (2005: 324) argues that bricoleurs avoid methodolatry and consider research methods 'actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct

our research methods from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the “correct”, universally applicable methodologies’. He further argues that ‘bricoleurs come to understand research methods as also a technology of justification, meaning a way of defending what we assert we know and the process by which we know it’ (Kincheloe, 2005: 325).

In many respects, this is similar to arguments raised by Yanchar et al. (2005) who discuss the need for psychology to adopt a critical methodology. They see this as involving a de-emphasis on methods, promotion of methodological innovation, and critical consideration of assumptions underlying research methods and practices. Kincheloe (2005) proposes that pursuing these directions will enable research that is synergistic with issues of empowerment, disadvantage, social change and social justice – key issues for a psychology of health. Bricoleurs, he argues, ‘attempt to remove knowledge production and its benefits from the control of elite groups ... helping address the ideological and informational needs of marginalized groups and individuals’ (Kincheloe, 2005: 344–5).

Hence another major challenge for health psychology is to use qualitative research to address social problems and produce change, to move qualitative work from research to social action, in order ‘to resist the multiple forces that threaten the health and survival of poor people today’ (Mishler, 2004: 391). We can start with Mishler’s (2005) suggestion that we expand the scope of our research from the individual to the broader context within which the individual is located. Through this move we may come to understand the anger and frustration of those who are marginalized and excluded, and consequently highlight the causes of ill-health within social injustices. This is not just rhetoric; researchers are already beginning to research health issues, using appropriate qualitative methodologies, in this way.

One illustration of this is the turn in qualitative health research to performance-based methodologies. Performance is an opportunity for engagement, a means by which

the researcher can participate in the lived experience of the other, and move from being an observer to a participant. Discussing this form of research, Denzin (2003: 4) distinguishes between performance as imitation or mimesis and performance as ‘struggle, as intervention, as breaking and remaking, as kinesis, as socio-political act’. Within the health psychology literature there are some examples of this form of praxis. For instance, Gray and Sinding (2002) reworked narrative accounts of illness into dramatic performances. These performances, enacted before different audiences, have provoked debate and discussion about the nature of healthcare. Projects like these illustrate how health psychologists, in their practice, can move from interpreters of the situation to participating in its transformation.

CONCLUSION

The use of qualitative methodologies in health psychology is expanding rapidly, and we can expect this to continue in the future, both in the amount of research conducted and in the range of methodologies and methods used. The range of issues being addressed in health psychology through the use of qualitative research methods is also expanding considerably. The study of health is increasingly becoming interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary boundaries are breaking down. We are seeing the uptake of creative and innovative methods in health psychology research, and methodologies and methods initiated in other disciplines, such as ethnography, semiotics, or visual analysis, are increasingly being embraced in current health psychology research. Theoretical ideas and research strategies are flowing into health psychology, not just from closely related fields like the sociology and anthropology of health, but from more diverse disciplines, like geography, cultural studies, humanities and the arts. These will all influence future directions and cross-pollinate research activities in health psychology, leading to the development of a new generation of health

psychology bricoleurs. Although we are only at the beginning of these developments, the future of qualitative research in health psychology is both promising and assured.

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Developmental Psychology

Erica Burman

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research in developmental psychology is no different in principle from other areas of psychology, although its specific focus highlights in stark form key issues for all psychological research. In particular its preoccupations with conceptualizing, measuring and evaluating change and with working with a vulnerable, low status population – with arguably limited, and certainly hard-to-interpret, repertoires of responses – have generated complex methodological and ethical debates (with the precise relationships between the attributions of limited capacity and difficulty of interpretation constituting much of both the conceptual and methodological literature). My aim here is to review more standard methodological treatments in developmental psychology and, beyond this, to indicate some more ‘outlying’ but innovative approaches that offer glimpses of the kinds of research that might usefully extend the current remit and approaches of developmental psychology. This involves taking a broad understanding of cross-disciplinary treatments of both method and childhood.

METHODOLOGICAL INVESTMENTS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developmental psychology, like the rest of psychology, is as much defined by its methodological procedures as its conceptual concerns. But since theory informs and inscribes all methods, we have to attend to the ways conceptual commitments structure and are structured by methodological designs, approaches and techniques. There are three key starting points for thinking about the role of methods in developmental psychology: (1) developmental psychology as method in psychology; (2) method as theory in developmental psychology; and (3) the constitutive relationship between technological developments and methodological approach.

Developmental psychology as method in psychology

Within the history of the discipline, developmental psychology has typically been accorded a particular methodological role, in the sense that questions about development are used to answer broader questions about the origin and nature of

psychological processes. The recapitulationist assumption formulated by Haeckel that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' (i.e. that the development of the individual repeats the development of its species) meant that the study of child development became the arena for posing a whole range of questions that were largely unrelated to concerns with specific children's development or welfare. Rather, from Locke to Rousseau (and if we include religious models of original sin or salvation, then much earlier), childhood was the arena for formulating, modelling and evaluating ideas of the subject and society that connect philosophy to political theory. Configurations of childhood methodologically structured and reflected wider concerns with the good (or bad) society, with methodological procedures as also their strategy. Indeed 'catching them young' (and its variants in 'headstart' or 'surestart' schemes) remains a key social policy assumption within national and international policies. For the child is understood as the methodological tool by which national and international development can be identified, organized and planned (Burman, 2008a).

Modern developmental psychology is largely conflated, for significant historical reasons, with both the domain of 'individual psychology' (via study of 'the child') and with the rise of psychological testing. Indeed, for significant historical reasons – to do with social policy imperatives of emerging nation states for tools to assess the capacities and behaviour of their populations – the history of 'individual psychology' (as with 'individual differences') is largely (but not entirely, as we shall see) the history of the development of psychometrics (Rose, N., 1985).

All this may seem obvious. But one of the precepts of interpretive analysis is that the obvious, the 'commonsense', can carry potent sets of assumptions precisely by virtue of seeming innocuous (Haug, 1992; Parker, 1992). A key paradox is that, despite concern over 'the' developing child, there is often little focus on the particular circumstances surrounding that child. (Note the singular here – indeed a key methodological

intervention has been to acknowledge, via research, that children usually grow up with at least one other sibling – thus challenging the cosy dyadic model¹ (Munn, 1990).) The focus is typically either on general epistemological questions (about the origin and development of 'knowledge' – as in Piaget's project) or on applied social policy imperatives to avoid stigmatized 'end-points' of development (deviance, pathology, criminality, teenage pregnancy, etc.). The latter agenda gives rise to the well-known methodological flaw of retrospectively, and thereby selectively researching, the early experiences and backgrounds of groups that have already been identified as problematic, and so by this circular chain of reasoning ignoring those whose adverse early experiences did not lead to such outcomes (Clarke and Clarke, 1976)². Either way, the study of the child arises out of other debates or concerns, not as a concern with the actual states and processes of how this child (or set of children) develops. A key effect of this individualist approach typically works to implicate families and especially (given prevailing gendered patterns of childcare) mothers as responsible for such outcomes, rather than socioeconomic conditions or state policies.

Hence – through the conjoint focus on developmental progress – the trope of the child produces an elision between individual and national development, and correspondingly naturalizes understandings of development. In this way developmental psychology has fulfilled a key role in the production of mainstream Anglo-US psychology's abstracted, asocial model of the subject, with class, gender and culture only appearing as variables to be grafted on to it (Burman, 1994a,b, 2008a,b), 'casting its object of inquiry – "the child" – in a pre-determined (a priori after all) image of a situationally indifferent, naturally developing biological organism' (Code, 2000: 235–6).

It is precisely the awareness of such conceptual and methodological limitations that have generated new interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary methodological approaches

to the study of children and childhood that we will consider below.

Method as theory in developmental psychology

All too often in psychology questions of *how* something can be measured have substituted for an adequate model of *what* it is that is deemed to have developed. Indeed 'methods' sections in developmental psychology textbooks are either absent because they are subsumed within theories, or else offer only brief accounts of research designs. It is widely acknowledged that the most efficient and widely used design, cross-sectional study, measures only static states documented at a particular time. Moreover, taking age as the dependent variable privileges this over individual and cultural differences such that generational (or cohort) differences are also ignored. Such concerns have preoccupied some developmental researchers so as to render it an area of theory in itself, for example in proposing other designs that more adequately take account of the historically situated character of the emergence and development of activities and qualities (e.g. Baltes, Reese and Lipsett, 1980). Ancillary subdisciplines, such as cross-cultural research, similarly function as a site for the validation of generalized psychological models that usually rely almost entirely on quantitative forms of measurement (see Burman, 2007), and so are regularly cited as designs for developmental research. Indeed developmental psychology and cross-cultural psychology fulfil reciprocal functions as methodological devices of mutual legitimation³.

Clearly theoretical assumptions (about the model of the psychological subject under investigation as much as the trajectory of its change under investigation) structure each design. All measures of development are indirect and inferential; they therefore provide a key site for the rehearsal of ideological presuppositions.

Indeed the very terms of investigation carry cultural-political assumptions that constitute an important topic for study.

As commentators on models of economic development have long noted (Crush, 1995; Rahnama with Bawtree, 1997), the metaphors by which we describe development are shot through with ideological assumptions that both reflect and perpetuate power inequalities. While change is usually understood as positive, 'development' is typically constituted as an unquestionable good - with its absence understood as deficit (undeveloped) or inferiority (underdeveloped) (Sachs, 1992). The epithet 'overdeveloped', now in circulation within post-development and critical development debates, works as an intervention precisely because it invites reflection on the presumed superiority and linearity of western models of economic development. Not only does this prompt reassessment of ecological, environmental and structural inequalities of development, but it also invites attention to who benefits and suffers from this (cf. Burman, 1995, 2005a,b, 2008b; Crewe and Harrison, 2000).

Moreover the equation of developmental psychology with individual development itself betrays how individualism relentlessly structures our models and methods:

The tendency to assign personal responsibility for the successes and failures of development is an amalgam of the positivistic search for causes, of the older Western tradition of personal moral responsibility, and of the conviction that personal mastery and consequent personal responsibility are first among the goals of child-rearing. It is difficult to imagine an American child without a core commitment to the proposition that *someone* is responsible for what happens in development ... The child - like the Pilgrim, the cowboy, and the detective on television - is invariably seen as a free-standing isolatable being who moves through development as a self-contained and complete individual.

Kessen (1979: 819; emphasis in original)

Yet notwithstanding the broader crisis heralded by claims that modernity is in crisis (sometimes cast as 'the end of history'; Fukuyama, 1992), developmental psychological assumptions structured into the concept of 'progress' remain largely uninterrogated. Similarly the conflation of psychological with physical change within notions of

'growth' betrays not only the biological, but also the functionalist, agendas that structured the emergence of psychology, and developmental psychology in particular (Harris, 1987). Indeed feminist theory has generated critical scrutiny of the metaphors of development to highlight the cultural masculinity structured into models through notions of 'mastery' (equating to 'competence') (Walkerdine, 1988), and the privileging of the cognitive over the affective (Broughton, 1988). Even the seemingly innocuous 'arrow' of time can be critiqued for its cultural masculinity (i.e. asocial individualism):

The arrow metaphor expresses three contemporary explanations of developmental change: (1) biology, which launches movements; (2) an ideal solution to a cognitive task, which serves as the target for development; and (3) linearity, which ensures continuity of travel. Arrows describe linear thought and linear development in a universal child. Arrows are also, of course, typically associated with aggression, domination, imposition of a view, and penetration of an influence. An arrow expresses development as a push towards change, not as a force that simultaneously transforms and is transformed.

Kofsky Scholnick (2000: 34)

Kofsky Scholnick elaborates more feminist-friendly relational metaphors such as friendship, conversation, apprenticeship and narrative that usher in more socially-based understandings of contexts for and of development.

Methodology–technology relations in the construction of 'the child'

Technological change is the third key influence on methods of study in developmental psychology. Just as the invention of photography enabled Gesell to formulate his charts for age norms in development in the early twentieth century, so from the 1960s video allowed detailed frame by frame analysis of infant-caregiver interaction. These transformed understandings of the interactional attunement of very young babies (Condon, 1977; Trevarthen, 1977) – central to the relational shift in psychoanalysis (see especially Stern, 1985) – while virtual imaging allowed investigation of perceptual abilities (Bower, 1966).

As we will see later, technological developments have fostered methods of promoting children's self-representations (using photography and video), and we can anticipate future work attending to the varieties and textualities of these (via texting, internet use, etc.). Such methodological developments are also research topics in themselves, with the birth of the information revolution giving rise to new forms of communication, literacy and sociality – as well as offering spaces for culturally specific forms of childhood. Thus technology informs culture, and method becomes topic.

Overall, models of infancy have made a marked transition from attributions of lack (i.e. what the baby 'can't' do) to those of competence, as Stone et al.'s landmark (Stone, Smith and Murphy, 1973) collection indicated. This discourse of competence owes much to the technology that produces such rich descriptions of small children's expertise. But Kessen (1993) argued that locating previously undiscovered skills and qualities within the child serves other functions, in particular in warding off contemporary anxieties about the adequacy of the conditions in which we are rearing children:

The assignment of cognitive capabilities to the new infant frees the baby of dependence on environmental – specifically cultural and parental – influences; his intellectual growth is safe regardless of variations in his surrounding context. Whether or not western culture is the epitome of historical evolution, whether or not American child-rearing patterns are optimal, the child contains shielded knowledge that will exist independently of his nation or handling ... [P]art of the strength of a developmental psychology that stresses what the infant's tissue gives to his future lies in the freedom from responsibility it affords parents. Nor does the assignment of cognitive richness to the infant escape political implications; the new baby of current research is conservative, protected from the vagaries of an unpredictable environment, holding the truths steady in the winds of cultural change ... The baby has become the guardian of stability in an uncertain life.

Kessen (1993: 424–5)

Here theory and method remain integrally linked, invoked to cover the gaps in each.

For this ‘full infant’ (in Kessen’s terms) ‘may have been constructed to save us from the disorder of no longer having shared conceptual models, or even assured research procedures’ (Kessen, 1993: 415).

A brief history of qualitative methods in developmental psychology

While debates about qualitative research are relatively recent in psychology, nevertheless such approaches have a long presence in

developmental psychology, albeit overshadowed by the more recent quantitative emphasis (see Box 23.1). Most textbooks discuss Darwin and Preyer’s mid-nineteenth century diary studies of their own children as important conceptual precursors to the emergence of modern developmental psychology, but they rarely discuss the wider child study movement that these prompted (Riley, 1983). Indeed the longitudinal single or small sample case study remains a key and powerful paradigm within child language research.

BOX 23.1 (A History of) Qualitative Research into ‘Childhood’

Piaget (1919) The clinical method: semi-structured interviews designed to elicit the narrative structure and logical status of a child’s belief system.

Hinde (1983) Observation (behavioural approach): detailed time- and event-sampled descriptions of children’s activities and friendship groupings.

Vygotsky (1962) Cultural-historical approach: focus on what the learner can do with others (‘zone of proximal development’).

Rogoff (2003) Observation (children’s everyday life model): focus on how cultural norms elaborated within specific communities facilitate and constrain children’s developing capacities.

Alanen (1992) Cross-generational research: looks at systematic ways in which age coordinates and constrains social relationships (‘generational order’).

Newman and Holzman (1993) ‘Tool and result’ methodology: embeds activity within social and material conditions and focuses on ‘performance’.

Trawick (1992) Anthropological methods: use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation and researcher reflexivity in order to investigate the everyday relationships, mundane practices and day-to-day struggles which structure children’s beings.

Billington (1996) Textual analysis: analysis of the ways in which official records construct ‘the child’ and their consequences for children’s lives.

James et al. (1998) Childhood studies approach: focus on childhood as a cultural arena and on child agency as elaborated within specific social practices and conditions.

Elias (2000) Historical analysis: study of the history of manners via analysis of manuals for the education and training of young people.

Rose (1985) Literary analysis: Study of fictional representations in order to understand the child as cultural product and the role played by children’s literature in this process.

Marshall and Woollett (2000) Visual self-representation: production of video-diaries to facilitate young people’s self-definition and self-exploration and to explore the role of culture and cultural identifications within this context.

Keller (2003) Parental ethno-theories: identification of parents’ own theories of development and parenting, and their grounding in cultural and economic conditions.

Burman (1996) Analysis of media representations of childhood: discursive analysis of advertisements in order to identify the range of subject positions around children and their relationship with social and cultural practices.

Moreover the history of the case study in psychology speaks to longstanding although now suppressed links with psychoanalysis, which was also reflected in the ways US methodological imperatives transformed Piaget's approach (see Burman, 1996a). Indeed Piaget was closely involved with psychoanalysis⁴, and considered there to be close links between the two disciplines (Piaget, 1919). The methodological approach on which he based his studies of children (most fully discussed in Piaget, 1929) was what he called the 'clinical method' (or later the 'critical examination') which was a semi-structured interview designed to elicit the narrative structure and logical status of a child's belief system. While in its original formulation Piaget's concerns were with questions of certainty rather than 'knowledge', and with the classification of differently structured forms of reasoning, their transformation through translation and popularization across the Atlantic rendered this merely a question of whether and when children do or do not 'have' certain concepts. This question of concept acquisition or possession is a misreading of Piaget's conceptual framework, turning a qualitative investigation into a quantitative test (of 'conservation', for example). Hence the longstanding hostility and refusal on the part of Genevan researchers even to debate with their US counterparts on the basis of incommensurable work produced through incompatible methodological paradigms⁵.

While observational approaches were clearly central also to the child study movement, a further tradition was developed in the 1970s by Robert Hinde and his colleagues derived from comparative psychology and anthropology, in particular ethology. Analogous to animal studies, which do not rely on verbal accounts from participants, this applied behavioural approaches to the observation of groups of children (Hinde, 1983). This body of research has tended to focus on middle childhood – including playground studies, with detailed time-and event-sampled descriptions of children's activities and friendship groupings. It provided

quantitative and qualitative descriptions of children's activities – though clearly was suited more for particular kinds of contexts (such as schools).

A more recent development of these observational approaches is the 'children's everyday life' model that draws in particularly on Vygotsky's cultural-historical model. Developed by Rogoff (e.g. Rogoff, 2003) to research across diverse cultural contexts, with a focus on how cultural norms elaborated within specific communities facilitate and constrain the capacities children can display at a much more radical level than previously thought, the approach has been taken up in particular by Scandinavian developmental researchers (e.g. Solberg, 1990; Gulbrandsen et al., in preparation) to promote a different model of children's relations with their environments (see also Moss and Petrie, 2002). Here the model of the child as a competent social actor is used to explore specific children's roles within families, at home and at school. For example, Solberg (1990) analyses children's contributions to household labour, and their different orientations to being the primary 'homestayer' (when they are alone in the house). Observations are combined with diary accounts and questionnaires to arrive at comparisons of time spent at home, and time spent doing different forms of housework structured according to age (between parents and children) and by gender (mothers, fathers, girls and boys). This approach offers a good illustration of how qualitative observations can be assembled into and combined with some relatively simple quantitative analysis to formalize general and generative conclusions.

BEYOND DIFFERENCE AS DEFICIT: FEMINIST AND INTERPRETATIVE RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

A central dilemma motivating qualitative research in psychology has particular relevance for developmental psychology: how to

move beyond established patterns of representation, with their presences and absences, to inquire instead into what such patterns mean, and why and how they arise. In relation to developmental psychology the challenge is to find ways of interpreting change that do not presuppose the value of change or difference; to move away from the interpretation of difference as deviation, deficit or inferiority that is structured into statistical evaluations. Instead qualitative researchers elaborate ways of inquiring into the *meaning* of these differences, as understood by those identified with such qualities or statuses, and in relation to the construction of such qualities within contemporary conditions.

Qualitative methods in their diverse forms have major relevance to developmental research. The move away from reliance on quantitative measurement, with its conception of variation allowing a notion of difference only as deviation or inferiority, has enabled more thoughtful exploration of meanings, processes and interpretations of children and childhoods. As we will see, different models of the subject (humanist, discursive, etc.) are inscribed in specific research strategies.

Alongside such 'bridging disciplines' of Vygotskian, cultural and narrative psychology and social constructionism noted by Miller and Kofsky Scholnick (2000: 10), the critical importance of feminist research should be noted as a resource for innovation and intervention in qualitative methods in psychology, and developmental psychology in particular. In particular, the differentiations made between epistemology, methodology and method (Harding, 1991) have clarified how theory pervades all methods so that no specific methodological device can be assumed to imply any particular moral-particular framework. Hence it is important not to essentialize methodological paradigms (qualitative *or* quantitative) by attributing particular moral-political qualities to them.

This point is important because feminist work has been influential but its feminist origins typically disavowed within discussions of qualitative methodology, critical

psychology or social constructionism (see Burman, 1999a,b, 2004). Yet feminist analyses are especially important in developmental psychology where women's and children's interests and positions are so often set against each other. Notwithstanding the emerging feminist engagement with developmental psychology (Miller and Kofsky Scholnick, 2000), the continuing reliance of much US feminist psychology on quantitative methods is reflected in Nagy Jacklin and McBride's (1991) discussion of the impact of feminist work on developmental psychology which, significantly, fails to mention anything about methodological paradigms or interventions.

This matter is of particular irony since debates in feminist research provide the most acute interpretive resources relevant for developmental research; namely, an attention to the ways power enters into the conduct as well as interpretation of research. For example, they have exposed the paternalism that can underlie the drive to conduct emancipatory research (whereby the very desire to 'give voice' to the disempowered paradoxically performs those very power relations, through the presumption of the power to bestow them; Bhavnani, 1990); how the claim to conduct egalitarian research always threatens to disguise the power relations always set up (though not in unidirectional ways) by research (Ribbens, 1989). In this sense feminist research builds on, but goes beyond, humanist approaches to qualitative research in psychology.

Yet beyond even specific methodological contributions, feminist analyses of gender relations – as constitutive of identities, status and role – are fruitful resources for childhood researchers, including investigation of relations between gender and age. Researching with women and with children poses particular methodological challenges since both are associated with the 'private', domestic sphere. This has particular consequences for the assessment of women's and children's labour, since household labour is necessary but usually not acknowledged as 'work'. Various feminist researchers of

childhood have highlighted the urgency and analytic utility of addressing the complex intersections between gender and childhood. For example, Nieuwenhuys (1991, 2000a,b) has highlighted how any adequate analysis of international child labour in relation to poverty not only has to take account of the invisibilized character of both women's and children's household work, but also how this remains the last key resource for poor families' survival. This has particular implications for girls who, positioned as both children and incipient women, do both more, and more unpaid, work – and consequently have less access to schooling – than their male counterparts. Nieuwenhuys argues that the International Labour Organization campaign to abolish the 'worst forms child labour' is unhelpful so long as 'the child' is taken as gender-neutral, so failing to address how work is constituted differently across the public–private divide.

Indeed in terms of research design, the feminist sociologist Lena Alanen has extended analyses of gender as a social category to childhood to advocate for the notion of a 'generational order' structuring adult–child relations. Like gender, adult–child relations are asymmetrical and structured by the public–private divide:

Childhood orders children into the 'private' world of home and family and out of the world of economy and politics. It also orders a child's place within the family, in relation to and in difference from its adult members.

Alanen (1992: 65)

She advocates a new methodological paradigm for cross-generational research that can address the systematic effects of social categories such as gender alongside how age 'coordinates and constrains' social relationships, whose rules become identified most clearly when they are transgressed:

The working of such a generational order becomes usually apparent when its rules are violated, when e.g. children work for wages instead of going to school or when they disregard their obligations to their parents as a family child by taking to autonomous living. Such instances begin to make

visible a generational system in analogy to the gender system theorized in feminist analysis: a social order composed of, but also constraining and coordinating, children's relations in the social world in a systematic way.

Alanen (1992: 65)

It is important to note that this approach fits well with an attention to children's agency. As with feminist analysis, the project here is to formulate an epistemological and methodological approach that investigates the possibilities and limits for actions in contexts of specific social constraints. Moreover this account is sensitive to the multidirectional character of power relations; children – like women – are positioned here as neither victims, nor as 'free' agents, as Code (2000: 235; emphasis in original) also highlights:

Children – real, embodied, feeling and feeding children – are born into complexes of familial-social-cultural-affective meanings and expectations, and studied within disciplinary expectations, that shape, *even if they do not determine*, who the child can be, what she can know, how she can respond and negotiate with and within the material and affective circumstances in which she participates in constructing her becoming-adult subjectivity.

Specific methodological problems posed by developmental psychology

It is a moot question whether, why, and to what extent the challenges posed by researching with and about children are different in kind from researching with other populations, a question which is precisely at issue in much cross-disciplinary debate (see below). Formally speaking, childhood is a difficult-to-research area because it is relationally-defined, transient and asymmetrical. Two key methodological issues, as we shall see, also pose core theoretical questions.

What is the unit of development?

While developmental psychology technically could be concerned with investigating the development of any psychological process

(and still sometimes is within discussions of skills or qualities), more typically it makes the individualist move to map and be mapped onto child development. The methodological decision about the unit of measurement for developmental psychological research therefore has profound theoretical consequences, as we have already seen (and we have not yet even discussed competing definitions of what a 'child' is!). Yet not all models have started from this asocial, individualist point. The famous assertion by the psychoanalyst Winnicott (1947/1964: 88) that 'there is no such thing as a baby' drew attention to how psychological development begins with the (m)other-child *couple*. That is, it is impossible to conceptualize, let alone engage with, a baby without also addressing or presuming its care-giving context. Although as Riley (1983) points out, this analytical and methodological point does not necessarily ward off abstraction from the social, it is certainly a move in the right direction. Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) much-cited 'ecological model' further embeds the mother-child unit within ever-widening familial, social, cultural and environmental systems. This key point has been overlooked by international child development policy where appropriations of Bronfenbrenner's model have, significantly, reverted to the individualist position and amended it to position the child alone at its centre (see Burman, 1996b).

Yet while individualist approaches clearly remain very influential, nevertheless other methodological and interpretive resources are receiving more attention, in particular those influenced by Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Holzman, 2006; Vianna and Stetsenko, 2006). Here it is what the learner can do with others, rather than – as in individualist approaches – stripped of support, that is deemed most important as 'the zone of proximal development'. This methodological intervention is theoretical, with notions of 'scaffolding' now central to models of teaching. This 'scaffolding' is simultaneously interpersonal, cultural-historical and physical-biological; it can be in the form of talk as narrative frames holding

and inducting children in language (Bruner, 1983, 1990), or (as particularly elaborated within northern and eastern European readings of soviet psychology) activity systems (Langemeyer and Nissen, 2005). Development is not the unfolding of some inner essence or quality, but rather the interiorization of external features and stimuli to generate specific (social and psychological) change (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978).

Indeed Vygotsky (1978: 65; emphasis in original) emphasized the absolutely intertwined, dialectical character of method and theory, and method as theory:

The search for method becomes one of the most important problems of the entire enterprise of understanding the uniquely human forms of psychological activity. In this case, the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and result of the study.

In particular Newman and Holzman (1993) have taken up this 'tool and result' methodology as an explicit approach that counters (what they call) mentalism and dualism, and embeds activity within social and material conditions. They have further developed this methodology as a theory for the promotion of developmental (in their terms revolutionary) change in their focus on 'performance'. This focus therefore departs from deterministic approaches that privilege repetition over innovation. They extend the approach to Vygotsky's ideas beyond educational applications to therapy. Here they counter the more conservative focus of psychoanalytic approaches on the 'compulsion to repeat', by rather highlighting as a therapeutic tool (and result) how every action and interaction necessarily involves novel features and correspondingly new learning opportunities and outcomes (see also Newman and Holzman, 1997; Holzman, 1999, 2006).

We have all been children

A second key methodological issue posed by researching around children and childhoods is that we have all been children and experienced some kind of childhood.

This perhaps makes developmental research almost unique, in that in most cases the researchers are not, any longer, members of the group or social category about which they researching, but *they once were*. In this sense we are neither ethnographic 'natives' nor absolute 'outsiders'. How we recall or imagine our childhoods and early experiences is clearly important in structuring the models and topics, as well as the process, of developmental research. How can we avoid presuming childhood as a domain already known, imposing our own histories and so occluding and colonizing children's alterity? Equally, how can we attend to a child without treating its unintelligibility as something to be controlled, assimilated (as either deficit or deviance) or romanticized?

We should not underestimate the power of such desires and responses. While experimental research attempts to eschew subjectivity via its statistical tests and procedures, qualitative researchers acknowledge that their standpoint, history and preoccupations are always present. Indeed it is incumbent upon us as researchers to address the ways our prior commitments about children and childhoods may enter into the selection, conduct and interpretation of work with children. Otherwise we risk ignoring the actual condition of children and childhoods in favour of other – personal or social – agendas. Children who deviate from dominant conceptions of what children 'should' be and do – for example, children who work, who have sex, or who are violent – are typically expelled from the category of childhood and rendered monstrous (rather than, as would seem more appropriate, such issues prompting re-evaluating of our understandings of childhood). The vilification and demonization of the two Liverpool boys who murdered two-year-old Jamie Bulger in 1993 illustrated how deeply childhood is connected with prevailing idealizations of human nature⁶.

Not only are we frightened of what children can do, and of acknowledging what it means to us that 'even children' can do such things but we are also frightened of engaging with children's own fear. Rowe

(2005) presents an analysis of ADHD (attention deficit hyperactive disorder) as arising through the failure of adults to be able to tolerate children's anxieties and insecurities, because they highlight their own. The move to diagnosis and medication arises from the mismanaged struggles over our own feelings (as well as the increasing power of the pharmaceutical industry; Black 2003).

Commitments to children's innocence, protection or autonomy, or proposals addressing child welfare or neglect, inevitably evoke reference to our own childhoods, whether as lived, or as we would have wished them to have been (Burman, 2003). Various strategies to address this have been put forward by researchers. Psychoanalytic psychotherapy trainings include at least year long child observations not only to ensure that trainees gain intimate knowledge of developmental trajectories, but also to facilitate exploration of the trainees' responses and identifications: 'to see what is there to be seen and not to look for what they think should be there' (Reid, 1997: 1; see also Miller, Rustin, Rustin and Shuttleworth, 1989). As Reid points out:

To observe in this way is like having scales removed from one's eyes – exciting and terrifying at the same time. It allows for the possibility of generating new ideas and hypotheses, rather than looking for evidence to substantiate existing theories. It is an enormous shock for any observer to discover how little we really see, in ordinary situations ... for any professional working in the caring professions, the capacity for close and detailed observations (called upon in many different professional settings) makes us more effective in the service of our clients, pupils and patients.

Reid (1997: 4)

Walkerline (1997) explicitly advocates drawing on autobiography, including fantasy, as a resource for investigating the meanings and investments in gendered childhoods. Using a more explicitly psychoanalytic framework, Marks (1995) analyses how her identifications with the children within the education case conferences she was researching entered into her impressions and interpretations. Reflection upon her 'countertransference' responses not only helped her to

disentangle her own history and preoccupations from those of her participants, but also became an added resource for generating interpretations of other professionals' responses and dilemmas. In both these accounts, biographical material is situated within axes of gender and class relations and so is more than, rather than merely, 'personal'.

These issues become more stark in contexts of intercultural exploration. In her anthropological study of sacred texts and household life in Tamil Nadu, Trawick (1992: xvii) explicitly espouses the 'boundless, ragged and plural' as methodological principles:

One advantage of taking plurality as the way things are is that it makes us realize that the ethnographic situation (confrontation between 'fieldworker' and 'native') is not really all that strange, and it may make us more comfortable about focusing on that situation for what it is and playing it as it lays ... We may not feel so inclined to pretend in our monographs that we don't exist. We may be able to act upon the faith that 'culture' is created only in the confrontation between cultures, as 'self' is created only in the confrontation between selves.

Trawick (1992: xix)

While Trawick includes (in a 'methodology' section) description of the range of methodological devices she used (including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, etc.), she also writes of other aspects of the research process; in particular, the importance of having to recognize that she was no longer in control of the project. This is a key feature of qualitative research; for when the conditions for and practice of research are explicitly negotiated with participants we have to be able to cope with the unexpected:

Learning a culture, like learning a language, is largely an unconscious process, which means that one cannot control it. Plain waiting, listening and hoping seem to be the most useful things one can do most of the time.

Trawick (1992: 50–1)

Trawick documents how she came to appreciate that her study of Tamil sacred poetry was actually bound to, and played out within,

the household life and activity in which she was participating. Moreover, the central concepts she was investigating (of love, conflict, loyalty and hierarchy) were present within the everyday relationships between the adults, and the adults and children around her. Reading her ethnography as a study of children and childhoods is instructive not only because she brings the reader face to face with his or her own positions and identifications, but also because we cannot learn about the children without also learning about specific and mundane cultural practices of food preparation, kinship relations and day-to-day struggles that structure their lives and relationships, their very beings. Thus her account is not only a tale of orientalist admiration alongside grinding worry about child malnutrition – including the struggle to curb a western impulse to intervene and 'know best' (although it is also that). Above all, Trawick's account challenges and exposes what is at stake in the comfortable abstraction of childhood.

THE 'VALUES' PROBLEM

We have already noted contests and investments structuring how development is described and evaluated, and indeed whether it is considered desirable. Here I will address three key debates concerning major 'value issues' prompted by research with and about children. These are: children's trustworthiness as informants; the question of who speaks for children; and 'ethics'.

Children's trustworthiness as research informants

This question is typically cast as a debate over 'reliability', generated in particular by abuse investigations, and fuelled by false/recovered memory debates. A key difficulty in the psychological research is that the process of determining children's reliability threatens to recapitulate the very difficulties it sets out to investigate in terms of attempting to manipulate memorial accounts (Burman, 1997). Here the quantitative research has at least

demonstrated that adults can under some conditions be susceptible to the same kinds of influences and effects noted in relation to children (e.g. Poole and White, 1991). This poses the question of what exactly marks the difference (if any) between adults and children – is it a question of competence, or confidence and sense of social power?

Motzkau (2005) wryly highlights the logical circularity structuring the ‘suggestibility’ debate, which in the end always returns to the evaluator’s own commitments and predilections (about the credibility of children, and how each particular child ‘fits’ in relation to his or her view of this). In turn Motzkau suggests that this realization generates so much discomfort on the part of the evaluators (whether judges, psychologists or social workers) that they enter another round of the circle ...

Who speaks for the child?

While the politics of representation is a constant preoccupation for qualitative researchers, this takes particularly acute and practical form in relation to research with children, where questions of competence become confounded with those of status (Burman, 1992). The ethical requirement for ‘informed consent’ clearly recapitulates most developmental questions: how do we differentiate consent from compliance? Indeed it is instructive to ask how the rights endowed by research practice confirm or transgress typical norms around adult-child relations which often rely upon some degree of persuasion or coercion – in the name of enlistment or even ‘scaffolding’ (David, Edwards and Alldred, 2001; Gillies and Alldred, 2002).

While some approaches focus on documenting children’s accounts, and where possible would seek to solicit representation via children (seen especially in relation to consultation over the development of child rights policies), others prioritize facilitating adults to advocate for the child (a position sometimes adopted by educational psychologists; Billington, 2000, 2006; Billington and Pomerantz, 2003). Yet formally within

typical ethics procedures there are requirements to gain adult permission for any research intervention involving children, either from parents/guardians or from teachers (depending on the nature and, more typically, the setting for the intervention). These tensions surrounding adult permission/protection vs. child rights take on particularly stark form in relation to matters involving the child’s body – whether of consent to surgery (Alderson, 2002) or access to contraception (Hayden, 2002). They also map onto disciplinary differences and intra-disciplinary debates (e.g. between structural and relational sociologies of childhood, for example), which are reflected in different research strategies: research by children, with children, about children, or about representations of children and childhoods.

Perhaps one of the key contributions of qualitative research is to be able to enquire into and interpret absences, as where children are not present or included in their representation. For example, children are often (literally) absent from education case conferences, which are supposedly collaborative multi-disciplinary decision-making arenas whose conclusions are usually of material relevance to children’s lives. The frequent fact of children’s (and often also parents’) literal absence of self-representation in this arena may well speak volumes about the extent to which they regard this process as actually involving them in any meaningful way (cf. Marks, 1993; Burman, 1996c).

Beyond this, it is possible to trace the textual construction of the child via analysis of official records and the contests played out within these. Billington (1996, 2000) offers a close analysis of the subtle transformations and substitutions between the ‘statement’ of special educational needs he submitted and the version finally adopted by the local education authority. He traces the origins and insertions of particular phrases transposed from different professionals’ reports made at much earlier points in the child’s educational career, and analyses how these worked to change his recommendations against diagnosis and segregation.

'Ethics'

Major ethical issues are posed by researching with and about children (not least – but sometimes forgotten – the issues posed for adults in their engagement with children and childhoods, as real or remembered). There is now a vast apparatus of legislation surrounding children, such that any intervention is accompanied by industries of checklists, policies and committees seeking to minimize harm and ensure informed consent. But it is important that this bureaucracy does not evacuate the genuinely critical thinking that motivated such procedures. Ethical practice is a process, not an absolute state. There is a danger that researchers imagine that ethical issues are resolved by the successful negotiation of the paperwork. But while they should be anticipated, not all ethical dilemmas can be resolved in advance. A genuinely consultative and relational approach cannot specify all eventualities.

Clearly the inequality of the adult–child research relationship imposes some limits on levels of consultation and relationship. But if we are not merely either to pre-empt or to re-state all the problems composing the topic of developmental psychology in attempting to characterize ethical research relationships with and about children, we should perhaps take as a guiding principle that all research safeguards applying to adults should be considered applicable to children, with possible extra ones surrounding clarity of information and reflection on possible consequences; that is adopting as a methodological principle a theoretical position that goes beyond the 'special' status of the child. Rather, the analytical position that children imply and are implicated in relationships with others (including determining, as well as being determined by, the positions of mothers, fathers, teachers, professionals, etc.) also extends to an understanding of ethics. Ethical practice is not a part of the research process, as an additional or separable element, but *is* the research process.

Ethical concerns expose the wider social investments developmental psychological

discourses can inadvertently support. Alongside all the focus on child protection (and its struggle with more libertarian approaches) we might ask: is protectionism winning in an era of defensive practice and 'risk'? Protecting children can function as a way of pre-empting answers/silencing children/closing down questions (since parents/guardians required to be present) (see also Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers, 1992). More generally, the flow of the paradigm of abuse between the social and the familial seems to involve the projection of societal anxieties about personal, environmental and national safety onto children. It has been suggested that the undermining of parental authority reflected in current child rights legislation arises from a model of society that is disillusioned and disempowered, that is thereby positioned as in need of support from professional experts (Pupavac, 2002). In a context where the global 'war against terror' comes to be reflected in the insecurity of personal and familial relations, does this herald a return to new, but less confident, individualism that is all the more intent on regulating children? As Moss and Petrie (2002) point out, such wider crises appear to enter into our models of services such that – especially in the UK – we have come to think of services *for* children, with children positioned as passive consumers in need of being contained and protected, instead of creating spaces for children to explore and interact with each other and with others.

DISCIPLINING CHILDHOOD

While psychology is typically rather parochial and inward-looking in its debates and resources, qualitative methods have wide cross-disciplinary connections. Developmental psychology – so often constituted as child development – has many intersections with other disciplines. While often dismissed as merely providing a deficit model of children, developmental psychologists claim to investigate what is often presumed or ignored: what it is that develops or changes between

children and adults. Nevertheless there are many useful research and analytical strategies offered by other disciplines, in particular in relativizing, or specifically situating, psychological knowledge claims.

The childhood studies approach, formulated from within sociology, portrays childhood as a social category. Its model of the child as competent social actor emphasizes the importance of the child as researcher or co-researcher, with a particular focus on child agency as elaborated within specific social practices and conditions (James, Jencks and Prout, 1998). As Alanen (2003: 42) noted of generational relations: 'the socially determined source of individuals' agency in their capacity as children is therefore to be found by investigating the particular social organization of generational relations existing in the society under study'.

Overlapping in methodology somewhat, anthropology invites exploration of cultural perspectives on children and childhoods. Is childhood another culture? Such questions go in two directions: one concerns how the settings and approaches surrounding children constitute particular cultural environments worthy of study. Thus nurseries, schools, toys and games become cultural sites for investigation that tell us about the practices and positions elaborated for participants⁷. The second trend analyses how children in different contexts live different childhoods. Both approaches understand childhood as a cultural construct – a position which has powerful consequences for developmental psychologists' predilections towards naturalized, universal explanations (see Burman, 2008a,b). I have already shown how discussions of working children, for example, offer key challenges to dominant conceptions of modern western childhood as a period of innocence, play and freedom from responsibilities. Such work is methodologically important in revealing the limits of developmental psychological knowledge and its cultural presumptions. Similarly, the study of child soldiers and child-headed households are both urgent and important in themselves at the level of policy and practice, but

also they prompt re-evaluation of the meanings and expectations surrounding dominant notions of childhood. An anthropological approach works with a model of the child as informant; that is, as expert on their own culture capable of alerting the researcher to salient aspects of its rules.

Historical treatments of childhood are also vital in attending to variations of and conditions for understandings of children and childhood. These include far-reaching debates over the status of childhood as itself a historically specific construct emerging in the modern period (Aries, 1962), while Elias' (2000) analysis of the history of manners devotes especial attention to manuals for the education and training of young people as key sources to identify social norms. Methodological debates here focus on the interpretation of sources; for example, Pollack (1983) disputed Aries' claims of lesser affective involvement on the part of parents on the basis of pictorial representations using analysis of other kinds of (written) historical records.

A further key methodological point emerges from attention to the selectivity of records. Since children, like other most relatively powerless groups, do not typically author the kinds of records that are preserved, children's political involvement gets written out of history. For example, it is impossible to evaluate the role of children and young people in the protests against exploitative conditions in the early European factories because age was simply not recorded (de Wilde, 2000). Currently the role of children as 'freedom fighters' within the struggle against apartheid in South Africa is rapidly being forgotten (Seekings, 1993; Marks, 2001).

Perhaps most significant for evaluating the status of developmental psychology is historical research that investigates the interwoven character of constructions of childhood with the emergence of specific understandings of human nature. Steedman (1995) traces the historical and cultural conditions by which 'the child' became the signifier of interiority, a trope now so structured within contemporary western culture that it is difficult to

even to reflect upon it as such. Yet the child as personification of the inner self owes its origins to the emerging theories of science (including cellular development), psychoanalysis and popular culture from the eighteenth century onwards, as well as broader social shifts in the organization of family and labour via industrialization.

The question of sources ties historical work to literary analysis. Here once again we have a model of the child as cultural product, but with an attention to the literary forms and the relations structuring their production and reception. A key relevant methodological intervention here is that fictional representations can be as analytically important as any 'real' historical record (Lesnik Oberstein, 1998a). Indeed that idealized representations can be constitutive as well as reflective of children and childhoods is well illustrated by Rose, J.'s (1984, 1985) analysis of how the preparation of *Peter Pan* for distribution as a school text in early twentieth century England was explicitly oriented to creating and organizing age and class differences, as reflected in the regulation of its form, narrative voice and lexical complexity. Here particular ideologies of childhood and child development entered into the forms of language deemed appropriate for children.

Via analysis of educational policy documents, Rose, J. (1985: 94) traces how particular conceptions of language teaching (derived from emerging models of childhood – as closer to nature; Singer, 1992) informed the selection and abridging of literature for schools:

The language of the elementary school child was to be natural – which meant a vocabulary based on concrete objects and written composition constructed on the basis of speech ... It meant literature based on physical actions and on facts which could be added to the child's stock of information.

This example indicates a clear illustration of the circularity between the cultural representation of and children's actual development, since of course children's lives are shaped by the cultural conditions to which they have been exposed. Indeed as Lesnik

Oberstein (1998b) points out, unreflective accounts of children's literature and theories of child development play a merry-go-round game of mutual citation and legitimation. Further, Rose's account is methodologically informative because she shows how ideas about language are constructed according to contingent social agendas, in this case class (indicated by 'cultured', Latinate-inflected prose):

As educational policy at the turn of the century makes clear, the most natural of languages only has a meaning against that most stylistic form against which it is set. There is no natural language (least of all *for* children): there is elementary English and cultured prose, evoking each other, confronting each other, or else coming together as here [in Barrie's text] only to be carefully orchestrated apart.

Rose, J. (1985: 100; emphasis in original)

Significantly, this process of rendering *Peter Pan* into a form deemed appropriate for young children removes all traces of its sexuality and violence. Further, its very form was changed to remove moments of self-referentiality, where language itself is glimpsed as a construction, from the text. The narrator becomes disembodied, and comments about the protagonists' grammar and vocabulary (and class position) disappear. Reading policy thus warrants the naturalization of class privilege.

In addition to the disciplinary perspectives discussed above – all of which function methodologically as interpretive/analytic checks and commentaries upon the status and construction of psychological accounts – we have already also discussed how psychoanalytic and feminist approaches offer techniques for studying and interpreting children, and responses to children and childhoods.

INNOVATIVE SOURCES/TECHNIQUES

I will now take three examples of research to illustrate some recently emerging forms of qualitative developmental research, focusing on technologies of self-representation, ethno-theories of childrearing, and analysis of media representations.

Visual self-representation

New forms of technology make available possibilities for children and young people to actively create their own research material. Indeed visual culture has increasingly been seen as a participative tool of inquiry that allows for flexibility and self-representation (and even action; e.g. Mitchell, DeLange, Moletsane, Stuart and Buthelezi, 2005). As Marshall and Woollett (2000: 121) comment:

Video diaries have been hailed as a democratic methodology, in part because of their ready public access but also because representational issues reside largely with the diarist rather than being professionally mediated through, for example, voice-over narration. Similarly when a video diary is used as a social scientific tool, the agenda for its content and contextualisation resides largely with participants.

Reflecting on their analysis of a young British Asian woman's video diary, they claim that this medium facilitates opportunities for self-definition and exploration, with

culture and cultural identifications as variably expressed, and cultural referents as changeable and affording the potential for innovation [to] problematize notions that culture is a variable that is similarly experienced by all those designated as belonging to that culture.

Marshall and Wollet (2000:129)

This methodological approach therefore opens up for inquiry key debates that other methods have closed down. Nevertheless, as the authors point out (Marshall and Woollett, 2000: 130), questions of ambiguity of interpretation and politics of representation still remain since – through their re-presentation – the young person's 'voice' is now framed by theirs. As we have seen, no mere technology can guarantee democracy or egalitarianism. Rather such commitments must be structured into the epistemological framework guiding the research.

Parental ethno-theories

Also drawing on anthropological contributions and turning the tables from prescribing

to, to learning from, parents recent developmental research has positioned parents as worthy informants of their own theories of development. As mediators and moulders of development, parental accounts indicate sociocultural norms and standards. Keller's (2003) study documents how parental evaluations of care-giving practices are structured by distinct cultural norms related to particular economic and cultural conditions. She observed and videotaped both rural traditional subsistence-based community vs. urban (post)industrial cultures. These two groups were considered to have different socialization goals, and so corresponding notions of competence. She then presented to groups of 7–10 women extracts of the videos showing typical interactional situations with three month old babies from each cultural environment, inviting comments from each woman on 'what they had seen (what they find good or bad, or whatever comes to their mind' (Keller, 2003: 293). Not surprisingly, the mothers from each cultural group could offer clear analysis and justification for the practices from their 'own' group. More interesting was their emphatically negative view of the other group. Irrespective of possible over-polarization of cultural differences (through selection of two opposing cultural practices, rather than researching across contrasts of class and region intra-culturally; see Gjerde, 2004), this approach highlights the importance of situating the evaluation of childrearing practices within locally-defined norms.

Analysing media representations of childhood

Rather like the historical analysis of texts produced for children, and the discussion of ethno-theories above, we can see media representations of and about children as providing a valuable methodological arena for investigating the discursive resources informing understandings of children and childhoods; understandings that undoubtedly have acquired the status of (at least popular) psychological theories and that function

materially in performing children and childhoods. Methodologically, media texts – in their myriad forms – offer a rich array of representations of children and childhoods. Their diversity can be overwhelming, nevertheless a structured approach can usefully address these as resources. There are of course now many approaches to analysing written and visual texts (see, for example, Chapters 5, 6 and 17 in this volume). Here I offer two examples.

In Burman (1996c) I take charity advertisements as a forum to investigate contemporary discourses of North–South relations as played out through representations of international aid for children. By analysing these I explicitly challenge the abstraction of the child from culture/community and rather reverse this to read dominant cultural representations through the portrayal of children. In particular, this approach is useful to explicate the range of subject positions around children (helping, saving, etc.) as well as how these become recruited into the paternalist discourse of donor-recipient relations⁸.

A similar approach taken to social work training advertisements (discussed in Bradbury and Burman, 2004) highlights how the discourse of ‘care’ and personal involvement take priority over the regulatory and bureaucratic duties social workers perform within welfare state apparatus. While gender, class and cultural themes are mobilized to emphasize childhood vulnerability and need for protection, psychological theories concerning cycles of abuse (or intergenerational transmission) and attachment disorders are visually invoked as resources informing professional understandings and intervention. Thus we see the practice of developmental psychological theories as a cultural resource drawn upon to interpellate the professional as concerned, engaged and as a saviour of damaged children (see also Burman, 2003, 2008b). Such discursive approaches enable investigation of the crucial link between theory and its popularization, that otherwise would stay inadequately theorized only in terms of decontextualized and asocial individual beliefs.

STRATEGIES

The above techniques rely on distinctly different orientations to knowledge-claims and production. Now I will highlight two distinct interpretive positions according to which material generated from research with children can be analysed.

‘Giving voice’

A first strategy for researching children and childhoods that emphasizes the child as author of their account often makes claims to ‘give voice’ (Cullingford, 1991). Such claims underlay the video diary as a research tool, but are subject to limits as indicated above. We need to ask: whose voice is privileged in such accounts (the researcher or the researched)? For such work still cannot escape the work of interpretation. Instead of remaining complicit with how unequal power relations outside the research relationship structure access to representational arenas, this kind of research attempts to use the power of legitimation that research is accorded to re-present the accounts of and so advocate for a relatively marginalized and disempowered group. This approach also extends to collaborative and action research with children and families (Billington and Pomerantz, 2003).

Documenting children’s accounts

Nevertheless we should not romanticize or essentialize this ‘voice’, or treat it as somehow authentic or anterior to socio-cultural conditions and relations. Here discursive analysis is useful to address the forms of talk and frameworks of meaning mobilized by speakers. Such approaches are useful to help researchers working with children grapple with the interpretive complexity of the accounts they generate (Alldred and Burman, 2005). For example, in her study investigating children’s accounts of being excluded from school Marks (1996) was surprised to find that, instead of generating accounts of defiance or indignation, many of the young

people's (mainly boys') accounts apparently concurred with their detractors as to the reasons and justification for their exclusion. How was she to make sense of this?

Rather than invoking claims about the young people's beliefs or self-images, she attempted to analyse further the broader cultural contexts mobilized within the interviewing situation. So, elaborating this discursive analysis, it became clear that it is not unusual for those subject to a regulatory practice to position themselves accordingly. This 'confession' is surely the expected framework within which the participants had likely rehearsed, and perhaps had to rehearse, their account of what had happened. By close attention to the forms of question she asked and comparison between the affective tone in the group and individual interviews, Marks identified what she called 'co-operative', 'resistant' and 'disengaged' accounts, all of which conveyed quite distinct relations: between the child and the school; the child and the (mis)deed/precipitating event; and the child and the interviewer. As much as giving 'voice', through her research she was *producing* a subject; a subject constituted in forms of talk as institutional practice (see also Alldred and Gillies, 2002). Further, such strategies can be consciously deployed by children, as was highlighted by Silverman, Baker and Keogh's (1998) conversational analysis of children's silence in parent-teacher consultations about them. In such contexts, rather than signifying incompetence, silence can work to successfully resist enlistment into a moral discourse children want to avoid.

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY BEYOND THE CHILD?

Rather than offering conclusions to round off or close this account, I will indicate where else it might go. I will finish by offering two possibilities that span technical and analytical intervention, as methodological investigations inevitably do. Both address the central theoretical and methodological limitations that have been highlighted

as pervading developmental psychological investigations – how the focus on 'the child' has produced an asocial account of individual development, abstracted from socioeconomic and political conditions. To disrupt this tendency we can: (1) displace the focus on the child; or (2) use the focus on the child to open up wider questions.

Displacing the child

Rather than indulging the prevailing sentimentalization surrounding children (with its attendant lack of engagement with actual children), we can ask: is it helpful to think about 'children' at all? The very term seems to occlude constitutive axes of class, culture, gender and even age in a meaningful way, let alone sexuality. 'Children' and 'childhood' as blanket categories typically get in the way of genuine intellectual inquiry and sensitive intervention. Indeed much current research is designed to explore the constitutive ways gender, 'race' and class inequalities structure specific forms of childhood, rather than privileging the category of childhood over these (as in Frosh et al.'s work (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) on 'young masculinities', for example).

Moreover we can take apparently problematic cases as revealing methodological limit cases identifying the analytical tensions structured within conceptualizations of childhood. So, for example, are 'teenage mothers' children? And how do we determine which 'voice' to privilege when mothers and children's views diverge – in a context of a mother in a refuge refusing to allow her child to have therapy (see Bravo, 2005). But we should take care when we look at the following issues: women as mothers, especially that problematic category of 'teenage mothers'; or at the contests that service providers have with women in shelters – about how they discipline children or whether the children should have therapy. These specific and seemingly exceptional circumstances offer crucial glimpses of the structurally ambiguous and unstable parameters of relationships posed by and

around children. Above all, the question that has reverberated around women's studies of 'which women?' applies equally to how we construct developmental psychological investigations: *which children?*

Widening the focus

An alternative strategy is to use the focus on the child to open up broader issues of democracy, contested power relations and societal values. This is the approach used by Dahlberg and Moss (2005) in their cross-national comparative analysis of early childcare and educational provision. Their analyses highlight the different conceptualizations of citizenship, societal relationships and political participation discernable through the study of policies and practices around children in different countries. From this they generate specific proposals for facilitating models of childhood that emphasize and enable engagement, autonomy and resilience rather than the isolated, privatized and protected childhoods currently being configured in Anglo-US contexts. Hence acknowledging the wider agendas mobilized around work with children, including the political tensions involved, can inform investigations that combine methodological attentiveness with political transformativity.

NOTES

1 The portrayal of the caregiver-child relation as a mother-child dyad, with the child pronominalized in English as masculine, does – as various commentators have pointed out – avoid acknowledging the homoerotic connection between mother and daughter which thus prefigures and privileges heterosexuality.

2 Models of 'cycles of abuse' typically rely on this kind of reasoning and so should be approached with caution.

3 The emergence (from the 1970s onwards – significantly from US psychologists) of life span developmental perspectives arose from the acknowledgement that developmental models, in particular with their recent focus on cognitive development, had largely portrayed post-adolescent life in terms of stasis or even decline. Notwithstanding this, the main body of developmental psychological work tends to

be equated with the study of childhood – hence my focus here.

4 Piaget was an early member of the International Psychoanalytic Association, and both underwent and conducted analysis himself for a period (Schepeler, 1993). Discussing processes of symbolization, he describes presenting a paper 'in which Freud had been interested' to the 1922 International Conference on Psychoanalysis held in Berlin (Piaget, 1951: 170–1).

5 Notwithstanding his other critiques, Vygotsky was favourable about Piaget's clinical method. See later for an account of his cultural-historical approach – a method as much as a theory.

6 Indeed Franklin (2002) treats the media treatment and public response to this case as emblematic of a shift in the English conceptualisation of children from victims to villains which is currently more receptive to authoritarian measures to control and punish children than empower them through 'rights'.

7 Children's geographies is now a burgeoning area, for example – with a journal now published of that title.

8 Elsewhere I extend this analysis to draw on psychoanalytic theorizing to account for dis/engagement with such campaigns (Burman, 1999), and consider the wider North–South relations recapitulated in such representations (Burman, 1994b, 2007, 2008b).

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Clinical Psychology

David Harper

INTRODUCTION

Clinical psychology ‘aims to reduce psychological distress and to enhance and promote psychological well-being by the systematic application of knowledge derived from psychological theory and data’ (British Psychological Society Division of Clinical Psychology, 2001: 2). In reviewing qualitative research in clinical psychology, I will provide examples from a range of specialties (e.g. work with adults, children, people with learning disabilities and so on) and so I will not duplicate the significant literatures in forensic psychology (see Chapter 28), health psychology (see Chapter 22), developmental psychology (see Chapter 23) or psychotherapy and counselling research (see Chapter 25). Most of the studies I discuss here have either been conducted by clinical psychologists, or included clinical psychologists in the research team. Some studies are by academic researchers but are either on a clinical topic or have been published in clinical psychology-related journals.

MAPPING THE INFLUENCE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The predominant model of clinical psychology in most countries is that of the scientist-practitioner. The tension between an emphasis on a positivist science base and an emphasis on therapy and professional issues runs through many debates in clinical psychology, including research methods. Thus, on the one hand, clinical psychology has often seemed wedded to quantitative research methods drawing on an implicit naïvely realist epistemology and yet, on the other hand, many commentators note the similarities between the kinds of analysis undertaken in qualitative research and the judgements practitioners have to make in making sense of clinical material (Good and Watts, 1995; Orford, 1995; Walsh-Bowers, 2002).

However, there are four major sources of variation in the take-up of qualitative methods internationally: the legacy of naïve realism; the policies of research

commissioners; international differences in the culture of training programmes; and the editorial policies of major journals.

The legacy of naïve realism

Clinical qualitative researchers face a powerful medical discourse which constrains what research can be funded, published and thus conducted. In common with much of mainstream psychology, clinical psychology has, historically, been a modernist discipline largely wedded to quantitative methods within a naïvely realist epistemological framework. This is so taken for granted that most research reports do not include a statement about the study's epistemological position. Early accounts of qualitative research in clinical psychology (e.g. Good and Watts, 1989) were ambivalent about epistemological questions like whether qualitative research should follow a hypothesis-testing paradigm with evaluations of reliability. Indeed, this was the source of a debate in the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* (BJCP). Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (1999) had outlined some criteria for evaluating qualitative research, based on methods ranging across the epistemological spectrum, mainly focusing on phenomenological and more realist methods whilst excluding discursive and other methods which were more relativist. Reicher (2000) argued that these criteria excluded discursive methods because they tended to imply a more realist epistemology. Elliott, Fischer and Rennie (2000) acknowledged this and noted that they had neglected to ask discursive researchers to review their criteria. In part, this may reflect the fact that discourse analysis (DA) appears to be more popular in the UK and Ireland than in North America where the authors of the criteria paper were based (Rennie, Watson and Monteiro, 2002).

The most popular 'big q' qualitative methods in clinical psychology tend to be based on realist (e.g. realist versions of Grounded Theory), critical realist or phenomenological (e.g. interpretative phenomenological analysis, IPA) epistemologies.

Indeed, in many reviews (e.g. Good and Watts, 1995; Buston, Parry-Jones, Livingston, Bogan and Wood, 1998), social constructionist methods like DA are absent, reflecting a tendency to exclude alternative approaches and to minimize questions of epistemology. However, there are some signs that, in most countries apart from the USA and Canada, a process of legitimization has begun. For example the BJCP published a grounded theory study in 1996 (Clegg, Standen and Jones, 1996) and has now published a paper described as a DA (Messari and Hallam, 2003). Mental health research methods books have begun to include DA as a valid approach (e.g. Potter, 1998; McLeod, 2001; Barker, Pistrang and Elliott, 2002; Marks and Yardley, 2004; Dallos and Vetere, 2005; Slade and Priebe, 2006).

For clinical psychologists, their preferences for epistemological frameworks will probably be related to their preferred theoretical orientation. The cognitive behavioural tradition is a large, though not the only grouping – others identify themselves with other traditions (e.g. systemic family therapy, psychodynamic or humanistic traditions) or as eclectic or integrative (Norcross, Brust and Dryden, 1992; Bechtoldt, Norcross, Wyckoff, Pokrywa and Campbell, 2001; Sayette, Mayne and Norcross, 2004). Cognitive behaviourism's more realist epistemology fits well with the evidence-based practice movement and, of course, the commissioners of research have a major influence on the take-up of qualitative research in clinical psychology.

The policies of research commissioners

What research gets conducted depends largely on what attracts funding. Health research commissioning occurs within a largely medical context and, as one of Walsh-Bowers' (2002: 172) interviewees puts it 'in health-related research there is great pressure from granting agencies to emulate medical research with measurable outcome variables'. In this section I will focus on the

example of health research commissioning in the UK (see also Holloway, 2006; Priebe and Slade, 2006). A recent volume includes chapters on the mental health research policy context in other countries: Germany (Puschner, Kunze and Becker, 2006); Italy (Burti, 2006); Sweden (Hansson, 2006); and the USA (Lyons and Witt, 2006).

The UK Department of Health's (1999) *National Service Framework for Mental Health* lists a hierarchy of evidence which is used within the evidence-based practice movement, for example the international Cochrane collaboration which produces systematic reviews:

- Type I evidence:** at least one good systematic review and at least one randomized controlled trial.
- Type II evidence:** at least one good randomized controlled trial (RCT).
- Type III evidence:** at least one well-designed intervention study without randomization.
- Type IV evidence:** at least one well-designed observational study.
- Type V evidence:** expert opinion, including the opinion of service users¹ and carers.
- Department of Health (1999: 6)

RCTs are thus considered to be the 'gold standard' of research designs in health research and this feeds through into how research applications are judged by commissioners of research and the research review boards encountered in health settings. I have discussed problems like the relegation of service users' opinions elsewhere (Harper, Mulvey and Robinson, 2003). However, of concern here is that qualitative research is unlikely to be viewed as higher than type IV or V evidence. Thus RCTs are more likely to be funded and accorded prestige. However, although they are able to answer a small number of important questions, they are inappropriate for many of the questions

practitioners find useful (Slade and Priebe, 2001; Williams and Garner, 2002).

In response to some of these concerns, a group of researchers have set up the Cochrane Qualitative Research Methods Group in order to raise awareness amongst reviewers of the utility of qualitative research and to increase the use and importance of qualitative research in systematic reviews (Popay, 2002). Some clinicians like Roy-Chowdhury (2003) have adopted the evidence-based practice discourse to argue that qualitative research can provide 'evidence' in relation to particular research questions and some recent research texts have attempted to follow through the implications of embracing a variety of methods to address a range of questions (Slade and Priebe, 2006).

Since many commissioners and reviewers of research have been socialized into using hypothetico-deductive approaches, they often frame questions in terms of comparison, change over time or in relation to inferred constructs. Potter (2003: 78) notes how this occurs 'as psychological questions often work from a factors-and-outcomes logic that has been developed with notions of experimental manipulation and the multivariate statistics that go with the analysis of results'. However, these kinds of questions are more appropriately addressed by quantitative methods (Barker et al., 2002) and it will take a process of education and institutional policy change so that commissioners begin to frame their questions differently in order to increase the amount of qualitative research. However, there are some signs that this is occurring with some National Health Service (NHS) research review committees specifically including both reviewers who are qualitative researchers and reviewers who are psychiatric service users. Moreover, in the independent sector, research funders are often more open to alternative paradigms. Thus, in 2006, the research website of the UK's Mental Health Foundation (<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>): noted that 'the Foundation's research team uses quantitative and qualitative research to develop our understanding of how people can survive,

recover from and prevent mental health problems’.

International differences in the culture of training programmes

Despite the apparent flexibility in research teaching allowed by accreditation criteria, North American writers have described a number of sources of resistance to qualitative research in professional psychology (Ponterotto, 2005a). A number of surveys reveal that only a small amount of clinical research on US clinical training programmes is qualitative (e.g. Keeley, Shemberg and Zaynor, 1988; Shemberg, Keeley and Blum, 1989; Ponterotto, 2005b).

In contrast, in the UK, qualitative research in professional psychology has continued to grow at a faster rate than in some other countries although, even now, it is hardly mainstream. In a survey I conducted in 1992, 81% of clinical psychology training programmes which responded reported that they taught qualitative methods though the average amount of time devoted was just under five hours and only a small number of students submitted qualitative dissertations (Harper, 1993). Henwood (2004), reporting on research conducted with UK clinical psychology programme staff in the mid- to late 1990s, notes that they responded to the increasing popularity of qualitative methods amongst students at that time with responses which varied from: actively facilitative; to passively or anxiously facilitative; to reactive; and to relatively indifferent. However, the situation appears to have changed and, when I repeated my earlier survey in 2006, 100% of the responding programmes now reported that they taught qualitative methods, devoted an average of 30.8% of method-specific teaching time to qualitative methods and had an average of 38% of students using solely qualitative methods in their final dissertations (Harper, in preparation). Indeed Barker et al. (2002: 91) state that ‘qualitative methods have now become much more fully accepted within psychology, and the heat

seems to be dying out of the old quantitative versus qualitative debate’. Even in the USA where clinical qualitative research has been less extensive there are signs of change with the publication of Camic, Rhodes and Yardley (2003) by the American Psychological Association and the publication of a book on qualitative methods edited by a clinical psychologist and qualitative researcher which includes several chapters in a section entitled ‘clinical practices’ (Fischer, 2006). But is the growing acceptance of qualitative methods within clinical psychology reflected in journal publication policies?

The editorial policies of major journals

Munley et al. (2002) reviewed 454 papers appearing in 10 APA journals (including *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Psychological Assessment* and *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*) during 1999. They reported that 97.6% solely used quantitative methods as opposed to qualitative or mixed qualitative/quantitative.

I recently searched clinical psychology-related journals on EBSCO up to 2005, using the search terms ‘qualitative research’, ‘qualitative’ and ‘discourse’. I excluded most counselling psychology and psychotherapy journals for reasons of overlap with other chapters. The results can be seen in Table 24.1. I have excluded some hits which were duplications. Rennie et al. (2002) noted that qualitative research was gradually increasing and the British Psychological Society journal *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice* (PAPTRAP) is an example of this. Between 1923 and 2001 (when it was called the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*) there were 23 hits in total of all the search terms (duplicate publications excluded), i.e. 1.09% of all the articles was a hit. In contrast, between 2002 and the end of 2005, there were 14 hits in total out of 121 articles, i.e. 11.57% were hits. This is quite a significant increase.

Table 24.1 Hits for qualitative search terms on EBSCO

<i>Journal</i>	<i>Total no. articles searched</i>	<i>Search term 'qualitative research'</i>	<i>Search term 'discourse'</i>	<i>Search term 'qualitative'</i>
<i>British Journal of Clinical Psychology</i> (BPS)	1386	4 (0.29%)	4 (0.29%)	23 (1.66%)
<i>Clinical Psychologist</i> (Taylor & Francis for Australian Psychological Society's College of Clinical Psychologists)	355	0	1 (0.28%)	2 (0.56%)
<i>Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy</i> (Wiley) ^a	380	48 (12.63%)	15 (3.95%)	50 (13.16%)
<i>Clinical Psychology Review</i>	990	1 (0.1%)	3 (0.3%)	9 (0.91%)
<i>Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice</i> (Oxford journals for APA Division 12)	522	3 (0.57%)	0	13 (2.49%)
<i>Journal of Abnormal Psychology</i> (APA)	6417	0	5 (0.07%)	23 (0.36%)
<i>Journal of Clinical Psychology</i> (Wiley)	7876	4 (0.05%)	6 (0.08%)	59 (0.75%)
<i>Journal of Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings</i> (SpringerLink)	396	0	0	2 (0.51%)
<i>Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology</i> (APA)	8414	0	14 (0.17%)	37 (0.44%)
<i>Journal of Mental Health</i> (UK) (Taylor & Francis)	758	6 (0.79%)	7 (0.92%)	41 (5.41%)
<i>Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology</i> (Guilford) ^a	1020	20 (1.96%)	21 (2.06%)	8 (0.78%)
<i>Professional Psychology: Research and Practice</i> (APA)	4311	2 (0.05%)	1 (0.02%)	22 (0.51%)
<i>Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice</i> (2002–2005; formerly <i>British Journal of Medical Psychology</i> 1923–2001) (BPS)	2224	2 (0.09%)	10 (0.45%)	31 (1.39%)

^a Since these journals were not covered by EBSCO, Google Scholar was utilized instead.

Of course, the search terms are very broad and a review of the articles hit reveals that many use the terms 'qualitative' and 'discourse' in their generic sense – for example, the article may include discussion of qualitative changes in data, a qualitative literature review or of qualitative interpretation of psychometric data. In the articles where a qualitative research method has been used the most common study is an interview study where raters code responses (e.g. interviews developed to investigate attachment theory; Salzman, 1997) and then perform statistical analysis, often in relation to quantitative variables. Alternatively, a generic form of content or thematic analysis will be conducted on interview responses (e.g. Johnstone, 1999).

'Big q' studies are rarer, though the *Journal of Mental Health* (JMH) and PAPTRAP have published a good number. Newer journals and those more influenced by psychotherapy

traditions have tended to publish more qualitative research. In 1995 the JMH had a special issue devoted to qualitative research. *Clinical Psychology Forum* (the British Psychological Society's Division of Clinical Psychology newsletter) followed in 1998 (Henwood, McQueen and Vetere, 1998). The JMH editorial board includes some qualitative researchers and also users of mental health services. Both PAPTRAP and the BJCP include qualitative researchers on their editorial boards.

Obviously, qualitative research methods will address some questions more appropriately than quantitative methods but there are a range of questions they address because each method has a different theoretical tradition, analytic focus and epistemological framework. In the next section I will discuss the kinds of research questions addressed by qualitative research in clinical psychology.

THE QUESTIONS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH CAN (AND CANNOT) ADDRESS

Research questions need to be framed in a manner which both fit the epistemological assumptions of each method and are of relevance to clinical psychology. Some clinical psychologists hold to an excessively narrow interpretation of the definition of a 'clinically relevant' research question, one that is often informed by the dominant modernist research paradigm. A traditional interpretation of this has been that this means research on clinical populations alone. However, increasingly qualitative researchers have focused on 'normal' samples alone or comparisons between normal samples and clinical samples. Moreover, researchers have begun to investigate professional practice where the focus of the study is the professionals themselves and they have also examined some of the social, political and institutional contexts of mental health problems.

The importance of clarifying research questions

In their discussion of clinically relevant research, Barker et al. (2002) emphasize the importance of formulating, clarifying and refining research questions over time. They identify different kinds of questions which studies can address. Using their typology, qualitative methods are generally better at addressing questions relating to the description of phenomena and, more debatably, some may be appropriate for questions of comparison. However, they are less appropriate for questions relating to correlation, causality and measurement which are essentially quantitative in nature. As Coyle (2000) and Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) note, the choice of method is essentially a tactical and pragmatic issue – some methods are better at addressing some questions than others. Thus if we want to know how many people experience a particular mental health problem, we need to adopt a quantitative strategy but if we want to know what it is like to

experience that problem we may need to adopt a qualitative strategy. Questions that qualitative methods cannot address include those based on a 'factors-and-outcomes logic' (Potter, 2003) like 'what is the influence of X on Y?'

The question of whether qualitative methods are appropriate for comparing groups is open to debate, depending on whether the comparison involves some kind of numerical assumption (e.g. 'does group X talk more about A than group Y?'). If, however, the question is more descriptive (e.g. 'how do a group of service users and a group of professionals talk about mental health problems?') then qualitative methods can be appropriate.

The importance of epistemological considerations

Barker et al. (2002) also distinguish between different research paradigms: exploratory and discovery-oriented versus confirmatory (e.g. hypothesis-testing). Qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in each, though the hypothetico-deductive approach is generally only appropriate for qualitative methods adopting more realist epistemological frameworks. Therefore choosing the right method is also about ensuring that the method's assumptions and underlying epistemology are consistent with the researcher's aims. There are now a bewildering array of epistemologies to choose from but some researchers have helpfully analysed similar material using different methods so readers can evaluate the different kinds of analysis possible (Madill, Jordan and Shirley, 2000; Wilkinson, 2000; Burck, 2005).

Clinically relevant questions addressed by different qualitative methods

Potter (1998: 122) notes that for those beginning to use qualitative methods 'the failure to properly conceptualize a research question that fits with the research method is a major source of confusion'. There are a number of

research methods texts which aim to help practitioners appreciate the range of questions methods address because of the differing philosophical traditions from which they emerged (McLeod, 2001; Barker et al., 2002; Marks and Yardley, 2004; Murray, 2004; Dallos and Vetere, 2005; Slade and Priebe, 2006). However, it is also important not to be overly organized by methodological constraints since, on occasion, they can impede the analytic process (Chamberlain, 2000; Salmon, 2003).

In Table 24.2 I have listed examples of qualitative clinical research. Here, I will briefly note the kinds of topics and research question those investigating clinical issues have addressed.

(a) *Conversation analysis (CA) and ethnomethodology.* CA's focus on the sequential nature of talk and on how participants orient to it has proved very valuable for researchers since much of mental health work is conducted via talk of one kind or another (in psychotherapy sessions, meetings and so on) or in writing (e.g. referral letters, written reports and so on). Rapley (2004) has examined how, for example, the notion of learning disability is, in part a product of interactions, for example between care staff and people with learning disabilities.

(b) *Discourse analysis.* Elsewhere (Harper, 2006) I have noted that clinical DA researchers have had three main aims: developing accounts of the history of psychiatric categories; delineating discursive resources and the positions afforded through their use; and investigating the interaction as evidenced in the practice of diagnosis and psychotherapy. DA has proved most useful in exploring issues which are contested in some way: the role of 'culture' in family therapy sessions (Roy-Chowdhury, 2003) or how dangerousness is constructed in media reports about people with mental health problems (Allen and Nairn, 1997). Psychotherapy sessions have also been a topic here (Soal and Kottler, 1996).

(c) *Ethnography.* Ethnography is not used as much as it might be in clinical research.

It is valuable in trying to understand the local 'culture' of a particular setting and how its 'rules' might be made explicable to non-members. Light (1980) provides a fascinating ethnographic account of the process of professional socialization of American psychiatrists.

(d) *Grounded theory.* This approach has been quite popular in clinical research and is the method of choice for some clinical psychologists (Orford, 1995). Indeed there are enough Grounded theory studies on psychosis alone for Boyd and Gumley (2007a) to produce a methodological review. It is particularly well-suited to developing theoretical models from unstructured data and it has been used to investigate the experiences both of mental health service users (Strickland-Clark, Campbell and Dallos, 2000; Rose, Fleischmann and Wykes, 2004; Boyd and Gumley, 2007b) and of professionals (Corrie and Callanan, 2001).

(e) *Interpretative phenomenological analysis.* IPA is rapidly becoming a popular method within clinical psychology. This is not surprising, given the method's focus on developing an insider perspective on how people subjectively experience the world and respond to particular issues or transitions. Similarly to the use of Grounded Theory, researchers have used IPA to focus both on the experiences of service users (e.g. Knight, Wykes and Hayward, 2003) and of practitioners (e.g. Raval and Smith, 2003; Whittington and Burns, 2005).

(f) *Narrative analysis.* Like IPA and grounded theory, narrative analysis often resonates with practitioners because of its orientation both to people's stories and how they change over time. Thus Thornhill, Clare and May (2004) examined the emerging narratives of people who self-identified as having recovered from psychosis. Stern, Doolan, Staples, Szmukler and Eisler (1999) focused on the experiences of those caring for people with a psychiatric diagnosis.

(g) *Q methodology.* Stenner and Stainton Rogers (2004) refer to this approach as a 'qualiquantological' method as it combines aspects of both qualitative and

Table 24.2 Examples of methods used in qualitative research in clinical psychology

<i>Method</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>What was done</i>
Conversation analysis and ethnomethodology	Rapley (2004)	Examined interactions between people with learning disabilities and staff.
	Kogan and Gale (1997)	Investigated a narrative therapy session transcript.
	Stevens and Harper (2007)	DA of semi-structured interviews with psychiatrists, anaesthetists and psychiatric nurses about Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT)
	Roy-Chowdhury (2003)	DA exploring how 'culture' is constructed in family therapy sessions, using session transcripts.
	Soal and Kottler (1996)	DA of transcripts of family therapy sessions.
	Stowell-Smith and McKeown (1999)	DA of admission reports to a maximum security psychiatric hospital.
	Messari and Hallam (2003)	DA of interviews with clinical psychologists and clients about psychological therapy for psychosis.
	Allen and Nairn (1997)	DA of media texts in New Zealand examining the way in which dangerousness was constructed in stories about mental illness.
	Burns and Gavey (2004)	Post-structuralist DA of media texts and transcripts of semi-structured interviews with women who practised bulimia.
Ethnography	Light (1980)	Participant observation of the professional socialization of psychiatrists in the USA in the late 1970s.
	Barrett (1996)	Participant observation of the life and work of a psychiatric hospital by a psychiatrist working there who was also an anthropologist. There is a particular focus on talk (e.g. by professionals or in clinical interviews) and on how schizophrenia is produced in talk and in medical documents.
Grounded theory	Carrick, Mitchell, Powell and Lloyd (2004)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with adults about their experience of using anti-psychotic medication.
	Clegg et al. (1996)	Analysis of interviews with care staff working with people with profound learning disabilities.
	Corrie and Callanan (2001)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with clinical psychologists, counsellors, counselling psychologists and psychology trainers about the topic of research in the context of clinical work.
	Rose et al. (2004)	Mixed use of content analysis and grounded theory to investigate archived 'testimonies' of service users' experiences of ECT.
	Strickland-Clark et al. (2000)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with children and adolescents conducted immediately after family therapy sessions.
IPA	Raval and Smith (2003)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with practitioners who have had experience of working with interpreters.
	Whittington and Burns (2005)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with staff working with people with learning disabilities about the topic of challenging behaviour.
	Knight et al. (2003)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with psychiatric service users about their experiences, particularly of stigma.
	Coyle and Rafalin (2000)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with Jewish gay men about their experiences of negotiating their cultural, sexual and religious identities.
Narrative analysis	Thornhill et al. (2004)	Analysis of semi-structured interviews with people who self-identified as having recovered from psychosis.
	Stern et al. (1999)	Analysis of conversations with relatives of psychiatric service users about their experience of caring.
	Adame and Hornstein (2006)	Analysis of ten first person accounts of emotional distress, investigating the form of the narratives and how the author's purposes affect them.
Q-methodology	Day et al. (1996)	Analysis of Q-sorts completed by psychiatric service users about their experiences of using neuroleptic medication.
	John (1997)	Analysis of Q-sorts completed by practitioners, teachers and trainees about the relationship between theory and practice in psychology.
	James and Warner (2005)	Analysis of Q-sorts completed by service users and staff in a medium secure unit on the topic of women with learning disabilities and self harm.
	Jones, Guy and Ormrod (2003)	Analysis of Q-sorts and of structured interviews by psychiatric service users about their construal of the experience of voice hearing.
	Gleeson (1991) (see also Chapter 6 in Curt, 1994)	Analysis of Q-sorts about how madness is represented.

quantitative methods. Since many other methods focus on small samples, Q methodology can be helpful where researchers are interested in understanding what range of perspectives are culturally available about a topic and what groupings of people might cohere around different stories. Thus Day, Bentall and Warner (1996) examined how service users positioned themselves in relation to different perspectives on psychiatric medication. Q methodology has also been used with groups of staff: James and Warner (2005) analysed Q-sorts completed by service users and staff in a medium secure unit on the topic of women with learning disabilities and self harm.

One of the difficulties in comparing qualitative clinical studies is that they are often conducted with different clinical populations on different topics. In order to help give a flavour of the ways qualitative methods can approach the same topic, let us take a look at how the topic of 'delusions' has been addressed by researchers working within different research traditions.

An example of the use of different methods in clinical psychology: The case of 'delusions'

We have seen how different qualitative research methods ask different, but equally valid questions. In Table 24.3 we can see how researchers using different methods, drawing on different epistemological frameworks have examined the topic of 'delusions'.

According to DSM-IV a delusion is 'a false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everyone else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary' (American Psychiatric Association, 1994: 765). Many of the studies focus on delusions which would be seen by psychiatrists as persecutory or paranoid (i.e. involving the person thinking that they are at risk of harm from a persecutor who has an intention to cause them harm). By focusing on the same topic but different methods, I hope the

range of studies demonstrates the variety of research questions which can be addressed. I have listed the methods with those subscribing to a more realist epistemology at the top and with the studies at the bottom subscribing to a more social constructionist epistemology.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Clinicians have begun to look for alternatives to the scientist-practitioner model. Some of these are more able to include the kind of insights likely to come from qualitative work including Lerner's (2001) *critical practitioner*; Schön's (1987) *reflective practitioner*; practice-based enquiry (e.g. Hoshmand and Polkinghorne, 1992); and narrative-based practice (e.g. Greenhalgh, 1999; Roberts, 2000).

Qualitative research has influenced theoretical developments and therapeutic innovations in clinical psychology and, in this section, I will attempt to summarize some of these.

Qualitative research and therapeutic innovation

To some extent, the impact of qualitative research intersects with the influence of the various epistemologies underlying those methods, for example, the critiques associated with post-Structuralism and social constructionism. Within psychodynamic and psychoanalytic traditions, there have been applications of psychoanalytic theory to understand psychological phenomena (e.g. Walkerdine, 2001; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2003) and to research methods (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). Some academic researchers have subsequently trained in forms of psychoanalysis (e.g. Ian Parker and Eugenie Georgaca in Lacanian psychoanalysis and Erica Burman in group analysis) and this may influence their research interests in a number of ways.

Table 24.3 How different methods have been used to investigate 'delusions'

<i>Method</i>	<i>Study</i>	<i>Research questions</i>	<i>Data</i>
Attributional coding schemes	Lee et al. (2004)	Hypothesis-driven: the clinical sample would make more external-personal attributions for negative life events and would make highly stable and global external-personal attributions.	Using the Content Analysis of Verbal Explanations, attributions were derived from interviews with 12 participants with a diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder (which included persecutory delusions) and a non-clinical control group.
	Beese and Stratton (2004)	An exploratory study so no hypotheses stated; however aims were to confirm and expand findings of previous Attributional Style Questionnaire-based studies.	Data gathered through use of Leeds Patient Experience Interview. Spontaneous attributions in interviews with 31 'patients with delusional beliefs' derived using the Leeds Attributional Coding System.
Conversation analysis	Palmer (2000)	Aimed to 'to explicate the tacit skills by which delusions are recognised' by psychiatrists (p. 778).	Based on three interviews with people who had been admitted to hospital, had diagnoses of schizophrenia or schizo-affective disorder and had expressed delusions. Draws on Wooffitt's (1992) analysis of people who reported paranormal experiences.
	McCabe, Heath, Burns and Priebe (2002)	Aimed to investigate how psychiatrists and service users engaged with each other in routine consultations.	Transcripts of 32 videotaped naturalistic psychiatrist-patient outpatient appointments conducted by seven randomly selected psychiatrists. Service users had diagnoses of schizophrenia or schizo-affective disorder.
	McCabe, Leudar and Antaki (2004)	Investigating the claim that delusions represent a Theory of Mind (ToM) deficit by identifying how participants used or failed to use ToM-relevant skills.	Transcripts of 35 encounters (out-patient consultations and cognitive behaviour therapy sessions) between mental health professionals and people with a diagnosis of chronic schizophrenia.
IPA	Rhodes and Jakes (2000)	Exploring whether there were any links between the contents of delusions and participants personal goals.	Firstly, developed a typology of motives from semi-structured interviews with 14 people where delusions were reported and who had a diagnosis of some form of psychosis. Secondly, conducted a category-led thematic analysis both of the delusions in terms of motivations and of their life goals and problems in terms of motivations.
Institutional ethnography	Hak (1998)	Examining how diagnostic interviewing is part of a process of working up the client's experiences into a factual account and how social relations are invoked and constituted by this process.	Three sources of data: a report made by a male psychiatric nurse following an interview with a 20-year-old woman who had been referred to a Dutch emergency psychiatric service; the transcript of a visit by another nurse to the woman's home; and a report written by this nurse following the visit.
Grounded theory	Boyd and Gumley (2007b)	Aim was to construct theory about persecutory delusions from an experiential perspective rather than from pre-conceived hypotheses.	Transcripts of 15 semi-structured interviews with 10 people who were identified by their psychiatrist as having experienced persecutory delusions.

(Continued)

Table 24.3 cont'd

<i>Method</i>	<i>Study</i>	<i>Research questions</i>	<i>Data</i>
Discourse analysis ^a	Harper (1994)	Aim was to investigate how interviewees talked about the practice of diagnosing paranoid delusions.	Transcripts of semi-structured interviews with three psychiatrists and two clinical psychology academics.
	Georgaca (2000)	Aim was scrutinize the diagnostic criteria of implausibility, idiosyncrasy, conviction and incorrigibility.	Transcripts of unstructured interviews with individuals on an acute psychiatric ward who were diagnosed as delusional. Study reported extracts from two of the interviews.
	Georgaca (2004)	Aim was to investigate how rhetorical devices commonly encountered in disputes about fact were deployed in an interview with a man diagnosed as delusional.	Utilized data gathered in Georgaca (2000) and analysed a number of extracts from one interview transcript.

^a Both the Harper (1994) and Georgaca (2004) articles were accompanied by commentaries and responses from the authors (one of Harper's interviewees wrote a commentary) which highlight some important issues.

Thus psychoanalytic concepts may be drawn on to understand cultural processes (Parker, 1997). They can be combined with action research (e.g. Burman, 2004) or used as a theoretical resource for reflecting on the process of research, for example: researching around race, gender and mental health (Burman and Chantler, 2003); and investigating parallel processes in discussing research team dynamics (Burman and Chantler, 2004). Also theoretical developments can be introduced to the psychotherapy field, for example Georgaca's (2001, 2003, 2005) application of Lacanian theory and Bakhtinian ideas about dialogue to psychotherapy.

Within cognitive therapy, however, constructivism has had more of an effect than social constructionism (e.g. Neimeyer, 1999). Constructivist approaches to therapy have a long history, for example, in Personal Construct Theory (e.g. Kelly, 1955). As a result, qualitative research that is more realist or phenomenological has had more of an impact here than more critical or social constructionist work. However, there is a growing interest in qualitative research and, as we saw above, qualitative studies have drawn on attribution theory (Beese and Stratton, 2004; Lee, Randall, Beattie and Bentall, 2004) and on cognitive behavioural models of paranoia

(Boyd and Gumley, 2007b). Grounded theory has also been used to investigate important factors in cognitive behavioural therapy for psychosis (McGowan, Lavender and Garety, 2005).

Social constructionism has found its most receptive audience within the family therapy field, given the interest in systems of social relationships and the awareness of the existence of multiple perspectives on phenomena (Harper and Spellman, 2006). Different qualitative methods have been applied within systemic work (Burck, 2005). Two key foci include the use of CA and DA to examine issues of process in family therapy sessions (Morris and Chenail, 1995) including how change may be contested (Frosh, Burck, Strickland-Clark and Morgan, 1996; Stancombe and White, 1997) and how culture and gender may be constructed (Foreman and Dallos, 1992; Hare-Mustin, 1994; Roy-Chowdhury, 2003).

Within narrative therapy (White and Epston, 1990), which emerged out of systemic family therapy in the late 1980s, there has been an increasing interest in theoretical innovations associated both with qualitative research and epistemological frameworks like critical realism and post-structuralism (Parker, 1999; Angus and McLeod, 2004).

Some qualitative researchers draw links between their conclusions and approaches like narrative therapy – thus Hepworth (1999) sees narrative therapy as attempting to avoid some of the pathologization associated with other therapeutic approaches to anorexia. McKenzie and Monk (1997) describe an interesting adaptation of discourse analytic ideas – they invite trainee therapists to practice identifying discourses and positions adopted by themselves and their clients in therapy. This kind of approach can also be helpful in broadening the context explored in psychotherapy supervision (Heenan, 1998).

Exciting new developments include applications of narrative theories to unusual beliefs (de Rivera and Sarbin, 1998) and applications of dialogical theories both to psychotherapy (e.g. Hermans and Dimaggio, 2004) and to particular problems like obsessions (Hallam and O'Connor, 2002). Therapies, like Jaako Seikkula et al.'s Open Dialogue model, explicitly informed by dialogical theories, are now developing (Seikkula, Alakare and Aaltonen, 2001; Seikkula and Arnil, 2006).

Qualitative research and theoretical developments

Critical qualitative research (i.e. research broadly influenced by post-structuralist ideas) has begun to have a moderate influence on the development of theory and practice in clinical psychology (e.g. Parker, Georgaca, Harper, McLaughlin and Stowell-Smith, 1995), for example, offering new insights into how therapeutic practitioners might understand cultural and gender identities (Burman, Gowrisunkur and Sangha, 1998). Some important work here has been conducted by psychiatrists Pat Bracken and Phil Thomas who have developed the notion of 'postpsychiatry' (Bracken and Thomas, 2005). Phil Thomas has also been involved with innovative work into the experience of hearing voices (Leudar and Thomas, 2000) which is partly based on qualitative research into the voice-hearing experience (Leudar, Thomas,

McNally and Glinski, 1997) and has led to therapeutic innovations (Davies, Thomas and Leudar, 1999) very much in tune with other developments in the field like the Hearing Voices Movement (Romme and Escher, 2000). Michael White and other narrative therapists have developed similar ideas (Stewart, 1995). Some qualitative researchers have also used post-structuralist ideas in their research to explore the embodied nature of the experience of voice-hearing, focusing on the work of the Hearing Voices Network (Blackman, 2001).

Critical qualitative researchers have also offered new perspectives in the area of child sexual abuse and there is now a broad array of approaches (e.g. Haaken, 1998; Reavey and Warner, 2003). New perspectives have led to alternative therapeutic interventions like Sam Warner's 'visible therapy' (Warner, 2000, 2001) and innovative approaches to the training of professionals involved with child protection (Warner, 2003).

Clinical and academic collaborations

Potter (1998) has warned of the variable quality of qualitative work and he notes the difficulties faced by those practitioners working in isolated sub-disciplines when they try to use qualitative approaches. One solution to this is for practitioners and academic researchers skilled in qualitative research to collaborate. Practitioners can facilitate access to interesting settings and material whilst academics can access a range of theoretical and methodological resources. Potter (1998) notes, however, that practitioners and academics may have different aims and assumptions (e.g. about the stance taken on therapy). However, this need not necessarily be a problem provided those involved in the studies are clear about their aims and have resolved areas of potential conflict. Examples of collaborative work include: Charles Antaki's involvement with Mark Rapley (Antaki and Rapley, 1996) and with Rosemarie McCabe and Ivan Leudar (McCabe et al., 2004); and Ivan Leudar's work with Phil Thomas (Leudar et al., 1997; Leudar and Thomas, 2000).

Erica Burman and Ian Parker at Manchester Metropolitan University's Discourse Unit have been involved in a number of collaborative projects between practitioners and academics (Parker et al., 1995; Burman et al., 1996a, 1996b; Chantler, Burman, Batsleer and Bashir, 2001; Batsleer et al., 2002).

In South Africa, academics and clinical practitioners alike have contributed to the reshaping of clinical psychology in the post-Apartheid era. Collections like Hook et al. (2004), Hook and Eagle (2002) and Levett, Kottler, Burman and Parker (1997) include qualitative and critical psychology contributions on clinical topics some authored by clinical psychologists. The refreshingly pluralist research methods handbook edited by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) again includes contributions from clinical psychologists using qualitative methods, as well as a chapter on clinically relevant research (Lindegger, 1999).

THE FUTURE

Potter (1998) made a number of speculative predictions about qualitative research in clinical settings: that the amount would continue to increase; that therapy and counselling talk would be an initial focus of DA work at least; that there would be more mixed quantitative and qualitative studies (e.g. supplementing outcome research); and that there would be an increased focus on clinical work practices. In the years since then, many of these predictions have been borne out. For example, outcome studies are now starting to include some qualitative aspects to attempt to capture participants' experiences in their own words. Kuipers (2006), for example, includes comments from carers and staff.

It seems likely that the new theoretical and methodological perspectives found in qualitative research will be incorporated into clinical psychology. As the field develops, practitioners and researchers will have to learn skills in integrating and synthesizing the results of studies conducted

using different methods, drawing on differing epistemological frameworks, with different populations – no easy task. Greenhalgh (2004) has proposed one solution to this problem – engaging in 'meta-narrative mapping' to plot how a particular research tradition develops over time.

There are dangers associated with the increasing popularity of qualitative research. Thus Mary Boyle (1998) warns that the more radical qualitative methods may be transformed in a manner that does not threaten the theoretical, epistemological and methodological status quo. Authors may engage in self-censorship when submitting to mainstream journals or be pressured to change aspects of their studies to meet the requirements of editors and reviewers. Chamberlain (2000), for example, has detected a tendency for much applied qualitative research to be overly descriptive and to lack much theoretical or critical depth.

A number of suggestions have been made about how qualitative research could be encouraged. Thus Ponterotto (2005a) suggests that professional training programmes: employ staff with experience of qualitative research; collaborate with other academic departments with relevant skills; and offer training to current staff. He also calls for institutional support for research within faculties and for journal editors to become more open including recruiting editorial board members with experience of qualitative research. He also proposes including a qualitative research curriculum in professional psychology training programmes. Walsh-Bowers (2002) makes similar points, including the need for qualitative researchers to act as role models for novice psychologists.

There are a number of issues which I think need to be addressed as qualitative research develops in clinical psychology.

Clinical qualitative research needs to be more methodologically diverse

To a large extent, clinical psychology tends to lag behind methodological developments in other disciplines like social psychology

so clinicians need to keep abreast of current developments and debates in qualitative research otherwise there is a danger that the use of particular qualitative approaches by practitioners becomes reified and frozen in aspic. This can lead to some methods of data collection or analysis being used repetitively. As a result it would be good to see alternative methods of investigation being used.

Clinical psychologists could be more creative in the data they use. Potter and Hepburn (2005) have cautioned against the inappropriate and over-use of interview methods in qualitative studies. It is certainly true that interviews create particular kinds of interaction (Gilbert, 1980) and they should not be seen as a proxy for more 'naturally occurring' kinds of conversations. Although interviews may be an important source of data for some of the questions in which qualitative researchers are interested (e.g. what kinds of justifications do mental health professionals give for their decisions?) they should not be inappropriately used when more 'naturalistic' data might be better. This may pose particular challenges for many professional psychology training programmes which appear to view the interview as the data-collection method of choice for all qualitative research. Indeed, in the same way as the questionnaire has become over-used in clinical quantitative research, so the interview is starting to be over-used in clinical qualitative research.

Instead of interviews practitioners could analyse other texts including transcripts of psychotherapy sessions, multidisciplinary meetings, ward rounds, case notes and so on. Non-verbal material could be investigated, including the use of video-tape. Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network (1999) outline how visual and other kinds of texts can be investigated.

Since much qualitative work is primarily textual there is a danger that the embodied nature of experience is neglected. Methods like memory work (e.g. Gillies et al., 2004) attempt to address some of these difficulties and also attempt to address issues of power imbalance because the researchers are also

participants in the study. In an innovative adaptation of memory work, for example, Goran Petronic (Petronic, 2005) facilitated discussions in two memory work groups about anomalous experiences (i.e. having an unusual perceptual experience like seeing a ghost): one group consisting of mental health service users with psychosis-related diagnoses; the other consisting of people with no history of psychiatric involvement. He was able to delineate both the commonalities and differences in how people respond to anomalous experiences.

Given that practitioners often want to make a difference through conducting research, it is surprising that there are not more examples of action research. It would be good to see this develop further and useful examples can be seen in Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002a) and volume 2 of the *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*. Moreover, it is possible that, given the increased emphasis on collaboration in clinical practice, forms of collaborative research will become more popular and there are some good examples in Paré and Lerner (2004).

There should be more collaborative work with service users and survivors

Of course, a significant area for future growth is collaborative research with service users and survivors and carers and relatives. Lindow (2001) has demonstrated the range of research conducted by users of services themselves including the excellent Strategies for Living project (Faulkner and Layzell, 2000) where service users were trained in research skills, interviewed other service users and produced a report on the strategies people used to cope with mental health problems. In the UK there has been particular innovation – the Service User Research Enterprise (SURE) has been set up at the Institute of Psychiatry. To quote from their website², SURE is:

a collaborative project between service user researchers and clinical academics aiming to involve service users in all aspects of research ... one

of only two units in UK universities to employ people who have used mental health services as well as having research skills. These 'double identities' bring a unique focus to mental health research.

Such research is important because the research priorities of academics and researchers may be very different from those of the people who use mental health services (Thornicroft, Rose, Huxley, Dale and Wykes, 2002). Practitioners could support and encourage such endeavours, for example by providing training in research skills for service users. Faulkner and Thomas (2002) and Lindow (2001) discuss some of the tensions and dilemmas encountered when service users and professionals attempt to conduct research together.

Trivedi and Wykes (2002) identify ten questions to consider when planning such research. They ask how a project proposal will be jointly assessed. For example, how did the research come about and does it address users' priorities? What is the purpose of the study and does it contribute to user empowerment? What outcomes should be assessed, and are they what service users consider to be important? How will dissemination occur and what forms will it take?

The involvement of service users in qualitative research could be one of the most important and exciting challenges ahead. I have already noted how one NHS unit has recruited service user reviewers to participate in ethical reviews of research proposals and how the JMH has recruited service user researchers for its editorial board. The JMH has also published qualitative research by service users (e.g. Rose et al., 2004).

Qualitative researchers can also act as collaborative activists, documentarians and archivists. For example, Gail Hornstein at Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts maintains a bibliography of first person accounts of madness (Hornstein, 2005). Hornstein's on-line bibliography is also a good example of my last suggestion about dissemination.

Researchers should disseminate more widely and creatively

Trivedi and Wykes (2002: 470) note that peer-reviewed journal articles usually only have an impact on 'a relatively small number of clinicians who are research-oriented'. Indeed, as Law, Banis and Peck (2004) note, many clinicians do not regularly read journals. Alongside more traditional outlets, clinical qualitative researchers could also write shorter articles in wider-access publications more likely to be read by professionals (e.g. membership newsletters like *The Clinical Psychologist* or *Clinical Psychology Forum* – e.g. Harper, 1998). For example, Trivedi and Wykes (2002) note that research teams could set up web-pages which participants could access or send out newsletters to research participants. In addition, researchers could write for newsletters published by service user organizations (e.g. *Asylum Magazine*, the Hearing Voices Network's *Voices* magazine or Mind's *Open Mind* – e.g. Harper, 2002³). Effendi and Hamber (1999) make some excellent suggestions in this regard. Practitioners could also collaborate with journalists to get their ideas out to a wider audience (e.g. Radcliffe, 2003).

However, some qualitative clinical researchers have moved beyond a reliance on the written word. For example, Jan Haaken at Portland State University and her collaborators have produced two films: *Diamonds, Guns and Rice: Sierra Leone and the Women's Peace Movement* (examining Sierra Leonian women's experience of war to accompany Haaken, Ladum, Zundel, DeTarr and Heymann, 2006) and *Queens of Heart* (exploring the experiences of drag queens). Another example of creative dissemination can be found in the work of the Ontario Breast Cancer Community Research Initiative at the Centre for Research in Women's Health which has used drama and film to translate focus group research about women's experiences with breast cancer and their support and care needs to practitioner and consumer audiences (Gray and Sinding, 2002).

Of course, another important domain of dissemination is influencing public policy. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002b) have argued, for example, that critical psychologists should seek to reframe social problems and work in partnership with social movements. Weiss' (1977) work suggests that we can reconceptualize policy questions by interrogating the assumptions which shape those questions, delineating normative discourses and reporting alternative or marginalized discourses. For example legislative and policy statements can be interrogated (e.g. Boyle, 1997, 2002; Harper, 2004, 2005). Moreover, the adoption of alternative epistemological frameworks like social constructionism and critical realism can be useful in itself as a political intervention in policy debates (Shakespeare, 1998).

DOING CLINICAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH WELL: SOME SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions are based on my experience as a researcher, reviewer, consumer, supervisor and examiner of qualitative clinical psychology research in the UK.

Ensure the research questions are clear and focused

Research questions need to be focused, so avoid statements like 'the aim is to explore experiences of X'. The danger here is that the decisions about what the analyst is going to focus on are not made explicit and are simply put off until after data collection. A good qualitative clinical research question needs to be broad and open-ended but of sufficient clarity and specificity. Research questions should be consistent with the method used – thus questions about individual experience might best be addressed by phenomenological case studies rather than cross-sectional interview designs. Examples of better research questions can be found in the examples listed in Table 24.3.

Make a positive rather than negative case for your choice of method

Many novice qualitative researchers attempt to justify their choice of qualitative method by criticizing quantitative research *per se*. There is no need to do this – both have their place and there is the danger of developing a 'straw person' argument. Instead make a positive case – why is this qualitative method most suited to answering your research questions?

Search the literature thoroughly

Many clinicians, having been socialized in a quantitative paradigm fail to search fully for previous qualitative research which may be relevant to their study. Shaw et al. (2004) have shown how hard it can be to find relevant studies and it seems better to search a number of databases with broad inclusive search terms so as not to miss important studies. It is important for clinicians to read not only about the topic area but also about the method and to examine studies on other topic areas but which use the same method. It is also useful to read outside of the discipline of psychology (Parker, 2005) and to examine the so-called 'grey' literature – reports by charities and the independent sector.

Avoid mixing quantitative and qualitative methods unless they share epistemologies

Some clinical psychology training programmes promote 'mixed methods' approaches emphasizing the importance of using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Whilst this can work where the methods share epistemological assumptions it is impossible if they do not⁴. Sometimes supervisors suggest this because they fear that a qualitative study will not be sufficient for postgraduate work – hopefully the range of work cited here may be persuasive. Students in such situations need to cite the extant literature to demonstrate both how inappropriate such

demands are and other ways of addressing what may be legitimate underlying concerns.

Be clear about your epistemological framework

Many studies are not transparent about the epistemological assumptions of the methods used. For example, in a recent review of grounded theory studies, Boyd and Gumley (2007a) noted that many authors did not state which particular variant of the method was used. Indeed, the vast majority of quantitative researchers in clinical psychology fail to acknowledge their epistemological context (however, see Pilgrim and Bentall (1999) for a notable exception).

Do not over-use interviews for data collection

As I have already noted, there are a number of other ways of collecting data in addition to interviews. Indeed interviews may be an inappropriate way of dealing with questions best addressed by other means (e.g. analysing therapy transcripts). Moreover, where interviews are used, it is important to acknowledge that what a respondent says is, in part, a response to a particular question from the interviewer (Potter and Hepburn, 2005). Studies which report only the respondent's turn in an interview lose important context. Some of the better clinical qualitative research includes the interviewer's questions (Georgaca, 2000, 2004; Roy-Chowdhury, 2003).

Attend to ethical issues

In clinical qualitative research, more information is conveyed about research participants and, given the level of detail, it may be possible for participants to identify themselves or for readers to identify them. *Qualitative Health Research's* author guidelines suggest that participant demographics should be presented for the group as a whole rather than in a table listing individuals (www.ualberta.ca/~qhr/guidelines.htm;

accessed 3 July 2006). I would add that only broad characteristics of individual participants should be reported unless they are directly relevant to the study (e.g. an age range rather than an exact age; broad category of employment). Similarly, for students submitting dissertations which are eventually going to be publicly available in university libraries, it is not good practice to include whole transcripts or extended sections of transcripts since this is a threat to anonymity (though a separate volume of transcripts could be made available to examiners for the examination only). It may not always be possible to promise total anonymity if a participant is in a rare or easily identifiable group of some kind so it is best to be open about this at the start. Indeed, it may not always be desirable or ethical to aim for total anonymity (Parker, 2005).

Clinical qualitative researchers will also need to be clear with research participants about any limits to confidentiality as a result of professional or legal obligations (e.g. in relation to risk).

In clinical research, care of participants is extremely important. Most practitioners will be sensitive to any distress likely to be caused in a study and will take steps to address this. Indeed, Coyle and Wright (1996) suggest using counselling techniques in qualitative research on sensitive topics. Good practice includes seeking consent over time rather than just at the start – this is known as processual consent (Rosenblatt, 1995). Since it is not possible to be fully informed at the start of a study (e.g. for a participant to be sure what they are consenting to discuss in an interview) it is helpful to revisit consent after collecting data, possibly offering to delete from the transcript anything the participant regrets saying or would prefer not to go any further. One can also offer different levels of consent (e.g. consent to help someone with their academic studies but not consent for material to be published).

Many studies avoid recruiting, for example, non-English speakers to ensure a more homogeneous sample. However, the danger is that these groups' views are therefore

systematically excluded (Nimisha Patel, personal communication). It is likely that the issue of language is more problematic for some methods than for others. Thus discourse analysis and conversation analysis may be problematic unless the analyst is themselves a native speaker of the other language. However, with more realist methods (e.g. IPA, realist variants of grounded theory) where the language used itself is not a focus, this may be less of a problem, particularly if participant feedback on the analysis is sought or where back-translation is conducted. These issues are complex and Smith (2004) suggests that researchers may need to do a cost-benefit analysis in each case.

Avoid a superficial analysis

It is important that an analysis adds theoretical value to data. Some studies include analyses which are too structured by the data-collection method (e.g. the interview schedule) or research questions. Moreover, some analyses import particular psychological models (e.g. from particular therapeutic traditions) without giving a rationale for this or discussing any difficulties with it. Thus there is a danger of researchers simply 'finding' psychological models in the data or of 'trawling a set of transcripts for quotes to illustrate preconceived ideas' (Potter, 1998: 127). This can be avoided through attention to detail and a much slower pace of analysis (Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter, 2003). Of course, an opposite problem is where there is no theoretical value added by the analyst and a study is simply a banal summary of interview data.

For clinical psychology students who need to submit a doctoral-level dissertation after 1–2 years of empirical research, the amount of data they collect is likely to influence how much time they have to analyse it. It is important, therefore, to be realistic about how much material can be analysed. It is not unusual to hear of some students being required by programme staff to conduct up to twenty interviews in order to meet reliability and validity criteria more suited to

quantitative work. Such a demand inevitably means that the researcher will produce only a very superficial analysis in the allotted time.

Evaluate the quality of your study

It is important for researchers to note what criteria are appropriate for evaluating their study (Coyle, 2000) and to review it according to these. Some reviews of clinical qualitative research have found that many studies do not include an evaluation of their quality (Boyd and Gumley, 2007a). Of course it can be difficult to do justice to this with limited word counts.

Researcher reflexivity is an important issue in ensuring good quality research but it is not sufficient to simply list one's social locations (e.g. white, middle class, and so on). The important issue is to understand how one's social location has influenced one's reading of the material (Bola et al., 1998). A good example of this is Coyle and Rafalin (2000) who note how their gender, sexuality and religious faith may have influenced the analysis of their data.

Ensure that your study is broadly clinically relevant

It is to be hoped that the results of a qualitative study will be of broader relevance in clinical psychology. Obviously, sampling considerations (e.g. how many participants there were and how 'representative' they were) will be important here but it is possible to outline certain conditions for generalizing beyond one's sample or for extrapolating (Alasuutari, 1995). If for example, a study's results are consistent with previous studies, that may be grounds for generalizing beyond one's study. However, in order for a study to have an impact it can be helpful for researchers to focus on what the implications of their study are for different interest groups – Harper (1999) is an example of how different implications can be targeted at diverse groups including to service users, researchers, clinicians and so on.

In this chapter I have attempted to map the current state of qualitative research in clinical psychology. I have identified some key influences on its future development, given examples of how a range of methods can address a number of important research questions, noted some future challenges for the discipline's use of these methods and described ways in which the quality of studies could be improved in the future. At this early stage of acceptance in the discipline it is still too early to tell how significant the contribution of qualitative methods will be but it is clear that a number of challenges and exciting developments lie ahead.

NOTES

1 The term service user is used rather than consumer in British health literature. The way people receiving psychiatric and psychological interventions are described is a highly contested area (Campbell, 1999) – for example, 'consumer' does not adequately reflect receipt of compulsory psychiatric treatment. 'Service user' will be used throughout the chapter as it is in common use in the UK.

2 SURE's website can be found at: <http://www.iop.kcl.ac.uk/iopweb/departments/home/default.aspx?locator=300> (accessed 7 April 2006).

3 These magazines can be accessed via the following URLs: Asylum Magazine – <http://www.asylumonline.net/>; Voices Magazine – <http://www.hearing-voices.org/index.htm>; OpenMind – <http://www.mind.org.uk/shopping/openmind/>.

4 There are, however, examples of researchers using quantitative methods from a more critical perspective (e.g. Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

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Counselling and Psychotherapy

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview on the use of qualitative methods in counselling and psychotherapy research. To that end, we (a) provide a brief historical perspective on the place of qualitative methods in counselling and psychotherapy research; (b) review the current and emerging status of qualitative inquiry in the field; (c) summarize the most prevalent methods and topics uncovered in recent systematic reviews of qualitative counselling research; (d) critique the status of the research literature in terms of the variety and depth of inquiry approaches used and the contributions to knowledge that have been generated; and (e) provide specific and detailed recommendations for needed qualitative training and research in the field.

AUTHORS' INTELLECTUAL BASE AND FOCUS OF CHAPTER

The authors of this chapter live and work in the USA, where psychotherapists are trained

primarily in two psychology specialties: clinical psychology and counselling psychology. The professions of social work and psychiatry also equip their trainees with psychotherapy skills, but these disciplines are considered distinct (though related) from psychology. In this chapter, we focus on qualitative research in counselling psychology; whereas David Harper, in Chapter 24 in this volume, focuses on clinical psychology.

In the USA, the terms counselling and psychotherapy are often used interchangeably, and we follow this practice in the current chapter. We should acknowledge, however, that historically, the specialties of 'counselling' and 'psychotherapy' have included both philosophical similarities and differences. One helpful conceptualization for understanding the differences inherent in these terms is provided by Gelso and Fretz (2001: 7) who depict *counselling* and *psychotherapy* as sitting on two ends of the same continuum:

At one extreme, work that is supportive [and] seeks to educate, and focuses on situational problems and problem-solving at a conscious level, with

normal individuals, is aptly called counseling. At the other end of the continuum, interventions that seek to reconstruct personality, include depth analysis, and analytically focus on subconscious processes with more troubled individuals, are best labeled psychotherapy. In the broad middle-range of this continuum, when interventions contain a mixture of the factors just described, the terms *counseling* and *psychotherapy* imply one and the same process. [Italics in original.]

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PLACE OF QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Historically, qualitative research methods have served as a cornerstone for advancing theory and practice in counselling and psychotherapy. In fact, the origins of qualitative research in psychotherapy coincide with the development of the field itself. In the late nineteenth century, Sigmund Freud (1925) developed the 'talking cure', the clinical treatment that is at the heart of psychoanalysis as well as many other forms of counselling and psychotherapy. Early qualitative research emphasized the clinical case study, and it was Freud, along with his colleague Joseph Breuer, who published the now famous case study of 'Anna O' (Breuer and Freud, 1885/1955). Another psychoanalytic pioneer, Carl Jung, who developed his own variation of psychoanalysis, relied on hundreds of clinical case studies in developing his influential theory of psychological types (McCaulley and Moody, 2008). Critical to the work of today's cross-cultural counsellors, was the pioneering observation-participant work of Frantz Fanon, who was among the first clinicians to focus on multiculturalism and oppression (Utsey, Bolden and Brown, 2001).

Humanistic theories of counselling were also originally anchored in qualitative research. A good example is the person-centred approach of Carl Rogers (1951). He developed his theory based on numerous case studies highlighting the centrality of the 'counselling relationship' rather than the 'counselling technique' as the critical variable in successful counselling.

Roger's theory appears to be anchored in phenomenology, or the client's experiences of self in relation to the environment (Gelso and Fretz, 2001). Importantly, Rogers was one of the first counsellors to regularly audiotape his sessions for later transcription and analysis. Rogers's attempts to understand clients' subjective experiences and their interpretation of reality, along with his systematic analysis of transcribed sessions, has had a profound impact on subsequent qualitative research in counselling and psychotherapy worldwide.

Qualitative methods served as key research tools for many pioneering theorists whose work, though not focused on counselling process or outcome, nonetheless intimately informed the practice of counselling and psychotherapy. For example, Erik Erikson (1980) relied on naturalistic observation and case study methodology to develop his influential theory of psychosocial development and identity formation. Similarly, Jean Piaget (1929), relying on naturalistic observation, in-depth interviewing, and diary analysis, sketched out his landmark theory of cognitive development (Morrow, 2007). These developmental theories play a critical role in helping counsellors understand their clients in appropriate life contexts.

Not surprisingly, influential theories of personality and social psychology, developed in large part, through qualitative methods, have also informed the practice of counselling. For example, Henry Murray's (1938) multidimensional approach to the 'study of lives' led to his 'personology' framework and the subsequent development of projective psychological tests used by clinicians internationally (see Rogers, 2000; Young and Brooker, 2006). Gordon Allport's (1937) use of idiographic methods, including interviews and document analysis, led to scientific breakthroughs in the study of personality, spirituality, and racism. Finally, John Dollard's (1937) field-based qualitative research on race relations conducted in the Southern sector of the USA influenced later work on multicultural issues in counselling (see Jones, 1997; Rogers, 2000; Berrios and Lucca, 2006).

This brief history highlights how essential qualitative research methods were to a host of pioneering psychologists who have had a major impact on the development of counselling and psychotherapy as it has been practiced over the past century. It is therefore somewhat ironic, that over the last half century, qualitative methods have not been held in as high esteem as our sister research approaches – quantitative methods. Below we take a closer look at the current status of qualitative methods in counselling research.

CURRENT STATUS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Though qualitative methods were a foundation for early theory and practice in counselling and psychotherapy, they fell out of favour in North America and elsewhere during the later part of the twentieth century. There are likely numerous reasons for the decreasing influence of qualitative methods during this time, including a bias toward quantification in academe, generally (Kidd, 2002; Hoyt and Bhati, 2007), and in grant-funding agencies (Lincoln, 2005). Furthermore, the influence of the behavioural and cognitive therapy revolutions in counselling, with their emphasis on documenting behaviour and identifying maladaptive thought processes, along with their emphasis on outcome assessment, lent themselves well to quantitative procedures (see Krumboltz, 1966; Mahoney, 1991).

Clearly, quantitative methods have been the dominating force in general psychology over recent decades (see Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003), and this dominance extends to the specific fields of counselling and psychotherapy (see McLeod, 2001; Haverkamp, Morrow and Ponterotto, 2005; Berrios and Lucca, 2006). For example, in a review of 365 outcome studies in the areas of individual counselling, career counselling, and school counselling published across 116 different journals worldwide in counselling, psychotherapy, and psychiatry, Sexton (1996)

found that less than 5% of these studies relied on qualitative methods. Furthermore, in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* during the period 1989 through 1994, less than 2% of articles published relied on qualitative methods (Ambert, Adler, Adler and Detzner, 1995).

Faulkner, Klock and Gale (2002) examined the research published in the *American Journal of Family Therapy*, *Contemporary Family Therapy* (formerly titled the *International Journal of Family Therapy*), *Family Process*, and the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* over the 1980s and 1990s and found that although the overall number of qualitative studies was very small (relative percentages were not provided), there was a marked increase in the publication of such studies in the 1990s relative to the 1980s. More recently, Berrios and Lucca (2006) examined the six-year period 1997 to 2002 across four US-based counselling journals, *Counseling and Values*, the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *Professional School Counseling*, and the *Counseling Psychologist*, and found that qualitative methods accounted for roughly 17% of the research articles.

Given the bias in favour of quantitative research in counselling and psychotherapy journals, one might expect that this bias stems from a parallel bias in how the profession trains its aspiring clinicians and researchers. In fact, this is the case, as is evident in Ponterotto's (2005c) recent curriculum survey of Directors of Training of North American Counselling Psychology Doctoral Programs which found that only 10% of responding programs *require* any coursework in qualitative research methods. This same survey found that the median percentage of annual doctoral dissertations across programmes that relied on qualitative methods was only 10%.

It is important to note that the Ponterotto (2005c) survey sample consisted mostly of US-based training directors with minimal Canadian representation. We do not know if these results would generalize to other continents. In fact, there is some evidence that research training environments and journal

review boards in the UK and Australia have been somewhat more embracing of qualitative approaches (Harper, 1993; Rennie, 2004; Nelson and Quintana, 2005).

Despite the dominance of quantitative approaches to research in counselling, there is evidence, particularly within the past half decade, that qualitative methods have begun, albeit slowly, to take hold within the discipline. In fact, the recent momentum towards accepting and valuing qualitative approaches on par with quantitative methods in the field of counselling has been depicted by

some scholars as a paradigm shift for the profession (Ponterotto, 2002; Berrios and Lucca, 2006; Hoyt and Bhati, 2007). Evidence for this paradigm shift is provided, in part, through the publication of new research books (e.g. McLeod, 2001; Fischer, 2006), as well as special journal issues (e.g. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 2005, 52(2); *The Counseling Psychologist*, 2007, 35(2–3)), devoted to qualitative research approaches. (See Box 25.1 for an overview of the use and range of qualitative research methods in counselling and psychotherapy.)

BOX 25.1 Recommended Qualitative (and Mixed Method) Inquiry Approaches for Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Overview of approach</i>	<i>Sample studies</i>
Action project method	Young, Valach and Domene (2005)	Young, Ball, Valach, Turkel and Wong (2003); Young et al. (2001)
Biography, life-story	Atkinson (1998); Denzin (1989)	Cross (2001); Pope and Sveinsdottir (2005)
Case study	Stake (1995)	Ingersoll (2000)
Comprehensive process analysis	Elliott (1989)	Elliott, Shapiro and Firth-Cozens (1994)
Cognitive-psychoanalytic plan	Weiss, Sampson and Mount Zion Psychotherapy Research Group (1986)	Shilkret and Nigrosh (1997)
Formulation model		
Consensual qualitative research	Hill, Thompson, B. J. and Williams (1997); Hill et al. (2005)	Hill et al. (2003); Williams, Polster, Grizzard, Rockenbaug and Judge (2003)
Conversation and discourse analysis	Silverman (2001); Wood and Kroger (2000)	Madill (2006); Goicoechea (2006)
Ethnography	Fetterman (1998); Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Mattis and Quizon (2005)	Suzuki, Prendes-Lintel, Wertlieb and Stallings (1999)
Grounded theory	Fassinger (2005); Glaser and Strauss (1967)	Beckstead and Morrow (2004); Ward (2005)
Narrative research	Hoshmand (2005)	Croteau, Lark, Lidderdale and Chung (2005)
Participatory action research	Kidd and Kral (2005)	Mohatt and Thomas (2006)
Phenomenology	Wertz (2005)	Churchill (2006); Miville, Constantine, Baysden and So-Lloyd (2005)
Qualitative assimilation analysis	Honos-Webb, Stiles and Greenberg (2003)	Honos-Webb, Stiles, Greenberg and Goldman (2006)
Mixed methods	Hanson et al. (2005)	
Ethnographic decision-tree modelling	Beck (2005); Gladwin (1989)	Breslin, Gladwin, Borsoi and Cunningham (2000)
Idiographic concept mapping	Goodyear, Tracey, Claiborn, Lichtenberg and Wampold (2005)	Bedi (2006)

Of particular relevance to our discussion here is the Delphi Poll of US-based counselling psychology training directors conducted by Neimeyer and Diamond (2001) and published in the UK journal *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*. The results of this major Delphi poll which covered predictions for the profession's advancement from the years 2000 to 2010, identified 'qualitative sophistication' and 'methodological diversity and triangulation' as the leading trends for counselling research over the present decade (Neimeyer and Diamond, 2001: 57). We should also acknowledge that the fields of counselling and psychotherapy have been more open to qualitative methods than other specialty areas in psychology (Kidd, 2002; Morrow, 2007). In the next section of this chapter we summarize the results of our recent multi-year content analysis of qualitative counselling research in the USA.

A focused methodological content analysis

Recently, Ponterotto, Kuiakose and Granovskaya (submitted) conducted a content analysis of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (JCP), the *Journal of Counseling and Development* (JCD), and *The Counseling Psychologist* (TCP) during the period 1995 through 2005. The authors manually reviewed every issue of these three journals over the 11-year period, and each article was classified as to type: quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, conceptual/review article, and other. For those articles identified as qualitative or mixed method (with a significant qualitative component) research, the authors also

identified and logged the underlying research paradigm guiding the study, the particular qualitative inquiry approach employed, the chief data gathering procedures, characteristics of the sample, and the topics addressed. Though narrow in scope, the Ponterotto et al. (submitted) content analysis provides a clear snapshot of qualitative counselling research in North America over the last decade.

Table 25.1 is taken from Ponterotto et al. (submitted) and presents a summary of article type collapsed across the three journals over the 11-year time period of the content analysis. Examination of this table shows that of the large number of articles published during the review period, roughly half were research-based articles, either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method. Regarding the research articles, roughly 80% were quantitative and 20% qualitative or mixed method. The overall percentage of qualitative studies was similar to that found in the content analysis conducted by Berrios and Lucca (2006).

Common research paradigms and inquiry approaches

One criterion of strong qualitative writing is the researcher's ability to elucidate her or his operating paradigm when introducing the study to the readership (Morrow, 2005). Ponterotto et al. (submitted) examined all research studies in their select journal review that were either qualitative or mixed-method, and classified each study's operating paradigm according to the four paradigm schema introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and expanded upon

Table 25.1 Research methodology content analysis across the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (JCP), *The Counseling Psychologist* (TCP), and the *Journal of Counseling and Development* (JCD) from 1995 through 2005

	<i>Quantitative (no. (%))</i>	<i>Qualitative (no. (%))</i>	<i>Mixed method (no. (%))</i>	<i>Total research</i>	<i>Conceptual</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total articles</i>
JCP	432 (89.81)	39 (8.11)	10 (2.08)	481	25	38	544
TCP	55 (57.89)	35 (36.84)	5 (5.26)	95	139	258	492
JCD	207 (70.89)	79 (27.05)	6 (2.05)	292	322	43	657
Total	694 (79.95)	153 (17.63)	21 (2.42)	868	486	339	1693

Source: Table reprinted from Ponterotto et al. (submitted). Copyright © held by authors and reprinted by permission.

by Ponterotto (2005b): positivism, postpositivism, constructivism–interpretivism, and critical theory with related ideological positions.

Constructivism–interpretivism was the research paradigm most frequently anchoring qualitative research, followed by some combination of the postpositivist and constructivist–interpretivist paradigms. Finally, postpositivism served as an operating paradigm in a minority of the studies in the review. In the only other paradigmatic content analysis we could find in the recent literature, Gehart, Ratliff and Lyle (2001), focusing on family therapy research, also found variations of constructivism and postpositivism to be the primary paradigms anchoring the research.

Next, Ponterotto et al. (submitted) identified what specific inquiry approaches were most common in the counselling research reviewed. Across paradigms, the most frequently employed qualitative approaches were life story narratives or mini-biographies, phenomenological methods, the consensual qualitative approach, grounded theory, and case studies. These findings are consistent with the findings from other major reviews of the counselling and psychotherapy literature. For example, Berrios and Lucca (2006) found case studies, historical investigations, and phenomenological studies to be frequently employed. The Faulkner et al. (2002) review found a predominance of content analyses (which they defined as any form of transcript analysis aimed at noting frequencies or establishing categories or themes), followed by ethnographies, case studies, grounded theory, conversational analysis, and phenomenology. Gehart et al. (2001) found ethnography to be the most popular method in family therapy, followed by conversational analysis, and phenomenological interviews. Finally, Hill (2005) highlighted grounded theory, phenomenology, consensual qualitative research, and comprehensive process analysis as the most popular approaches to psychotherapy research. Box 25.1 lists samples of popular qualitative inquiry approaches along with descriptive articles and exemplar studies within each approach.

Subsumed within the varied inquiry approaches identified by Ponterotto et al. (submitted) was a wide array of specific data-gathering procedures. Of the 174 studies they analysed, the majority relied on face-to-face interviews (usually semi-structured) with multiple participants; also quite popular were biographical methods (usually interviewing the subject of the biography, supported with document analysis and sometimes interviewing informants), and life-story narratives of one or a pair of participants. Less popular were the use of multiple data-gathering procedures in the same study (e.g. a combination of two or more of the following: interviews, document analysis, genograms, analysis of drawings/art work, participant observation); use of archival document analysis, phone interviews of multiple participants; or case studies. The strong reliance on face-to-face interviews identified in their content analysis is consistent with the methodology most frequently employed in family therapy research (Gehart et al., 2001; Faulkner et al., 2002). It is quite understandable that counselling and psychotherapy researchers would be most comfortable with face-to-face interviews, as this method of data gathering is also at the heart of their clinical training and practice.

Topical foci of qualitative research articles

The next process in the Ponterotto et al. (submitted) content analysis involved classifying all 174 studies into their topical areas. The largest category included mini-biographies or profiles of pioneers in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. The second and third largest categories focused on multicultural counselling and career counselling, respectively. Personal narratives of experiences with racism constituted their next largest cluster of articles; this was followed by qualitative and mixed-method studies focusing on counselling process issues such as establishing a therapeutic alliance, working through therapeutic impasses, assessment of significant events during the therapy process, and the impact of self-disclosure on therapy. The findings of this topical content analysis are fairly consistent with those of Berrios and

Lucca (2006), particularly with regard to a focus on multiculturalism, career counselling, and profiles of counselling pioneers. However, in their review, given the nature of journals selected, they also found a strong focus on spirituality (from the journal *Counseling and Values*), which did not emerge as a focus in the Ponterotto et al. (submitted) content analysis.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF QUALITATIVE METHODS TO COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

General contributions

Counsellors and psychotherapists are naturally drawn to qualitative inquiry because this broad class of methods often emphasize the emotive and cognitive aspects of participants' experiences from their socially constructed worldview. Furthermore, qualitative inquiry usually involves close interpersonal contact with participants, and is a social and creative process, all traits of import to applied clinicians (Goldman, 1989; Sciarra, 1999; Ponterotto, 2005a). As such, we predict that counselling and psychotherapy, relative to other specialties in psychology, will be at the forefront in leading an international paradigm shift in research whereupon qualitative and quantitative methods will be equally respected and utilized in the advancement of science. In this section we review some general contributions that qualitative methods have made to counselling research. Then we move to a review of more specific contributions that we uncovered in our search of the literature.

Counselling researchers have recently highlighted that qualitative methods are valuable to all phases of the research enterprise. For example, in a major contribution to clinical research with children and adolescents, Nelson and Quintana (2005) demonstrate how qualitative methods are useful in the exploratory phases of inquiry, in theory development, in improving the clinical relevance of research, and in understanding

the socio-cultural context of the client's difficulties.

With regard to exploratory research, Nelson and Quintana (2005) note that qualitative methods are ideal in this situation because of their discovery (rather than confirming) orientation. In contrast, the a-priori specification of research hypotheses in quantitative research may predetermine the kind of data that are collected, which can, in turn, limit the scope of observations that are considered and analysed (Nelson and Quintana, 2005). Thus qualitative methods can effectively supplement quantitative methods by exploring a counselling issue and generating further research questions that can be addressed by follow-up quantitative and qualitative research.

Nelson and Quintana (2005) highlight the general value of qualitative methods for counselling theory development. One concern they have with postpositivist research and the hypothetico-deductive model, is that research hypotheses are deduced from a grand theory, often developed by one influential person much earlier in the development of the profession. In contrast, theory generation in qualitative research (particularly the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm) is inductive, developed through the ongoing iterative process of collecting data, analysing and interpreting the data, and establishing theory. Thus in qualitative research, a theory's credibility and utility is continuously evaluated against ongoing data collection and analysis. Perhaps the most well-known model of inductive theory generation is the grounded theory method first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and wonderfully extended to fields of counselling and psychotherapy by Rennie (2000) and Fassinger (2005).

A third research area where qualitative methods are of particular value is in what Nelson and Quintana (2005: 345) label 'establishing clinical relevance'. One limitation of quantitative research is that operational definitions of counselling constructs are predetermined by researchers (consistent with the hypothetico-deductive model

of science), and they control the range of responses (e.g., as in a Likert type response scale) available to participants. In contrast, in many qualitative approaches, the research participants are actively involved in the process of defining and assessing the variables of interest in the study. The research process is thus more collaborative, and the resulting data more likely to have clinical relevance to clients and their therapists (see excellent examples in Trimble and Fisher, 2006).

Nelson and Quintana (2005) also highlight how qualitative approaches supplement quantitative research by delving into the socio-cultural context of the clients' experiences. It is now well-established that all phases of the counselling and therapy process are culturally influenced. How one defines or understands a psychological problem is culturally mediated, as are the expected roles of the client and 'helper', and the helping (counselling) process itself (Sue and Sue, 2003). Leading multicultural counselling scholars believe that qualitative inquiry is essential in understanding the client and her or his family's worldview regarding the helping process (e.g. Morrow, Rakhsha and Castaneda, 2001; Choudhuri, 2003; Grieger, 2008).

Recently, the journal *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* published a special three-article section addressing the contributions of qualitative research to counselling and psychotherapy practitioners. This was a landmark journal section that compliments well the integrative and creative work of Nelson and Quintana (2005) reviewed above. In the lead article of the special section, Silverstein, Auerbach and Levant (2006: 351) posit that the broad class of qualitative methods 'is particularly suited to enhancing clinical practice because it generates a rich description of both local contexts and individual subjective experiences'. The authors go on to highlight and demonstrate how such rich description can be used to enhance practice and advance knowledge on the process and outcomes of psychological services. The Silverstein et al. (2006) article is particularly valuable because it guides

day-to-day practitioners, who may tend to shy away from research, in a step-by-step process on conducting qualitative research and integrating the results directly into clinical practice.

Following the Silverstein et al. (2006) article were two studies that serve as exemplars for how qualitative research can enhance clinical practice in a broad range of contexts. Ditrano and Silverstein (2006) incorporated Participatory Action Research (PAR) to assist parents of emotionally disabled children learn to navigate and positively impact the special education system in a culturally diverse, urban environment. The authors then go on to demonstrate how PAR can help counsellors and their clients in a wide variety of mental health settings.

The final article in the special section, written by Auerbach, Salick and Fine (2006), demonstrates the use of the grounded theory approach to help counsellors develop a 'model for developing treatment strategies for multicontextual trauma – trauma in complex contexts in which no evidence-based treatment is available' (Auerbach et al., 2006: 367). The authors then provide examples of how the grounded theory-developed trauma assessment and intervention model was used with two types of medical trauma, acquired physical disability, and stem-cell transplant for multiple myeloma.

The special section of *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* reviewed above, along with the recent special issues of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (2005, 52(2)) and *The Counseling Psychologist* (2007, 35(2–3)), and books by McLeod (2001) and Fischer (2006), provide numerous examples of the particular value of qualitative methods to counselling and psychotherapy practitioners.

Specific contributions

Our broad review of the journal and book literature reveals that qualitative research has made substantial contributions to advancing the fields of counselling and psychotherapy.

From our perspective, among the greatest contributions have been the following:

- 1 The collective group of studies has provided us with a window into the deep emotional and cognitive experiences of clients, students, families, and the general population. Through a strong focus on semi-structured long interviews, we now better understand the phenomenology of life experiences, both positive and negative, for both 'normal' and 'clinical' samples. By presenting 'thick description' (see Ponterotto, 2006) of participants' life experiences, counsellors and psychotherapists have collectively heightened their level of empathy for a wide variety of clients and clinical issues.
- 2 Many countries throughout the world have a long and troubled history of oppression – and many groups have been oppressed by the dominant cultural groups in their respective countries. The collective studies in this review, particularly PAR studies, have given 'voice' to previously 'silenced' and disenfranchised groups, thus providing, at least for these research participants and the readers of the studies, some sense of empowerment and liberation (e.g. Kidd and Kral, 2005; Ditrano and Silverstein, 2006). Many of the personal narratives of minority counsellors and psychotherapists have also brought to the forefront the nature and impact of racism, sexism, and homophobia in our own profession (e.g. Ponterotto, Jackson and Nutini, 2001; Croteau et al., 2005).
- 3 The qualitative studies reviewed in this chapter have helped to identify session-to-session critical events that both promote and hinder therapeutic (and supervisory) progress. Whereas past quantitative research contributed significantly to pre- to post-therapy outcome assessments, the present qualitative studies have, in part, helped us understand what transpires session-to-session and minute-to-minute in sessions to promote therapeutic change and optimal health. Of particular value to understanding counselling and psychotherapy process and outcome have been a series of close to 50 studies using the consensual qualitative research (CQR) method (see reviews in Hill, 2005; Hill et al., 2005) or the grounded theory approach (see reviews in Rennie, 2002, 2006). For example, after an integrative review of grounded theory studies on experiencing psychotherapy Rennie (2002: 136) concluded that,

clients' reflexivity, covert experience [when client has thoughts that are not expressed to the

therapist], sensitivity to the therapeutic relationship, and deference to the therapist all point to the importance of accessing the client's reactions to the therapist's manner and approach ... the best way to achieve this compatibility is by metacommunicating with the client about the joint experience of the therapy.

- 4 Consistent with the historical traditions of counselling psychology, our review uncovered numerous studies demonstrating the critical links between career development and personal/family development. Though an extensive body of quantitative research has addressed this topic, the qualitative studies we reviewed give life to the struggles, challenges, and rewards of work-life balance through the captured voices of men and women of many races and socio-economic levels (see excellent research review in Blustein, 2006).
- 5 Our review uncovered significant attention given to the lives and experiences of counsellors and therapists themselves. Many pioneering counsellors, therapists, and supervisors have shared their life and work experiences either through first-person personal narratives or mini-biographies. As such, readers have a broad window into the world of helping professionals: their training, day-to-day work, challenges, struggles, and career rewards. Reading the life stories of pioneers in the field appears to have a strong impact on the training motivation and career self-efficacy of counsellors-in-training (Ponterotto et al., 2001).
- 6 Qualitative studies, such as many reviewed for this chapter, are often more user-friendly in terms of reaching practitioners and a broad audience of readers. Whereas an average citizen may be confused by reading a hierarchical regression table, they usually have no trouble reading about therapy themes reflected through quotes of study participants. Thus, qualitative research has enhanced the profession's credibility with clinicians, students, and lay audiences (Hill, 2005; Silverstein et al., 2006).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

This chapter has provided a macroscopic view of the general history and state of qualitative inquiry in counselling and psychotherapy, as well as a microscopic analysis of qualitative research published across

select journals over a recent time period. The information garnered from these reviews can provide a foundation for research and training recommendations for the profession of counselling and psychotherapy. In this last section of the chapter, we present seven general criticisms emanating from our macro and micro reviews of the research. Within these criticisms are embedded twelve specific recommendations to address the stated concerns.

I. Knowledge of and specification of research paradigm and inquiry approach

Our review uncovered that the research paradigms guiding most qualitative research in counselling and psychotherapy are constructivism or postpositivism, or some combination of the two. Unfortunately, in only a relative minority of studies did authors clearly explicate their operating paradigms and note how their paradigms led to choice of inquiry approach. This lack of conceptual clarity in research purpose and methods made it more difficult to critically evaluate the studies. Our concern is echoed by other researchers attempting to integrate and evaluate the merits of qualitative research in counselling and psychotherapy (e.g. Gehart et al., 2001; McLeod, 2001; Faulkner et al., 2002; Morrow, 2005, 2007). We were able to classify the research paradigms only by carefully reviewing the procedures and goals of each study and comparing this information to our paradigm definitions (developed from Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Ponterotto, 2005b). However, for many readers of journal articles, it can be quite difficult trying to identify the study's operating paradigm and inquiry approach.

Further complicating interpretive matters is the fact that the same qualitative inquiry approach can be modified to fit different paradigms. For example, the popular methods of grounded theory and phenomenology can be anchored across different paradigms depending on the specific approach of the researcher. This can occur because a particular inquiry approach evolves over

generations of researchers who hail from different intellectual disciplines. For example, grounded theory as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is more constructivist in nature; however in the Strauss and Corbin (1990) adaptation of grounded theory, the approach appears more postpositivistic. In fact, McLeod (2001) identified five different variations of grounded theory (see also discussions in Charmaz, 2000; Fassinger, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005b), and each can be located differentially on the postpositivism to constructivism continuum.

Likewise, there are variations of phenomenology as an inquiry model, and depending on the researchers' stance on the philosophy of science parameters of ontology and epistemology, the phenomenological method can be anchored across the postpositivism to constructivism continuum (see Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005). The variations of usages of a particular inquiry approach coupled with the fluidity within the postpositivism to constructivism continuum lead us to our first three recommendations.

- *Recommendation 1.* When reporting their research studies, authors should specify clearly the research paradigm from which they are operating. Furthermore, researchers should specify which variation of a particular inquiry approach they are employing (Morrow, 2005).
- *Recommendation 2.* Graduate training programs in counselling and psychotherapy should cover in-depth, philosophy of science knowledge in research courses (Hoshmand, 1989; Ponterotto, 2005a; Berrios and Lucca, 2006).
- *Recommendation 3.* We suggest that counsellors-in-training complete a few classes outside of their discipline, in fields such as sociology, anthropology, education, political science, and so forth. Interdisciplinary training will enhance researchers' philosophy of science knowledge base, will broaden their research worldview, and will expand their repertoire of inquiry approaches (McLeod, 2001; Ponterotto and Grieger, 2007).

II. Increase the overall usage of qualitative methods

Although qualitative methods are taking greater hold in psychology generally, the

content analyses we reviewed indicate that less than 20% of research studies in counselling and psychotherapy employ qualitative procedures (e.g. Sexton, 1996; Faulkner et al., 2002; Berrios and Lucca, 2006; Ponterotto et al., submitted). Thus, there is clearly still a postpositivist, quantitative hegemony in the fields of counselling and psychotherapy (see also Morrow and Smith, 2000; McLeod, 2001; Haverkamp et al., 2005). This is not surprising in that only 10% of counselling doctoral programs in the USA require even a single qualitative course as part of their PhD training (Ponterotto, 2005c). This state of affairs leads to the following recommendations.

- *Recommendation 4.* Researchers in counselling and psychotherapy are encouraged to increase their utilization of qualitative methods in their research plans. This may require that counsellors trained in the traditional postpositivist (quantitative) paradigm complete continuing education and receive mentoring in philosophy of science and qualitative approaches. Furthermore, university faculty and senior administrators responsible for promotion, tenure, and internal grant funding should value constructivist qualitative methods as equal to postpositivist quantitative methods (Lincoln, 2005; Berrios and Lucca, 2006).
- *Recommendation 5.* Graduate students in counselling and psychotherapy can be encouraged to conduct qualitative theses and dissertations for their final projects. At present, only 10% of doctoral dissertations in counselling psychology are qualitative in nature (Ponterotto, 2005c). Naturally, encouraging increased student dissertation research using qualitative methods will necessitate faculty supervisors and mentors who are highly knowledgeable in philosophy of science, and highly skilled in a wide repertoire of specific qualitative inquiry approaches (Ponterotto, 2005a; Berrios and Lucca, 2006).

III. Increase the breadth of qualitative inquiry approaches

Our literature review uncovered a strong reliance on just a few inquiry approaches, particularly, lifestory/mini-biography, grounded theory, phenomenology, consensual qualitative research, case studies, ethnography,

and conversation analysis (Creswell, 1998; Morrow and Smith, 2000; Gehart et al., 2001; McLeod, 2001; Faulkner, et al., 2002; Hill, 2005; Ponterotto et al., submitted). Though these approaches are extremely valuable in studying counselling process and outcome, it would be beneficial to expand on the repertoire of research approaches utilized.

- *Recommendation 6.* Counselling and psychotherapy researchers are encouraged to expand on their repertoire of inquiry models (refer to Box 25.1) and data collection methods. Section 1 of this handbook reviews 15 different qualitative approaches, and a good deal more can be found in the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). One promising area for expansion is in the use of a wide array of visual methodologies (see Gleeson et al., 2005). In a recent major contribution on data collection strategies for counselling research, Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora and Mattis (2007) advocate for increased usage of participant observation, physical data, and electronic data, in addition to the popular interview strategy. Specifically, regarding physical data, the authors are referring to archives, records, documents, visual data, and artefacts as data. With regard to electronic data, they are referring to e-mail, instant messages, bulletin boards, chat rooms, web pages, as well as surveys and researcher logs.
- *Recommendation 7.* Given the counselling field's commitment to social justice (see Goodman et al., 2004), we were surprised to find few studies emanating from critical theory and related ideological positions. We advocate increased usage of approaches anchored in the critical theory paradigm, including PAR (Kidd and Kral, 2005), feminist approaches (e.g. Olesen, 2005), race theory (Ladson-Billings and Donnor, 2005), cultural studies (Saukko, 2005), and Queer theory (Warner, 2004; Plummer, 2005). A strong commitment to social justice is an important component of the counselling profession, and as such helps distinguish us from other mental health specialties (e.g. clinical psychology, psychiatry) (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roesircar and Israel, 2005).

IV. Expand the scope of topics addressed

As highlighted earlier in our review, a wide variety of topics were covered in our select

sample of qualitative and mixed-method studies. We believe that qualitative inquiry approaches can continue to add a significant knowledge base to these and additional topics of current salience.

- *Recommendation 8.* Welcome at this time is increased qualitative research in a variety of topical areas, including: (a) resiliency and coping among a variety of populations; (b) the interface of counselling and health issues, such as counselling persons with a variety of moderate to serious health issues; (c) oppressed populations such as gays, lesbian, and bisexuals, persons with varied disabilities, the elderly, the poor, religious minorities; (d) counselling supervision; (e) violence, in its many forms, toward women and children; and (f) multiracial identity, biculturalism, immigration challenges, and multicultural personality development.
- *Recommendation 9.* Our broad review of the literature, supported by our focused content analysis, revealed a minority of qualitative studies focusing on *outcome* in counselling and psychotherapy research (see also Sexton, 1996). With the recent institutional and political pressure toward evidence-based practice (see Norcross et al., 2005), qualitative researchers must address *outcome* of counselling in addition to *process*, if greater methodological credibility is to be established (McLeod, 2001). Recently, the noted North American multi-method researcher, Clara Hill (2005), presented a convincing argument for the use of qualitative research in establishing procedural evidence of effective practice.

V. Increase research across the lifespan

Our review of qualitative and mixed-method studies found that a large percentage of studies focused on non-clinical adult and university samples. By contrast, there was a paucity of research on children, young adolescents, and families, as well as on a wide variety of clinical populations. This is not surprising because counselling psychology is anchored in working with normative populations with varied adjustment problems, rather than with severe pathologies as is more common in clinical psychology

and psychiatry. Nonetheless, it is time for counselling researchers to expand with regard to populations studied.

- *Recommendation 10.* We urge counselling researchers to devote more research energy to studying children, young adolescents, and elderly participants. Increased qualitative research on family processes and family functioning is also warranted. The mental health strengths and challenges of 'non-traditional' families, such as extended families, single parent families, and families headed by two gay or lesbian parents, need qualitative research attention.

VI. Cautiously consider mixed-method designs

Roughly 2% of the studies we closely reviewed incorporated mixed-method designs where the qualitative component was equal to or greater in salience than the quantitative component. Conducting strong mixed-method research is particularly challenging, and many researchers are hesitant to engage in this research for fear of diluting either the qualitative or quantitative component (see Ponterotto and Grieger, 1999). Naturally, there may also be philosophical inconsistencies in combined approaches (Sciarrà, 1999). Nonetheless, with recent advances in methodological integration we believe there will be an increasing place in counselling and psychotherapy research for carefully planned mixed method studies. Of interest is the recent establishment of the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, co-edited by John Creswell and Abbas Tashakkori, and published by Sage Publications. Journal operations are housed in John Creswell's Office of Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA (<http://manila.unl.edu/oqmmr/>).

- *Recommendation 11.* Researchers well grounded in philosophy of science, with in-depth knowledge of constructivism and postpositivism, are encouraged to consider, on occasion, mixed method designs. Such designs need to be carefully framed and rationalized philosophically, and should adhere to recent standards on mixed

method designs. We strongly recommend the conceptualizations of Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska and Creswell (2005) who review six different mixed designs for counselling psychology researchers: Sequential Explanatory, Sequential Exploratory, Sequential Transformative, Concurrent Triangulation, Concurrent Nested, and Concurrent Transformative. Hanson et al. (2005) clearly explain each design variation in a user friendly manner.

VII. Strive for respectful appreciation and balance of qualitative and quantitative approaches

Unfortunately, what has emerged at times in the counselling and psychotherapy literature is a schism between (postpositivist) quantitative researchers and (constructivist–interpretivist) qualitative researchers, where each disparages the usefulness of the other's methods (see discussion in Capaldi and Proctor, 2005). This is unfortunate because clearly there is a place in the wide arena of counselling and psychotherapy for both research worldviews. We believe that the status of counselling and psychotherapy will only advance significantly if paradigmatic and methodological diversity is employed. This position leads us to our last recommendation.

- **Recommendation 12.** Students and professionals in counselling and psychotherapy should be encouraged to value and learn both post-positivist quantitative methods and constructivist qualitative procedures. Such a bicultural or bimethodological research worldview will enhance researchers' flexibility, and will promote their ability to act in the role of problem-solving *bricoleur* in addressing complex counselling and psychotherapy issues. Naturally, such an expanded research worldview would need to be inculcated early in the training of researchers (McLeod, 2001; Ponterotto, 2005a).

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Educational Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Educational psychology covers a broad and disparate domain of knowledge and practice, with a blurred boundary into areas like social policy. In the main, academic research in the field has, from the beginnings of the discipline, been dominated by a preoccupation with measurement. It continues to be so and hence the vast majority of work published in the mainstream educational psychology journals was and is quantitative. Where qualitative work has begun to flourish is in applied areas, especially those that link with developmental psychology, issues such as bullying and more sociological concerns such as exclusion.

This chapter begins, then, with a fairly brief overview of the rather limited contributions of qualitative research to mainstream research in educational psychology. This is followed by a short section looking in more detail at specific examples of these studies.

The bulk of the chapter then turns to applied work. We begin with a broad overview of a variety of qualitative methods that have been used to look at a range of

applied areas. We then illustrate in more depth through our own work how qualitative methods have been used in this field and what can be achieved. As professional practitioners, our own research has been concerned mainly with what educational psychologists do in their work with young people, their teachers, parents/carers. We will look specifically at aspects of educational and social exclusion. These are not only highly challenging areas for professional intervention, but also have the potential to draw most deeply on a range of psychological theorizing. The chapter ends with a concluding section that looks to the future potential of qualitative work in this field.

OVERVIEW OF THE MAINSTREAM LITERATURE

This section is based on a systematic review of publications from 2000 to 2005 in seven key mainstream education psychology journals conducted by Shank and colleagues (Shank and Angeli, 2006).

They found that studies employing qualitative methods feature rarely in the key academic journals in educational psychology. For instance, between 2000 and 2005, the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* published only six articles using qualitative methods out of a total of around 160. Moreover, not only did they find that qualitative research seldom appears in mainstream journals, when it does it is usually only within the format of a mixed methods approach. The only exception to this trend was a special issue (volume 37) of the *Educational Psychologist* in 2002 that was devoted to the use of qualitative methods to investigate aspects of self-regulated learning (DeGroot, 2002; Meyer and Turner, 2002; Patrick and Middleton, 2002; Perry, Vandekamp, Merver and Nordby, 2002; Reed, Schallert and Deithloff, 2002).

However, despite the limited number of instances of qualitative research in the mainstream journals, where it does appear it encompasses a broad range of disparate topics. As well as the self-regulated learning studies indicated above, various aspects of literacy also feature frequently (Fitzgerald and Noblit, 2000; Panagopoulou-Stamatelatos and Merrett, 2000; Johnson, Woodside-Jiron and Day, 2001; McGill-Franzen, Lanford and Adams, 2002; Stuart, Dixon and Masterson, 2004; Bowyer-Crane and Snowling, 2005).

A range of more isolated subject areas were featured in isolated studies. Examples are set out in Table 26.1.

These are illustrative of the relatively small number of studies that their authors have managed to get published. Their sheer diversity demonstrates the lack of coherence that the subject of educational psychology can often seem to possess if viewed solely from the perspective of such publications.

What they do generally have in common is their main method of data collection – interviews. These are mainly used within mixed-method studies that are based on a standard quantitative design. The range includes structured (e.g. Dowson and McInerney 2001), semi-structured (such as Walker, Pressick-Kilborn, Arnold and Sainsbury, 2004) and open-ended (Frederickson, Osborne and Reed, 2004) approaches. Their purpose is generally to augment the analysis of the quantitative data. Other ‘little q’ approaches (Willig, 2001) include content analysis of drawings (Pnevmatikos 2002) and grammatical forms (Stuart et al., 2004); structured observations (e.g. Perry et al., 2002), video analysis (Eilama and Aharon, 2003); and participant observation (Fitzgerald and Noblit, 2000). Some investigations use specific instruments (such as repertory grid techniques; Yeung and Watkins, 2000) that have a more qualitative edge.

Shank and Angeli’s (2006) survey identified very few examples indeed of the main qualitative methodologies that feature prominently in this volume – that is, those approaches that derive from an epistemological standpoint fundamentally different from that of quantitative methods.

Table 26.1 Examples of the range of topics studied using mixed or qualitative methods in the mainstream literature

Topic	Study
Teachers’ personal sense teaching efficacy	Yeung and Watkins (2000)
Problem-centred learning	Evensen et al. (2001)
Views of Aboriginal college students on the topic of learning	Boulton-Lewis, Wilss and Lewis (2001)
Concept learning in religious education	Pnevmatikos (2002)
Situated cognition	Barab and Plucker (2002)
Motivation	Dowson and McInerney (2003)
Gesture–speech relations	Roth (2003)
Impact of metacognitive instruction on graph learning	Kramarski (2004)
Successful cases of inclusion	Frederickson et al. (2004)
Memory strategies	Gaskilla and Murphy (2004)

Three articles present studies using grounded theory or a variant of it (Fitzgerald and Noblit, 2000; Evensen, Salisbury-Glennon and Glenn, 2001; Pressley, Raphael, Gallagher and DiBella, 2004) and only one adopted a discourse analytical approach (Johnson et al., 2001). We describe these four articles in greater depth in Box 26.1.

The three studies in Box 26.1, all of which explicitly categorize themselves as adopting a grounded theory perspective, not only explore very differing subjects but also emphasize various aspects and degrees of the methodological application. In addition, the extent to which grounded theory is the dominant or sole approach utilized also varies and this brief review draws out these differences. In the fourth study, whilst the research clearly analyses discourse in classrooms in considerable depth, the methodology employed appears to be more ethnographic and less an example of discourse analysis as understood within the specific chapters of this Handbook (see Chapters 5 and 6).

THE ORIGINS OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AS PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

As professional practice, educational psychology can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century when questions about the nature of being human gained new impetus and new knowledges were formed by the likes of Darwin, Freud and Marx. Specifically the project of a more distinctly social science began to take shape in Europe and the USA through the works of scholars such as Spencer, Galton and William James.

While at the beginning of the nineteenth century, educating the masses was perceived to be a dangerous thing, by the end of that century mass education systems were seen as vital to national prosperity. New education systems, however, invariably adopted the character and form of existing industrialized power relations and, in order to create economically viable educational programmes, it became clear that some children could

disrupt the good order of schools and communities.

At the same time childhood as well as the family became sites for particular kinds of knowledges and practices and it was precisely to assist in the governmental process of defining which kind of child could not be contained within schools and families that educational psychology was born. Educational psychologists have thus traditionally plied their trade with children who live at the margins, whether home or school (Billington and Pomerantz, 2004).

In patrolling the margins, attempts were made to position the fledgling discipline as a 'science', since from the late nineteenth century this was increasingly becoming associated with particular forms of knowledge-making, invariably utilizing quantitative methods which had acquired greater authority. While educational psychology attempted to assume the guise of science, like other applied psychologies, it actually introduced technologies: 'our science is not knowledge ... it can achieve neither truth nor probability' (Tolman, 1994: 28).

The technologies adopted by educational psychology were constructed upon practices of measurement, ranking and categorization. Further critical analysis reveals that increasingly complex testing regimes could escape neither the normal distribution curve nor an approach to intelligence which was at root deeply flawed in its partiality (Foucault, 1979; Rose, 1985, 1989). Nevertheless, governments seized on the claims of early child psychologists to be able to 'diagnose' children's deficiency and deviance at a young age, based on a foundational notion of 'ability' (Foucault, 1977; Billington, 1996). These claims resonated with the ideologies of evolving liberal-human democracies: that a person should be able to prosper in the world according to their own merits. Ability, or rather what we now know to be a very narrow approach to the concept, was to be one of the building blocks of mass schooling (Hobsbawm, 1975, 1987, 1995; Williams, 1987).

While the history of educational psychology can be charted by the various

BOX 26.1 A Review of the Four Studies within the Mainstream Literature that Draw Explicitly on Grounded Theory and Discourse Analytic Approaches

Study 1: Fitzgerald, J. and Noblit, G. (2000) Balance in the making: learning to read in an ethnically diverse first grade classroom. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(1):3–22.

The study explored what diverse first grade children learned about reading within a year-long balanced approach to emergent reading instruction in a class of 20 children from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The authors, one of whom was the class teacher, examined briefly the popularity of the term 'balanced approach' and identified a predominant image of a balancing scale, with key 'curricular weights' placed along each arm.

In one respect, this paper may be viewed as describing a mixed methods study. A large amount of quantitative data in the form of assessments of the children's academic abilities was collected by various means. For the qualitative aspects the main sources of data were transcriptions of the teacher's audio-taped diary and the participant observer's field notes.

Whilst the large amount of quantitative data is used to demonstrate the children's gains in 'local knowledge' of reading (e.g. phonological awareness, word recognition strategies), the remaining findings draw on the teacher's journal and the field notes of the participant observer. These findings are categorized in three sets as: the beginnings of global knowledge about reading (learning that reading and writing were about understanding and communicating); a developing desire to read and a responsive stance to reading; and, the existence of significant generative moments signalling the children's movement towards more mature reading abilities.

In terms of the aspects of grounded theory employed, the constant comparison method was carried out in a number of stages. Firstly all instances of material that had anything to do with children's reading and with instruction related to reading were marked. At the second stage all of these instances were reviewed and all materials that seemed especially salient or remarkable were set aside. At this stage five categories depicting the instruction were constructed. Then, thirdly, another sort of these selected materials was carried out but in a more theoretically grounded and less exploratory fashion. By holding in mind a 'basic vision of a balance view of an emerging reading process' the four mutually exclusive categories outlined above arose. Finally an exhaustive search of all the data sources was carried out, 'keenly looking for "nonexamples" ', this process confirming the earlier analysis.

Study 2: Pressley, M., Raphael, L., Gallagher, J. D. and DiBella, J. (2004) Providence-St. Mel School: how a school that works for African American students works. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96(2):216–235.

This study constructs a case study portrait, using grounded theory methodologies, of a K-12 school serving urban, African American students, one producing high achievement. The primary data were observations complemented by questionnaire responses and document analyses.

Three of the researchers spent a total of 20 full days in the school and the fourth author, the principal of the school, was continually present. Data from observations were coded by the primary researcher whilst a second researcher coded data independently. In a similar vein to study 1, a number of cycles of feedback and reflection led to a refining of the conclusions and examples of the codes. Questionnaires subsequently distributed to teachers and students were then analysed separately. Common themes from these questionnaires, extracted following discussions between pairs of researchers, were integrated with the results based on the observations.

The paper notes that the research literature on 'school effectiveness' has focused mainly on administrative and organizational issues with 'psychological factors' receiving less emphasis. Whilst producing conclusions consistent with the existing effective schooling literature, outcomes in this study also emphasized, among other things, the use of: positive expectations, visible care by teachers and administrators, praise of specific accomplishments, generally positive atmosphere, encouragement of effort attributions, co-operative learning experiences, and tangible rewards of achievements.

The authors see a central feature of grounded theory as being a theory supported by converging data from observation, questionnaire responses, and analysis of documents (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). A decision was made in advance that no outcome would remain in the study that was doubted by even one of the researchers on the basis of the data collected to avoid the researchers' previous knowledge acting as 'conceptual blinders'. And, unusually, there is an interesting discussion within the body of the paper of some of the points made by one of the anonymous reviewers for the JEP. The theory emerging from this study is that the high achievement in this school is achieved through multiple factors, including decidedly psychological ones. This theory is presented as a categorized set of characteristics 'that potentially account, at least in part, for high student achievement'.

Study 3: Evensen, D.H., Salisbury-Glennon, J.D. and Glenn, J. (2001) A qualitative study of six medical students in a problem-based curriculum: toward a situated model of self-regulation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(4):659–676.

The authors followed 6 first-year medical students through their first semester in a problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum to understand how they self-regulated their learning. Because of the 'knowledge explosion' learning to learn, it is argued, may be seen as a pedagogical priority; yet theories of self-regulation are relatively emergent and theorists diverge on what might constitute its principal components and interrelated processes.

Multiple data sources were employed – observations in all 3-hour PBL group sessions during the first 8-week block and at a lesser frequency during the second blocks of sessions. Other observations of students with attendant field notes were also collected. Students kept an oral learning log consisting of 15- to 20-minute taped recordings at least 3 times each week.

The analysis set out to seek evidence of the strategies used by the students for learning. Probing more deeply into the causal conditions of strategy selection, both directly through interviews and indirectly through the other data sources, constituted the process of open coding. Of the three grounded theory studies described here, this paper most fully illustrates the process of analysis. Explicit attention is paid to saturation, axial coding, peer auditing, theoretical sampling, the constant comparative method, the identification of a core category, and member checking. In addition, and in order to counteract what might be seen as the 'reductive' nature of grounded theory, quotations were woven together to form narratives with selections from these being presented in a set of individual case studies.

The resulting grounded theory is built around the central phenomenon of stance. The learners illustrated different types of stances – proactive, reactive, retroactive, interactive and transactive – that served to govern their perceptions of themselves and the environment, their selection of goals, and their adoption of learning strategies. Furthermore, recursive patterns of stances were longitudinally described as either evolving or shifting. Findings indicated that more successful students demonstrate an evolving, interactive–transactive stance that affected the ways they participated in the learning environment and the professional identities they were beginning to develop.

Study 4: Johnston, P., Woodside-Jiron, H., and Day, J. (2001) Teaching and learning literate epistemologies. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93(1):223–233.

This study explored the links between teacher's epistemological stances with regard to literacy, classroom discourse and students' epistemologies. The authors argued that the teaching of literacy influences students' views about language and knowledge as well as how they view themselves as readers and writers. The authors contrasted two epistemological stances, the 'received knower' and the 'constructed knower' (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986), and suggested that teachers who take on each position have very different interactions with students.

Four teachers, from a previous, bigger study of competent teachers, were identified as being either a 'received' knower or a 'constructed' knower. The authors subsequently spent ten days in each teacher's classroom over the course of one academic year investigating classroom discourse and interactions around literacy. They carried out extensive observations, audio- and videotaped interactions within the class and interviewed both teachers and students. Unlike in the grounded theory studies above, however, particularly Study 3, the actual process of data analysis here is much less specifically described.

The authors suggested that in 'Received' classrooms, there was more of an emphasis on the teacher's authority and control. There was a focus on knowledge comprising only of facts and the importance of having the 'right answer' was emphasized. In contrast, in 'Constructed classrooms', open discussion was seen as a valuable tool. The teacher's authority was less pronounced. Knowledge could be challenged and there was rarely a right or wrong answer. These contrasting classrooms had a direct impact on how students then viewed themselves as readers and writers. Students in 'Received' classrooms focused on success in literacy being related to technical accuracy and individual achievement. They were much less likely to display a sense of ownership with regard to literacy. Students in 'Constructed' classrooms focused on constructing meaning through literacy. They valued their own and others' personal experiences as a way of extending knowledge. Technical accuracy was given much less importance. These students often displayed a strong sense of ownership and a sense of their own authority.

tests which have often dominated its performance, there has long been a tradition of scepticism. In particular, some practitioners have been uncomfortable with the diagnostic attitude imbibed from medicine. Diagnosis could seem a crude technique to justify the exclusion of children from

the mainstream when failing to take into account a range of crucial variables (such as poverty, social class, social prejudice): 'The practice of diagnosis is not appropriate to human difficulties' (Parker, Georgaca, Harper, McLaughlin and Stowell-Smith, 1995: 62).

Societal changes often demand a flexibility of response from educational psychologists and diagnostic categories can become outmoded or new ones created. For example, children are rarely diagnosed now as 'delicate' or 'abnormal', while diagnoses of autistic spectrum and attention-deficit disorders appear to be expanding. At the heart of this search for difference, the diagnostic model underpinned a history of educational psychology research and practice which, as for all other applied psychologies, has tended to focus its attentions on deficit.

While the humane instincts of educational psychologists drew them towards advocacy for the disadvantaged, a theoretical or critical base which allowed its practitioners to challenge at root the pervasive power of quantitative methods proved difficult to sustain in both research and practice. Nevertheless, social boundaries do change and differences are now markedly more difficult to demarcate than had been the case for Binet and Burt, for example. Currently, old boundaries are being re-negotiated and it may well be that definitions of childhood long established through traditional accounts of developmental psychology, are being challenged (Morss, 1990; Burman, 1994; Bird, 1999) not least to accord with new forms of democratization.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) has been part of a movement in which power and knowledge between adults and children and governments have been attempting to respond to calls for the 'voice of the child' to be heard. While traditional sites of educational psychology practice during its (first?) hundred years have been the school and the family, there have been recent shifts in the boundaries of authority and knowledge between children, their parents and professionals. As such, while it has been the child who has increasingly been subject to scrutiny, especially during the last fifty years, it has been the parent and the teacher who have been charged with ensuring that a child's life progresses in good order. The work of educational psychologists therefore has traditionally been conducted in an

alliance with the child, the parent and the teacher.

QUALITATIVE METHODS IN APPLIED EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Within the literature written specifically for and/or by professional school and educational psychologists it is possible to discern the same wide range of research topics as in the academic journals examined above. This section of the chapter will address in some detail publications concerned with student behaviour construed as challenging and the strained relationships that regularly attend such circumstances. However, before focusing down on this particular section of the literature, a review of the two major applied journals for practitioners in Britain – *Educational Psychology in Practice* and *Educational and Child Psychology* – between 2000 and 2005 is presented in Table 26.2. This shows all papers published in the period that have employed qualitative methods and illustrates the range of topics other than challenging behaviour that have also been studied.

STUDIES OF STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS AROUND 'CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR'

In order to focus down on research into the strained relationships that might occur between students, teachers and parents (either between all three parties or some permutation of two from the three) when troubled or challenging behaviour is posited as the presenting problem, a literature search was carried out. The journals *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *Educational and Child Psychology*, *Psychology in the Schools*, *School Psychology International* and the *Australian Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* were searched between 2000 and 2005 inclusive for any articles relating to these themes. All the papers that could be included within these categories are shown in Table 26.3.

Table 26.2 Studies in the British professional literature employing qualitative methods to investigate topics other than challenging behaviour

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Study</i>
Teachers' perspectives on dyslexia	Regan and Woods (2000)
Structured teaching programmes for autistic children	Howley, Preece and Arnold (2001)
Designing child guidance interventions to match parents' needs	Hodgson, Mattison, Phillips and Pollack (2001)
Impact on educational psychologists of equality training in respect of gay and lesbian young people	Imich, Bayley and Farley (2001)
Schematic differences in the discourse of professionals in two different multidisciplinary groups	Bartolo (2001)
Teachers and EPs jointly developing a framework with which to monitor interventions with dyslexic students	Barrett et al. (2002)
Young people's views about the quality of service delivered by educational psychologists	Woolfson and Harker (2002)
Educational psychologists' perspectives on change-promoting and change-constraining factors within their profession	Stobie (2002)
Pupils' experiences of transfer to secondary schooling	Tobbell (2003)
Learning gained from acting as a supervisor	Carrington (2004)
Young people's poetry about peace	Smith (2005)
Professional 'vulnerability' highlighted within a service review	Annan (2005)

Studies of bullying

One dominant theme arising in Table 26.3 is bullying, a topic that has attracted world-wide concern in terms of media attention and research interest, but only in the most recent decade or two. Given the prevalence of this recent concern, the relevant studies from Table 26.3 are selected for more detailed review in Box 26.2.

Studies of educational psychologists working to avoid social exclusion

As Table 26.3 shows, the qualitative research published by or for educational and school psychologists has tended to rely on the verbal accounts of teachers, students and professionals. These have been mainly gathered through interviews and far less by observing talk during interaction – with the exception of O'Brien and Miller (2005), Pomerantz (2005) and the earlier, original contribution from Bozic and Leadbetter (1999). Furthermore, none of the studies cited above have involved work with parents. Three further studies, carried out by three of the authors of this chapter, which focus on how pupil identity has been co-constructed partly through institutional

talk and where participants have included pupils and parents as well as professionals will now be described in Box 26.3.

EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND THE BEYOND WORDS

It is precisely the apparent centrality of these phenomena – unwritten rules, attributions of blame and responsibility, and the indistinct boundaries of psychosocial systems and processes – that has led many educational psychologists to scour the intellectual landscape and 'turn to language'. In doing so they are paralleling a range of disciplines, from philosophy (Wittgenstein, 1953) to communication sciences (Chomsky, 1986) and psychology (Vygotsky, 1978). In particular, the Russian developmental psychologist lamented that 'contemporary psychology has nothing to say about the specific ideas regarding word meaning' (Vygotsky, 1986: 5).

Word meaning and the idea that words might not mean exactly what they say became an accepted wisdom which left the academy and Foucault (1978), Lacan (1977) and Derrida (1978) each expanded upon the

Table 26.3 Qualitative studies published in professional journals with a primary focus on troubled and challenging behaviour and strained relationships between students, teachers and parents

<i>Participants (who provided the data)</i>		<i>Authors</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Authors' designation of topic area</i>	<i>Authors' designation of methodology</i>
Teachers		Bibou-Nakou (2000)	Greece	'Problem children'	Focus groups
		Smith and Cooke (2000)	UK	Child at risk of exclusion	Case study
		Tyler and Jones (2000)	UK	Problem behaviour in school	Case Study
Students		Cranham and Carroll (2003)	Australia	Bullying	Interviews and grounded theory.
		Garniel, Hoover, Daughtry and Imbra (2003)	USA	Bullying in schools	Interviews
		Hardman (2001)	UK	'Emotional and behavioural difficulties'	Narrative reflection on sessions using personal construct psychology
		James and Owens, (2005)	Australia	Peer conflicts between teenage girls	Letter writing
		Quicke (2000)	UK	Disruptive behaviour in a secondary school	Interviewing and phenomenological approach
Teachers and students		Rios-Ellis, Bellamy and Shoji, Junichi (2000)	Japan	Bullying in schools	Interviews and focus groups
		Tanaka (2001)	Japan	Bullying	Narrative analysis ('storied community')
		Bennett and Gamman (2000)	UK	Behaviour generally throughout school	Documentary analysis - questionnaires and observations
		Cullen and Ramatour (2003)	UK	Off-task and anti-social behaviour	Solution focused interviews and appreciative inquiry
Teachers and others		Owens, Slee and Shute (2000)	Australia	Effects of aggression on teenage girls	Interviews and focus groups
		Pomerantz (2005)	UK	Child at risk of permanent exclusion	Conversation analysis
		Timmins, Shepherd and Kelly (2003)	UK	'Emotional and behavioural difficulties'	Interviews and action research. Cooperative inquiry
		O'Brien and Miller (2005)	UK	Consultation over challenging behaviour of a student	Discourse analysis

BOX 26.2 Qualitative Studies of Bullying in Schools within the Professional Literature

Study 1: Tanaka, T. (2001) The identity formation of the victim of 'shunning'. *School Psychology International*, 22(4):463–476.

This small-scale study investigated the emotional experiences of two Japanese pupils described as having been shunned or excluded by their classmates. Such a form of bullying has been termed 'ijime' in Japan.

The case studies are reported by the researcher in the form of a chronological narrative. Following these, a theoretical framework is proposed in which individuals who have been shunned may position themselves in one of four identity states with details from the case studies being considered in relation to these.

The first position describes a situation where an individual accepts a negative label and tries to change aspects of their identity. In the second, an individual might find another group to belong to, for example, a marginalized group. In the third case, an individual might position themselves according to a 'storied community' which might help them to feel special, perhaps by identifying with an unacknowledged genius or a hero/heroine in a tragic fiction. Finally, Tanaka suggests a position where the individual does not cope, and experiences a complete loss of self.

In one case study a girl failed to identify with a group or counter-group at her new school, (the fourth position), and the paper argues that this contributed to her later experience of a 'nervous breakdown'. It is suggested that a set of alternative narratives might have provided a more secure basis for her identity. In support of this, another girl is viewed as having managed her identity by forming a relationship with another club, and later with a storied community, leading her to experience more supportive outcomes.

Although for those interested in the execution of this research there are some methodological details omitted, Tanaka suggests that psychologists and therapists may be able to help victims of bullying establish positive senses of identity within alternative storied communities as well as carry out additional work around transition phases.

Study 2: Rios-Ellis, B., Bellamy, L. and Shoji, J. (2000) An examination of specific types of ijime within Japanese schools. *School Psychology International*, 21(3):227–241.

In a second study carried out in Japan, which again investigated ijime, the researchers characterized their approach as content analysis. They interviewed educational and government administrators, psychologists, social workers, professors and physicians about their experiences of bullying and took extensive notes about the experience. In addition, the transcriptions from two pupil focus groups (aged approximately fifteen) and a university student group are included as part of the data set. An extensive review of the literature is carried out for descriptive and comparative purposes.

The research focused on broader political, historical and cultural events, including the culture of collectivism and group effort arising from Japan's rapid industrialization. It is suggested that these factors link to the prevalence of ijime. Other suggested factors include a diminished extended family structure and a decrease in the time the mother spends at home.

Quantitative data from surveys portray pupil and professional reluctance to report ijime as well as difficulties in its identification, with a rise in ijime around transition to junior high school. Gender differences are also identified, where boys are seen to use more direct approaches (embarrassing a pupil rather than socially isolating them). In addition, risk factors upon starting school, such as a lack of social experience and differences in visible appearance, are highlighted.

Qualitative statements from the interviews are used to illustrate schematic differences in the meanings expressed by individuals. These include feelings, for example, about the extent to which bystanders feel able to intervene.

Professional implications drawn from this study include a need for consistency in identifying ijime, as well as in studying the emergence of aggressive behaviour amongst Japanese peer groups. Whilst there may be difficulties in transferring the findings outside of Japan, the connection of micro events to a broader social picture illuminates a more general phenomenon.

Study 3: Gamliel, T., Hoover, J.H., Daughtry, D.W. and Imbra, C.M. (2003) A qualitative investigation of bullying. The perspectives of fifth, sixth and seventh graders in a USA parochial school. *School Psychology International*, 24(4):405–420.

This third study used in-depth interviews to investigate how young people explain, experience and manage bullying. The research involved six volunteers aged between nine and thirteen years described as middle class and of European American descent, and considered to be representative of the population of the school in the north of the USA where the research was carried out.

The interview protocol, carried out as much as possible as a 'natural conversation', addressed perceptions of whether or not the participants had suffered bullying by peers and also asked questions about the feelings evoked by

such events. The interviews, each lasting around fifteen minutes, were audio taped and transcribed, and accompanied by memoing (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). At the end of the session, participants were also asked to rank order nine strategies in terms of preference.

The research data was organized into central themes that emerged following the reading and re-reading of the transcripts and a cycle of discussions between the researchers. Coping styles were categorized with the assistance of the memos under categories such as 'avoidance/ignoring'.

Research findings are set in terms of 'portraits' of personality and behavioural styles. While female respondents tend to recommend reasoned discourse takes place with the bully and with friends, boys recommend entering into the spirit of horseplay and giving back the teasing. Female participants are found to talk more about the subject than males. From the rank ordering of the nine suggested strategies for dealing with bullies, peaceful methods such as trying to make friends and avoiding confrontation were ranked similarly highly across genders while confrontational methods such as fighting received the lowest mean rankings.

This study illustrates how some qualitative examples can be used to complement quantitative data when building a rich picture about a topic. The researchers recommend that further investigation is carried out into gender and interpretations of bullying and strategies for coping.

Study 4: Cranham, J. and Carroll, A. (2003) Dynamics within the bully/victim paradigm: a qualitative analysis. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 19(2):113–133.

The final study, carried out in Australia, investigated how 14- to 16-year-old high school students judged whether bullies intended to cause harm to others, and whether bystanders and victims developed an ethical perspective in relation to bullies.

Ten pupils, viewed as having specific roles within the bully/victim paradigm, were selected from teacher records and categorized as bullies, victims, bystanders or active peer mediators before taking part in a semi-structured interview. The questioning focused on how the participants defined popularity; their friends' expectations of them; their practice and interpretation of self-change; and ethical issues relating to bullying behaviour. A grounded theory approach of constant comparison of emerging data from the participants was utilized. As patterns and themes emerged, the researcher recorded memos and reflections on the data.

The authors concluded that categorizations of bully, victim, peer mediator and bystander were associated with differing abilities to comply with constructs in the school environment. Social rules were often felt to be subtle and complex and less likely to be picked up by bullies or victims. These dynamic structures demanded compliance by the students to avoid the risk of social isolation and exclusion.

There were also fundamental differences where ethics were concerned. Victims were seen to hold a very black and white view of right and wrong behaviours whereas bullies identified some forms of these wrong behaviours as acceptable. The latter also tended to legitimize aggressive and violent behaviours and show a distinct lack of empathy for those that were bullied by others.

This is an important study for educational psychologists because it highlights the complexity of the social dynamics involved in bullying, which might not be picked up by more quantitative methods. Implications that focus on teaching students to work together to overcome conflict might be particularly relevant to educational psychologists keen to help reduce bullying within school.

project of structuralist linguistics (Saussure, 1964). Lacan's model of discourse analysis (utilized, for example, by Wendy Hollway (1989)) provided a theoretical resource in which a distinction could be seen between the 'signifier' (the concrete life of the word itself) and the 'signified' (those possible meanings that live inside and beyond the word).

In the first of our examples of discourse analysis to be applied specifically to educational psychology (an interview between a parent and an educational psychologist), there was an attempt to capture something

of the complexity of the interactions between participants as an alternative to the tendency in applied psychology to focus on the individual. The interview was tape recorded and transcribed in detail but the researcher also relied on 'observations and self-reflexions noted down at the time' as well as 'self reflexions throughout the subsequent analytical process' (Billington, 1995: 40). The interpretive stance was thus made explicit as discourses such as 'authority ... partnership ... parental (in)ability ... social class ...' emerged in the conversation (Billington,

BOX 26.3 Qualitative Research Studies of Educational Psychologists Working to Prevent Exclusion from School

Study 1: O'Brien, L. and Miller, A. (2005) Challenging behaviour: analysing teacher language in a school-based consultation within the discursive action model, *Educational and Child Psychology*, 22(1):61–71.

This study analyses a school-based consultation between an educational psychologist, a teacher and a learning mentor (a professional employed to work part-time with selected pupils). The meeting took place in an inner city primary school and concerned a student aged 10 to 11 years.

In terms of action, accountability and interpretive repertoires, the teacher and learning mentor utilized a repertoire that was organized around the metaphor of 'flipping', and of the student in question being a 'Jekyll and Hyde' character, which suggests an unpredictability over which they have little or no control.

The second theme within the transcript documented how the teacher, learning mentor and EP used discursive devices to construct accounts to make them appear factual and accurate. The use by the teacher and learning mentor of devices such as extreme case formulations, consensus and corroboration, vivid descriptions and active voicing, bolstered the 'within child' repertoire and made it very difficult for the EP to challenge the accounts or to work towards constructing an alternative version.

An alternative story was presented briefly by the teacher but this was bracketed by the use of 'I don't know'. Potter (1996) argues that the appearance of 'I don't know' at particular points in conversations can be a way of doing stake inoculation and is a way of displaying indifference or uncertainty towards the account in which she clearly has a vested interest. In this consultation the teacher builds consensus and corroboration by describing how the other children are affected by the boy's behaviour making the account more effectual by portraying it as agreed across witnesses or having the concurrence of impartial or independent observers (Edwards and Potter, 1992).

In this meeting, the educational psychologist used a number of 'solution-focused' questions (Rhodes and Ajmal, 1995) in an attempt to move towards the co-creation of a different and more optimistic account than the one being presented by the teacher and learning mentor. However, the array of discursive features employed by the two school-based staff served to maintain an interpretive repertoire within which it proved impossible for the psychologist to suggest or develop new and 'inclusive' solutions for the pupil.

Study 2: Hobley, V.L. and Miller, A. (in preparation) Parental discourse about challenging behaviour: rhetoric and sequencing in story telling.

This study examined an interview between an educational psychologist and the mother of a pupil undergoing a Statutory Assessment of special educational needs – a procedure which, in essence, might lead to some additional provision being made within or outside of a mainstream school. Although informal in style and often conducted in parents' homes, such interviews are nevertheless constructed within a specific institutional form (Drew and Heritage, 1998).

The analysis of the interview transcript includes examples of discursive devices as in the study above, but also focuses explicitly on how the consultation takes shape, in particular, how the mother's desire for a special school placement is structured both sequentially and rhetorically. Conversation analysis is employed to provide a micro-analytic, detailed account of talk-in-interaction (Drew and Heritage, 1998) and demonstrates how the turn taking is organized, and particularly how story telling is accomplished through interaction (Sacks et al., 1978).

A turning point in the conversational pattern occurs some 40 minutes into the interview. Whereas the psychologist had initially controlled the direction of the talk, the mother at this stage engaged in two extended story sections, in which the psychologist appears 'subordinate' for a considerable amount of time. The use of continuers, such as 'yeah', by the psychologist enables the mother's conversational dominance (Itakura, 2001) to be maintained, the interview in its previous form having 'broken down'. This also provides further feedback that the psychologist is keeping up with her story, thus aligning both to the new roles of story teller and story recipient.

A major device which is used to manage accountability is the use of 'within child' interpretive repertoires, also a dominant feature of the previous study above. The dominant discursive theme is of the boy ending up in dangerous situations. Words chosen signify sudden impulsive behaviour, implying a reduction in accountability for parent and son, the mother referring at times to her own 'instinctive' behaviour. It is highly likely that the frequent use of this 'within child' interpretive repertoire within the realigned roles in the later stages of the consultation plays an influential part in the final decision to recommend a move into the segregated provision of a special school.

Study 3: A grounded theory study of successful consultations concerning challenging behaviour in classrooms (Miller, 2003, 2004).

This grounded theory study was based on interviews with 24 primary school teachers (US grades 1–6) identified by educational psychologists. Each teacher and psychologist pair had previously worked together on an intervention

that resulted, in the teacher's judgement, in an improvement in the challenging behaviour of a student in their class, often to a startling degree. The pupils were described by the majority of teachers as among the most, or the most challenging student they had ever encountered, a designation often highly likely to lead to exclusion from mainstream schooling.

In many of the interviews a three part pattern was discernible:

- the student had a widely perceived deviant identity within the school,
- most staff perceived positive changes following the teacher's and psychologist's joint work, and
- the teacher involved was often extremely reticent with colleagues about the nature of this joint work and colleagues were reluctant to make enquiries.

The final grounded theory is built around a core category of systems boundary maintenance. The involvement of an educational psychologist creates a temporary system which includes at least one member of staff, one parent, the pupil and the psychologist, and within which new norms and rules are created, in much the same way that a therapist and a family may form a 'therapeutic suprasystem' (De Shazer, 1982). This new system enables participants to act towards, and construe each other in new and more positive ways, which provide the basis from which the pupil and, sometimes, the parent can assume new identities.

This temporary overlapping boundary, in place only as long as the psychologist continues to work with the teacher and parent, insulates the class teacher from other staff members and thus prevents her or his new constructions of the pupil and parent from clashing with the more widely held views among the staff and hence disrupting the 'homeostasis' – the tendency to maintain the internal stability – of the school system. This also serves to maintain the boundary of the school as a socio-technical system (Rice, 1976).

This study demonstrates the positive contributions educational psychologists can make towards successful educational inclusion. However, it also accentuates the potentially confounding contributions of phenomena such as staff culture with its unwritten rules, attributions of blame and responsibility, and the negotiation of delicate and sometimes indistinct boundaries between school and home.

1995: 41). However, one of the consequences of adopting this mode of analysis was that the problem which prompted the involvement of the psychologist 'ceased to be located solely within either the child or the family' (Billington, 1995: 43). In utilizing the model articulated by Lacan (1977) and Hollway (1989), therefore, the analysis went beyond the words themselves. Indeed 'you take your first step into discourse ... as you take your first step away from language ...' (Parker, 1992: xi).

For a profession which cannot ignore the demands of government there are clearly problems in devising qualitative research projects based on Lacanian principles, i.e. on the basis that all cannot be captured within the words themselves. That practitioners and their clients might not always be able to trust words clearly has significance for the profession since there is invariably a need to pretend that all can be contained in the words, for example, in the diagnosis, the definition or explanation. A discourse analytic method that extends beyond words is thus messy and

awkward for the professional. The problems are not only methodological, however, and neither do they have implications only for the individuals involved. For if such analyses are applied to psychologists' reports, which are an important arm of officialdom (whether for schools, local authorities or the courts) discourse analysis begins to reveal a more radical potential for challenging key constructs which underpin the scrutiny of individual children or adults.

While continuing critiques of developmental psychology (Burman, 1994, in press; Chapter 23) and emerging discourse analytic methodology (Burman and Parker, 1993) began to expose the theoretical fissure between knowledge and the experience of the individual, eventually a further schism became unavoidable in analysis – that which occurs between individual experience and any explanations of that experience. In Billington (2000) not only did the psychologist researcher-practitioner become part of the narrative in respect of individual young

people but the author examined the ways in which the grand project of psychopathology infiltrated many aspects of the practitioner's work. The deficit model of autistic spectrum disorders, for example, was contrasted with accounts provided by the author of a boy with whom he worked – 'James' – together with those provided by autistic 'insiders.'

In the process, attempts were made to devise accounts of James which resisted the exclusionist consequences associated with a professional practice based primarily on psychopathology. Indeed, adopting such critical discourse methodology, one that is informed by a Lacanian psychoanalytic understanding of both language and the beyond of language, thus has the potential to operate not only as research and theory but as practice (Burman et al., 1996). Ultimately, it becomes possible to articulate three distinctions in work conducted by educational psychologists with children and young people:

- 1 between any diagnosis and the child (e.g. between autism and 'James')
- 2 between a knowledge of children generally and our interpretations of the child before us (e.g. between any seven-year-old and one's own child, for example)
- 3 between any description of the child we construct and the descriptions that the child might potentially construct for themselves (e.g. between the words we use to describe a child and his or her own chosen narrative) (see Billington, 2006: 158).

That a young person might view themselves as being quite distinct from any specific psychopathology has a significance which has often been overlooked. That many of the recent 'insider' accounts are markedly different from 'expert' accounts perhaps testifies to the limited usefulness of some professionalized explanations which can continue to expose deficits rather than talents or potentials.

Radical qualitative research thus begins to envisage new kinds of professional–client relationships. Whether such methods truly shake the axes of knowledge and power or merely allow some relatively gentle liberal readjustment is, of course, open to critique.

However, no longer can the psychologist, researcher or practitioner, feign invisibility.

CONCLUSION

Professional theory choices are thus adjusting to new conditions in which the boundaries between expert knowledge and client experience are being re-negotiated, a position taken also in contemporary neuroscience: 'there is an abyss between knowledge and experience that cannot be bridged scientifically' (Damasio, 2000: 307–8).

Critical qualitative research methodologies can allow educational psychologists to grapple with contests between knowledge and experience, overcome barriers between research and practice and better equip the practitioner to work with young people. The dilemmas continue unabated, however, for should we begin fully to embrace in practice that which we have been learning from research (i.e. listening to our clients, whether children, parents or teachers) or will educational psychologists become mere advocates?

Lessons learned from the practice of qualitative research methods have informed the future direction of professional practice in educational psychology since they lead to critiques in which such dilemmas become exposed. However, if there really is a fundamental re-adjustment of the professional position in relation to the subjects of our inquiry, encapsulated by a desire to resist social exclusion, might educational psychology lose its authority as it relaxes its claims to knowledge and truth?

Educational psychology practitioners have not always been best served by a critical mass of research devoted specifically to professional practices. The very diversity of its principal arenas of application – the school, the family and the community – has confused most attempts to locate or pathologize the individual child, parent or teacher with clinical precision. As such, educational psychology can claim to have performed a vital function in keeping alive those inherently social analyses and resisting the wholesale

application of a simplistic 'medical' or diagnostic model to any individual.

Many practitioners have been clinging on to other forms of resistance such as 'children's rights', 'the voice of the child' and 'inclusion'. Qualitative research methodologies have demanded not only a theoretical exploration of these concepts, but a re-evaluation of professional practices since the ways in which we conduct such research, often through the medium of the interview, has caused us to look at those interactions we share with our clients.

The questions developed in qualitative research methodologies are those which face practitioners:

How do we speak of children?
How do we speak with children?
How do we write of children?
How do we listen to children?
And additionally, how do we listen to ourselves
(when working with children)?

Billington (2006: 8)

Contrary to the myth, all this does not imply that there is no absolute truth; just that it cannot easily be known. Qualitative research methodologies can thus be embraced by all researcher-practitioners who look to base their work on the principles of an empirical science which is sensitive to the boundaries of the public and the private.

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Work and Organizational Psychology

Jo Silvester

INTRODUCTION

Work and organizational psychology has a rich tradition in qualitative research, yet anyone coming new to the field could easily be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Most academic journals and conference papers are dominated by empirical investigations that fit a 'scientific' epistemology. In fact, organizational psychologists have been criticized for lagging far behind other social science disciplines in utilizing qualitative methods (Spector, 2001). This chapter explores where and why qualitative research is (or is not) used in organizational psychology. It is not intended as an exhaustive description of the literature [for an excellent recent review see Cassell and Symon (2006), and for more detailed descriptions of many of the methods described here see Cassell and Symon (2004)]. The chapter is, however, an attempt to explain the apparent tension between quantitative and qualitative research in the workplace. My specific aims are to: briefly review the contribution made by qualitative research

within organizational psychology; explore where qualitative methods are used in current research and practice; discuss reasons for the apparent dominance of quantitative methods, and finally; consider what the future might hold for qualitative research within the discipline.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Organizational psychology is concerned with the way people think, feel and behave in work and organizational contexts. Organizational psychologists (who are also known as occupational, work, or industrial/organizational (IO) psychologists) are 'concerned about the ethical use of psychological theories and techniques and their impact on the well-being and effectiveness of individuals, groups and organizations' (Arnold et al., 2005: xvii). Important knowledge areas within this domain include motivation and employee relations, personnel selection and assessment, training, well-being at work, organizational

development and change, appraisal, career development, work design, and work safety. As such the topics studied by organizational psychologists are many and varied. They range from investigations of how individual characteristics impact on work performance, to interventions reducing stress at work, and evaluation of training interventions designed to improve safety in the workplace. However, organizational psychology, like other applied psychology fields such as health or clinical psychology, involves the application of many different theories including those that might be described as 'cognitive', 'social' or 'developmental'. For example, an important field in organizational psychology has involved applying cognitive theory to workplace phenomena (see Hodgkinson, 2003). Consequently, the methods adopted by researchers and practitioners reflect a rich and diverse field.

Organizational psychology as a discipline emerged in the UK and USA largely as a consequence of efforts to improve assessment of personnel in the First World War and Second World War. Initially the US army developed methods of psychological testing to assist in selecting and training individuals for the armed forces during the First World War. This led to the appearance of several commercial consultancies (e.g. Psychological Corporation) which specialized in the creation of psychological techniques to assess individuals for occupational roles. At the same time a slightly different approach materialized in the UK, where psychologists became increasingly interested in how work and the workplace could be designed more efficiently. An example of this was a series of studies investigating the personal health and efficiency of workers in munitions factories (for a more detailed discussion of these see Chmiel, 2000). In 1921 this work led to the creation of the UK National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP), set up with the specific aim of promoting and encouraging practical application of the *sciences* of psychology and physiology to commerce and industry. By the 1930s the NIIP was a centre of excellence for research into topics

such as work hours, rest pauses, dexterity and work conditions: the underlying rationale being that the scientific approach could improve worker performance and, ultimately, national economic success (Kwiatkowski, Duncan and Shimmin, 2006).

The advent of the Second World War prompted further interest in how psychological methods, such as job analysis, psychological testing, interviewing and vocational guidance, could help fit people to jobs. With such large numbers of people being recruited to military roles, there was a need to ensure that individuals' strengths could be identified and utilized most efficiently. The person-job fit model of work performance emerged as an important framework that still underpins much personnel selection research and practice to the present day. The basic premises of this model are that individuals differ in the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) they bring to the workplace, jobs require different KSAs, therefore a closer match between people and jobs should result in higher levels of performance. Consequently, the quantification of individual differences, job requirements and work performance became central to the work of organizational psychologists. However, the Second World War also prompted interest in the human side of technology and the dynamics of leadership and groups in military and industrial contexts. This led to work on group and organizational behaviour, culture, and learning in the US (e.g. Lewin, 1947). In the UK the Tavistock Institute, established in 1947, became an influential focus for researchers and practitioners interested in psychodynamic perspectives on organizational change, action research methods, socio-technical systems theory, and group dynamics (Guest, 2006). Arguably this point marks the start of a divergence between quantitative and qualitative researchers that remains today. Despite a preponderance of quantitative research in organizational psychology, however, in this chapter I will argue that qualitative approaches still play an important, but often understated role in shaping research and practice in the field.

QUALITATIVE METHODS IN ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH

Qualitative research involves watching people and interacting with people as we find them within their own territory, speaking their own language, on their own terms (Kirk and Miller, 1986; Fryer, 1991). Like qualitative researchers in other fields, those in organizational psychology are concerned with attempts to describe, decode and interpret the meanings of work-related phenomena for employees and employers. For the most part, they focus on *describing* the nature of something, which in organizational psychology has often been a precursor to quantification or *measuring* the degree to which a particular feature (e.g. stress) is present. A key difference between qualitative and quantitative researchers in organizational psychology is that the former typically view reality as socially constructed and accept the existence of multiple and equally legitimate interpretations of work-related events. In contrast, quantitative researchers have generally adopted a scientific approach, and sought to identify general principles about work related phenomena that can be tested on the basis of empirical evidence. These differences are apparent in the methods these researchers utilize. For example, according to a constructionist approach, individuals shape meaning of work events in their effort to make sense of and understand their role and the workplace. Thus, work satisfaction can mean different things to different people, including: monetary reward, flexibility and control over the timing of work, intellectual stimulation, or social contact. Researchers interested in these unique perspectives are more likely to use qualitative methods such as interviews or diaries that enable them to probe topics more important to the participant than the researcher. However, scientific researchers are more likely to use questionnaires that allow them to draw inferences and make comparisons across populations of workers or organizations, and quantify differences. In organizational psychology the ability to measure difference has provided

an important and powerful source of information for those individuals in organizations who making decisions about employees or the allocation of resources. This has contributed in large part to the popularity of the scientific approach in this discipline.

Yet, despite the low profile of qualitative approaches in academic and published research, they are used extensively by practitioners (and in many cases researchers) to support the development and implementation of many different interventions, such as organizational change programmes, training needs analyses, strategic review, and the design of development plans. Perhaps more surprising, however, is the extent to which qualitative methods feature in personnel selection; historically an important area for organizational psychologists, and one that has generated an extensive volume of research and practice in a scientific tradition (Salgado, 1999). For example, selection and assessment methods are generally evaluated in terms of their reliability and validity, or more specifically, how effectively they compare applicants and predict future job performance. A multi-million pound psychometric testing industry now exists based on the premise that it is possible to identify psychological constructs that predict employee performance, and measure the extent to which different people possess them. There is considerable support for relationships between work performance and psychological constructs such as general mental ability (Schmidt and Hunter, 1998) and personality traits (e.g. conscientiousness; Robertson, Baron, Gibbons, MacIver and Nyfield, 2000). Similarly, meta-analytic research has shown that other factors contribute to aspects of work experience including job satisfaction, leadership, stress and motivation (e.g. Ones, Viswesvaran and Schmidt, 1993).

This research provides an important evidence base for the scientific practice of employee selection and has no doubt increased the popularity of the discipline as one capable of promoting enhanced worker and organizational performance. It is perhaps

not so surprising, therefore, that qualitative research, with its focus on describing rather than predicting, has been received with less enthusiasm. Despite this, qualitative approaches are often central to personnel selection and the next section explores some of the qualitative methods that have been used to understand and map occupational roles.

Qualitative methods in personnel selection

According to best practice guidelines, certain steps should be followed in order to develop a valid and robust employee selection system. First, the job being selected for should be systematically defined by describing the roles, responsibilities and tasks that a job incumbent will be required to perform, as well as the standard he or she will need to perform to. This process, known as job analysis, should also determine the KSAs that an employee in that role will need in order to perform it effectively, and behavioural indicators of good and poor performance. The second step involves developing a selection process using valid, fair and reliable methods to compare applicants on the basis of these KSAs. Finally, the third step is to validate the selection process (i.e. demonstrate that it works) by comparing performance of successful applicants during the selection process with their subsequent performance in the job. Most selection and assessment therefore involves measurement and statistical comparison of applicant performance during selection and once in the job.

Analysis of work roles is not exclusive to personnel selection, but it is central. Job analysis is essentially a systematic process that incorporates a range of methods to describe what role incumbents must do (task analysis), and what they need in order to do it well (person analysis). The output of a job analysis can be used for various purposes including job evaluation and classification, job design and redesign, performance appraisal, training, succession planning and selection. Indeed, Brannick and Levine (2002: 7) go so

far as to say that job analysis 'forms the basis for the solution of virtually every human resource problem'.

The range of job analysis methods illustrates how the process has been treated as both a scientific and a constructivist process by researchers and practitioners. For example, the Job Components Inventory (JCI; Banks, Jackson, Stafford and Warr, 1982) and the Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ; McCormick, Jeanneret and Mecham, 1972) are highly structured and mechanistic approaches to analysing work roles based on the assumption that it is possible to classify aspects of a role according to common work tasks and characteristics. More recent attempts to define a universal set of role competencies also typify the scientific search for underlying factors of job performance (e.g. O*NET: <http://online.onetcenter.org>). Although this work can help us to understand commonalities between roles and occupations, it is less effective in exploring and describing the unique nature of individual work roles in particular organizational contexts. Indeed, one of the most important, but least discussed, roles of job analysis is to communicate what an organization expects from a role incumbent in terms of performance targets and how these should be achieved. Thus a central function of job analysis is to facilitate a shared understanding of good and poor performance. In this instance, job analysis is less a 'scientific' process of uncovering an underlying objective reality, and more an active process of sense-making that helps to construct a shared understanding of what a role means to managers and employees. Where the purpose of job analysis is to shape *and* map occupational roles (e.g. in the case of evolving or newly emergent roles), iterative and interactive qualitative methods such as critical incident interviewing, diaries, focus groups, and participant observation, are often more useful. The following methods are discussed to illustrate how different qualitative approaches have been used by researchers and practitioners to explore and understand work roles.

Critical incident technique

Flanagan (1954) first described the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) as a method for studying social science phenomena within a positivist research paradigm. CIT has since been developed as an investigative tool in organizational and job analysis (e.g. Silvester, Patterson and Ferguson, 2003). Flanagan describes CIT as a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour. He defines an 'incident' as any specifiable human activity sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions about a particular activity. In the case of job analysis, CIT has been used to gather information about important role-related behaviour from role incumbents and managers.

CIT was, in fact, the forerunner of 'behavioural event interviewing' developed by David McClelland and colleagues to identify behavioural competencies required by job incumbents. Interviewees are asked to describe the critical incidents they have encountered in their jobs in great detail and transcripts of these interviews are then analysed to extract the specific behaviours associated with different levels of performance. For example, an interviewee might be asked to describe an occasion where they observed a work colleague demonstrating excellent work performance, and another where they observed poor work performance. By probing the interviewee about what happened, and reassuring them that examples can be anonymous, it is possible to obtain a full description. This enables researchers to gather behavioural examples that can then be used to define positive and negative performance indicators for different performance standards.

Repertory grid

Like several other methods described here, repertory grids have often been analysed using quantitative techniques, illustrating Cassell and Symon's (2004) point that it is not methods themselves that best determine

whether research should be described as qualitative or quantitative, but how the methods are used, the data interpreted, and what conclusions (if any) are reached. The repertory grid technique originates from George Kelly's (1955) personal construct psychology, where individuals are viewed as actively making sense of their world. Kelly suggests that we create constructs in order to describe ourselves and the events we witness, and that these constructs will change and develop as we experience and learn from different events. In the workplace, employees develop constructs about their roles which can be explored using the repertory grid technique. Interestingly, the idea that constructs develop with experience is particularly useful when considering differences between how novices and experts experience their roles. Although the role itself may not differ, a qualitative approach implicitly recognizes and accepts that an experienced individual will conceptualize their role in different and potentially important ways to new employees.

In brief, the practice of repertory grid technique involves three steps: (1) identifying elements relevant to the topic to be studied (in the case of job analysis these might be an excellent performer, a poor performer and a novice), (2) elicitation of constructs differentiating these elements (e.g. possesses knowledge of wider organization), and (3) construction of a matrix listing elements and constructs (Fransella, Bell and Bannister, 2004). Although repertory grid was initially developed to explore individuals' unique constructs, researchers have sought to combine findings from interviews with different individuals to identify commonalities. One area where repertory grid has proven particularly useful is in exploring assumed differences about how individuals from different groups perform the same role. For example, Dick and Jankowicz (2001) used the method to explore how organizational culture impacts upon differential career progression for male and female police officers. Other work by Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe has used repertory grid methodology to

explore constructs of leadership held by male and female managers in the public sector (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 1999). They identified 48 'leadership dimensions' that were then used to develop a Transformational Leadership Questionnaire. Thus a qualitative approach formed the basis for development of a quantitative tool.

Diary studies

Researchers have asked employees to keep diaries in order to investigate a variety of organizational topics including call centre work (Holman, 2005), violations of the psychological contract (Conway and Briner, 2002), mood changes in shift work (Williamson, Gower and Clark, 1994) and well-being at work (Sonnentag, 2001). They are also a popular method for capturing information about work roles. Diaries involve role incumbents keeping a personalized record of their work-related activities, with whom they interact, and in some cases, their feelings and emotions about different activities. In job analysis, diaries are particularly useful for understanding how much time is spent on different activities, as well as the relative frequency of various tasks and responsibilities. Diary research varies from purely quantitative collection of questionnaire data at different time points, to purely qualitative descriptions provided by employees about their own feelings and thoughts about work events they, rather than the researcher, might consider important.

The diary method is particularly useful in helping to identify those aspects of a job that are less easy to observe or may occur relatively infrequently, but are particularly important for understanding the role. For example, in the UK and many Western societies, most work involves cognitive rather than manual skills. There is also a growing focus on emotional labour (Holman, 2005). Diaries allow researchers to capture role incumbents' perceptions and thoughts about their work and the cognitive skills required. This can provide important additional information for shaping selection systems that

provide a realistic insight into the job for applicants.

Participant observation

The fact that participant observation is used less frequently in job analysis is more a reflection of the time and cost involved in using the method, than its utility. Indeed, some argue that there are few more effective methods for allowing researchers to study at first hand the day-to-day experience of people at work (Waddington, 2004). Participant observation, as the term implies, involves the researcher engaging (or participating) in the work that he or she is observing, although the degree to which observers participate can vary. Four categories involving different levels of participation are described by Burgess (1984): (1) 'complete participant', involving covert involvement, concealing the researcher's identity and purpose; (2) 'participant as observer', where no attempt is made to conceal the observation or its purpose and where the observer can participate in activities and form relationships with those observed; (3) 'observer as participant', involving more superficial contact with observed individuals such as occasional questions or interviews; and (4) 'complete observer', where the researcher has no interaction. The latter approach may be favoured where there is a belief that the researcher's involvement may pollute or distort the 'reality' of the workplace. However, the very presence of a researcher has been found to influence how people behave, as shown in the now famous Hawthorne studies (e.g. Arnold et al., 2005: 18) (where knowledge that they were to be studied was found to be the primary determinant of increases in group performance).

An excellent example of participant observation is provided by Anat Rafaeli in her study of cashiers in local supermarkets in Israel (Rafaeli, 1989). Rafaeli applied, trained and then worked as a cashier for 18 hours per week for three months. Her own observations together with semi-structured critical incident interviews with 30 cashiers

and 30 male and female customers provided a detailed insight into the cashier–customer relationship. Rafaeli pursued an iterative process of systematically going back and forth between theoretical insights and data, describing the struggle for control between customers and cashiers over service interactions and identifying manager influence as legitimate but remote.

Waddington (2004) points out that there can be disadvantages with participant observation. For example, consultants who work closely with organizations for long periods of time often speak of the risks of ‘going native’, that is, developing stronger relationships and allegiances with their host organization than their own employers. These relationships, which can influence the inferences drawn by researchers, draw particular criticism from scientific researchers for their potential threat to validity. However, as Waddington (2004: 163–4) reflects on his own study of strike behaviour at Ansells brewery: ‘Whilst participant observation is less tidy and more complicated than I formerly pretended, it is one of the surest ways I know of getting *directly to the heart* of human experience’.

Grounded theory

Although grounded theory is a well known qualitative research method, it is surprisingly rare in job analysis. Grounded theory is more common in studies of organizational change where it is well suited to a dialectic exploration of relationships between agents and internal groups (Nicholson, 1990). An example of such work is an investigation of the development of innovation in the Spanish ceramic industry by Carrero, Peiró and Salanova (2000). Here 14 in-depth interviews were conducted over a three-year period in four organizations where new innovation practices had been introduced. The choice of grounded theory was based on a desire to use an open and flexible research design that would allow reflection on the frequent changes and movements that characterized the organizational context. Their aim

was to build theories of organizational innovation grounded in data.

Grounded theory methodology is a style of data analysis that aims to discover concepts and hypotheses relevant to a particular area of organizational research (Lämsäsalmi, Peiró and Kivimäki, 2004). Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) grounded theory provides new insights into social processes without forcing the data into previous theoretical frameworks. In the case of job analysis, this means that grounded theory is a virtual antithesis to the application of pre-specified competency frameworks or job categories. A recent example of the use of grounded theory to job analysis is provided by Koczwara (2007) in her study of leadership and diversity in investment banking. She conducted 40 semi-structured interviews with managers in the UK and USA to capture what they described as behaviours evidencing whether an employee has leadership potential (i.e. the potential to move to higher levels within the organization). Koczwara combined grounded theory with a card sort method using the following steps: (1) extracting and recording all behavioural descriptions of leadership potential provided by managers on individual cards, (2) asking individuals to undertake a card sort to group behaviours into initial themes, (3) re-examination of behaviour groupings to break them into more precise groups called Elements. (Level 1 coding), and (4) re-grouping of Elements into behavioural competencies (Level 2 coding). A subsequent quantitative comparison of these competencies revealed differences between the behaviours associated with leadership potential for men and women that may help to explain the glass ceiling effect (Koczwara and Silvester, 2006).

MAPPING ROLE COMPETENCIES: TWO CASE STUDIES

What all of these methods clearly illustrate is the spectrum of qualitative to quantitative approaches that have been used to map

and understand occupational roles. At one end, scientific researchers using a reductionist approach have sought to identify universal job components and create tools capable of describing any work role. An example of this is 'off-the-shelf' competency frameworks that include a range of different job characteristics (e.g. 'works closely with customers', 'involved in selling products'), from which job incumbents and managers are asked to choose those that best describe their role. 'Off-the-shelf' competency frameworks are useful in situations where time is short and detailed understanding of a particular role less important. But they are more limited in their ability to provide insight into the unique characteristics of roles in different organizational contexts. In contrast, qualitative approaches, much like emic studies in cross-cultural research, focus on the people for whom that role has meaning. Using a 'bottom-up' approach involving interviews with multiple stakeholders, researchers and practitioners consider how the role is made sense of by different people and search for those aspects that make the role unique. This chapter provides two examples of how competency frameworks have been developed in changing work sectors (medical and political) (see below). In both cases, the approach taken begins with a stakeholder analysis, and interviews and observations, but both end with the use of quantitative methods to explore their validity in selection.

Competency modelling

According to Sparrow (1995), competencies have been one of the 'big ideas' in human resource management (HRM), but debate still rages as to what they constitute. Some organizational psychologists treat competencies as generic, seeking to identify those that can be found in different roles and organizations (as witnessed by the previous description of off-the-shelf competency frameworks). Others focus on 'behavioural competencies' as soft skills, which are seen as being associated with underlying individual characteristics, such as skills, personality and motivation

(Boyatzis, 1982). In this case competencies are evidenced by patterns of behaviour (referred to as behavioural indicators), which are used as criteria in employee selection, assessment and development. It is argued that, by being explicit about important role-related behaviours, an organization can facilitate a shared understanding of what is meant by good and poor performance more easily.

Competency modelling is a comparatively recent form of job analysis. It seeks to create a common language about a role and language, and is therefore of fundamental importance in describing work events and behaviour (Schippmann et al., 2000). However, the extent to which competency modelling can be viewed as a quantitative or a qualitative method depends crucially on the approach taken by the researcher or practitioner in identifying and describing the behavioural indicators and competencies. For example, in a constructionist approach, interviews with a wide range of stakeholders are used to elicit multiple perspectives, but these are then shaped to create an accepted and shared view using the language of that organization.

Medical competencies

An example of this approach is recent work by Fiona Patterson and her colleagues involving the creation of competency frameworks for a range of medical roles in the UK (e.g. general practitioner (GP), surgeon, obstetrician and gynaecologist, paediatrician, and anaesthetist). This is an ongoing project to evaluate medical roles, identify future development needs and design selection procedures for doctors applying for postgraduate specialty medical training. It forms part of the UK Government's Modernizing Medical Careers programme (General Medical Council, 2003). This is the largest change programme to be introduced in the health sector since the inception of the National Health Service (NHS) and is being managed by the Department of Health in conjunction with the Royal Colleges of Medicine and Deaneries responsible for medical training.

The original work was conducted to investigate the GP role. Patterson and her colleagues observed and analysed 168 separate doctor-patient interactions. They also interviewed patients, senior medical professionals, medical trainees, trainers and GPs themselves. Central to their approach was their assumption that the role is multi-faceted and that each group would provide information relating to different aspects and, more importantly, what they believed constituted good and poor performance. Therefore, including patients' perspectives of what they considered good practice by doctors was seen to be just as important (and in many cases more so) than other groups (Patterson et al., 2000). This work led to the development of a competency framework with eleven core competencies (including, empathy and sensitivity, communication skills, clinical knowledge and expertise, professional integrity) each of which was described using positive and negative behavioural indicators (see Box 27.1). This competency framework has since become the basis for a selection process for doctors applying for GP training with the NHS (Patterson, Lane, Ferguson and Norfolk, 2002). The process of information gathering based on the importance of multiple perspectives fits well with a qualitative research epistemology in that it recognizes the legitimacy and importance

of the perspectives of different groups in shaping what is meant by good performance for doctors.

Since the original work there has been a move to integrate and streamline selection processes for all doctors applying for postgraduate training across all UK medical specialties. Patterson and her colleagues have worked to develop competency frameworks for all medical roles. Given the highly political nature of the project and its role as a major change agent in medical training, all subsequent projects have begun with a process of stakeholder analysis to map the individuals, groups and entities that may have a role in determining or defining the nature of a phenomenon. Stakeholder analysis has been associated most frequently with organizational change research (Burgoyne, 1998), so it is not surprising that it has relevance for strategic role analysis at an organizational or sector level. An example of the output of a stakeholder analysis conducted by Patterson, Silvester and Farrell (2006) as part of a project to define the role of 'surgeon' for the Royal College of Surgeons is provided in Figure 27.1. This stakeholder map resulted from a process of consultation with key visionaries in the surgical field, all of whom were asked to identify those groups with a legitimate interest in, and relevant knowledge of, the surgical role.

BOX 27.1 Example Behavioural Indicators (Positive) for the General Practitioner Role

(from Patterson et al., 2000)

Competency: 'Empathy and Sensitivity'

- Generates an atmosphere where the patient feels safe
- Patient is taken seriously, treated confidentially
- Picks up on patient's emotions and feelings
- Encourages patient, gives reassurances
- Use of 'I understand what you're saying'
- Focuses on the positive
- Treats individuals as people
- Checks patient needs are satisfied
- Demonstrates a caring attitude.

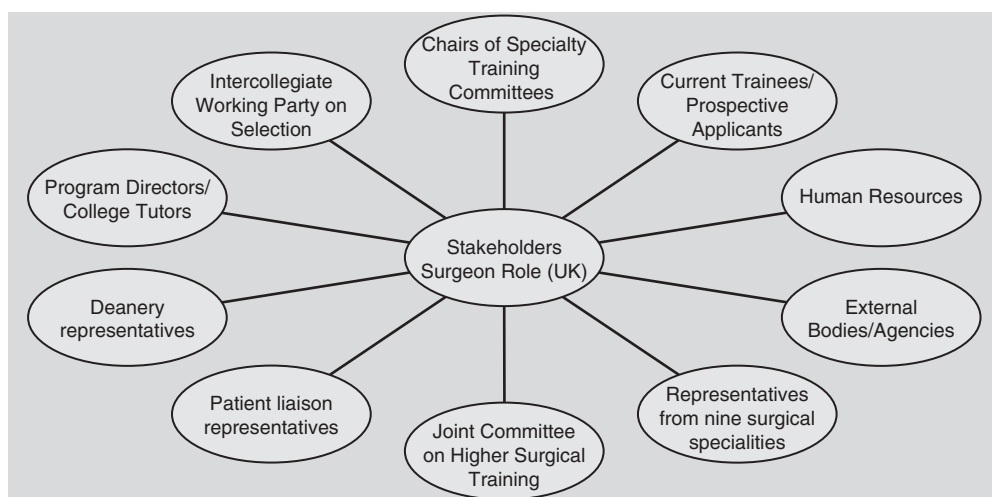


Figure 27.1 Stakeholder analysis for surgeon role (Patterson et al., 2006)

Interviews and focus groups were held subsequently with representatives from all of these groups to further scope the behavioural competencies. Lievens, Sanchez and De Corte (2004) suggest that one of the differences between competency modelling and more traditional job analysis is that the former ties job specifications more explicitly to the organization's strategy. What stakeholder analysis makes clear, however, is the existence of multiple sources of influence and power that can drive the definition of a role. Job analysis in most situations involves little more than a detailed investigation of an existing role in a hierarchy of roles within an organization. However, in the case of public sector reform many different groups have a vested interest in defining what future roles should involve. It is less straightforward than the simple top-down approach of defining work from a managerial perspective (Silvester and Dykes, 2007). At the very least stakeholder analysis enforces the need for researchers and practitioners to be explicit about whose views are being taken account of in shaping a particular job.

Nowhere is the involvement of multiple legitimate stakeholders more apparent than in the case of political roles: in the final case study I describe examples from my own work

to map the Member of Parliament (MP) and local councillor roles.

Political competencies

Political performance has been equated historically with success at the ballot box. There has been little if any consideration of whether politicians need specific knowledge, skills or abilities to perform effectively. Yet, on resigning from her position as UK Secretary for Education, Estelle Morris, famously (and honestly) commented that she felt she lacked the skills necessary for the job. In 2001, I was asked by the director of development and candidates for the Conservative Party (the main right-of-centre political party in the UK) to advise them on how they might improve their process for selecting prospective parliamentary candidates. Their aim was to increase the number of women and ethnic minority candidates. Coming from a job analysis perspective, my first question was 'what are you looking for?' but quickly realized that there had been no previous job analysis for the MP role. Since then, I have found little evidence that any other political role has been subject to job analysis (which begs the interesting question 'why?'). This initial meeting led to a fascinating process of

developing a competency model for an MP. It involved undertaking a stakeholder analysis, followed by critical incident interviews with MPs, shadow ministers, party volunteers, party whips and members of the public, to capture what they considered to be the behavioural indicators of effective and ineffective MP performance (Silvester, 2003). These competencies and behavioural indicators were used subsequently to develop an assessment centre for approving prospective parliamentary candidates, and to conduct a validation study investigating the individual characteristics associated with performance in the 2005 General Election (Silvester and Dykes, 2007). A similar project was conducted subsequently for the Improvement and Development Agency, the main government-sponsored organization for developing capacity in local government, scoping the cross-party skill sets for UK local councillors (Silvester, 2004). The resulting political skills framework has been used as the basis for development and review activities for local politicians across the political divide.

Both of these projects illustrate job analysis as a formative and iterative process. More specifically, because there had been no prior consideration of the specific knowledge, skills and abilities required by politicians, and because the roles are unique in that they concern democratically elected individuals, it was particularly important to understand how different stakeholders construed the role. The generation of a competency framework and associated positive and negative behavioural indicators (see Box 27.2 for an example of the competency ‘political understanding’) provided an opportunity to capture and shape perceptions about what local councillors do. Interestingly, whilst politicians are elected and responsible to the people that elect them, most people have very little understanding of what politicians do. For example, there was a widespread belief that MPs are mostly involved in debating in the House of Commons. As such, it was assumed that barristers would make good politicians because they possess necessary public speaking skills. Not only can such a stereotype predicate against

BOX 27.2 Example of the Competency ‘Political Understanding’ for Local Councillors

(from Silvester, 2004)

Political Understanding: Acts ethically, consistently and with integrity when communicating values or representing political group views in decisions and actions. Works across political group boundaries without compromising values or ethics.

Positive indicators

- Actively represents group views and values through decisions and actions
- Helps develop political group cohesion and contributes to healthy communication between group and council
- Communicates political values through canvassing, electoral campaigning and by identifying new ways of engaging the public
- Committed to understanding local and national political landscape and developing own political intelligence
- Acts ethically, understands and communicates political values to others
- Works across group boundaries without compromising political values

Negative indicators

- Demonstrates inconsistent political values, lacks integrity and tends to say what others want to hear
- Has poor knowledge of group manifesto, values and objectives
- Puts personal motivations first, goes native or changes beliefs to accord with those in power
- Acts alone and fails to support group colleagues in public forums
- Fails to translate group values into ways of helping the community
- Lacks understanding of how central government policy impacts on local issues and council functioning

women, it also fails to incorporate other aspects of communication, including the need to adapt to different audiences, to listen, and to communicate effectively across different forms of media. Furthermore, the MP role has changed considerably, and is likely to change further, illustrating the need for organizations to take a visionary approach in shaping job analyses to reflect what they believe a role should look like (Sparrow, 1995).

CONCLUSIONS

Lievens et al. (2004) claim that the scientific community has treated competency modelling with scepticism, because research evidence has lagged behind practice and because it lacks the rigour of more traditional job analysis. Yet, their argument is open to challenge on the basis of their assumption that job analysis should be reliable. That is, we cannot expect individuals to have the same experience of a role, or identify the same characteristics as being important. This is where the scientific approach, which conceptualizes a role as a fixed reality that can be reliably and objectively defined, runs into problems. As we have seen, roles are shaped and changed through the influence of different visionaries and stakeholders to the extent that they have the power to do so. Thus, 'reliability' may be an appropriate concept in an organizational context where a single powerful group, such as management, defines the role and controls the experience of job incumbents through systems of performance review and reward. But in the case of public sector roles, where there are multiple legitimate stakeholders including the public themselves, there are likely to be as many different views as there are stakeholders. In such cases, a qualitative approach that recognizes and seeks to accommodate these multiple perspectives is more useful. Job analysis, and in this instance competency modelling, should not be evaluated in terms of the extent to which it reliably samples equivalent views, but rather how effective it

is at shaping multiple views into a shared understanding.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Although the call to incorporate more qualitative research within organizational psychology is increasing (Fryer, 1991; Van Maanen, 1998; Cassell, Buehring, Symon and Johnson, 2005), considerable resistance still exists to the notion that organizational psychology is anything other than a science. Pfeffer (1993), for example, claims that only when the supporting *science* is secure can professional practice become effective. However, this is not simply an argument between researchers with competing epistemologies. There are also strong commercial interests based on the claim that a scientific approach can predict and enhance work performance. To understand why the quantitative approach dominates it is therefore important to consider why organizational research is being conducted and who ultimately it is for.

Hollway (1991) argues that it is important to consider how knowledge is created in organizational psychology in order to understand why certain approaches and models have been successful. She also argues for the need to acknowledge the social and political conditions important in producing such knowledge, thereby rendering explicit the political considerations of power and influence that are rarely considered by organizational psychologists. Hollway considers the lack of debate about the status of knowledge that makes up the field of organizational psychology to be the result of an uncritical identification on the part of researchers with the behavioural and natural sciences. Whilst this may well be the case, the scientific legitimization of organizational psychology is also popular among clients and practitioners, because according to a positivist model it is possible to uncover universal principles of workplace behaviour and use these to predict, shape and control performance. A multi-billion-dollar industry has developed based on this premise, with organizational

psychologists now working in some capacity in most large organizations. This success is in part due to the availability of methods for quantifying and comparing the effectiveness of individuals and practices: factors that have enhanced the power (and resources) of human resources (HR), traditionally one of the least powerful organizational functions.

Some of the tension between qualitative and quantitative perspectives can therefore be explained by the way in which research findings are used in practice. Organizational research has commercial value and research findings represent a commodity. For example, results are often presented as 'evidence' that a particular approach works. That is, if an organization adopts this approach (which might be a stress management programme, a training intervention, selection process, or form of work design) they will be able to enhance performance, well-being, or some other factor relevant to achieving organizational objectives. However, the commercial value of the research (the extent to which an approach can be sold to different organizations) often depends on the generalizability of these research findings. This is particularly apparent in the case of psychometric measures such as personality, work attitude or cognitive ability questionnaires, which are marketed on their ability to work equally well across different occupational and organizational domains. The ability to generalize findings to multiple work contexts fits with a scientific search for universal principles of behaviour. In comparison, qualitative researchers, who emphasize the uniqueness of individuals and work contexts, represent a potential challenge to these assumptions (Bartunek and Seo, 2002). For, example, if we conceptualize organizational culture as a socially constructed phenomenon that will vary both across organizations and within organizations over time, this represents a challenge to the commercial viability of psychometric tests that claim to measure common aspects of culture across different organizations. Thus, resistance to qualitative research may be explained in part by the more attractive commercial proposition

of quantitative methods and the scientific approach. To gain more popularity in organizational psychology, qualitative researchers may therefore need to emphasize the potential relevance of their work to a commercial as well as an academic audience.

For example, in his practitioner commentary on a special issue of the *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* devoted to qualitative research Kandola (2000: 586) suggests that it is important to ask 'How have organizations benefited from this approach?' That is, where is the evidence that qualitative research has made an impact upon organizational effectiveness? Ironically, in the work context, where performance is quantified, compared against objectives, and equated to financial profit, qualitative research may need to rely on quantitative methods in order to demonstrate its 'worth' and impact. However, Kandola's question also raises the issue of whether 'worth' is conceptualized in the same way by different stakeholders (e.g. managers, shareholders, employees and customers). For example, introducing a new work design that facilitates increased levels of production in manufacturing may be perceived as effective by managers, but not by workers who find that they have less opportunity for social interaction in the workplace. Organizational psychologists rarely acknowledge the power and influence of different stakeholders when undertaking research and practice, nor the fact that there may be different and conflicting views about the effectiveness of such work. Interestingly, however, King (2000) points out that in some quarters of discursive and rhetorical psychology the assumption that qualitative research *should* have an influence on practice has itself been strongly criticized. According to Widdicombe (1996) this would almost inevitably mean some compromise or acquiescence to the status quo and its dominant power relations, in this case a managerial perspective.

Despite the tremendous contribution of organizational psychology, Hollway is right to challenge organizational psychologists for their single-minded dedication to a

scientific approach. Person–job fit is based on the premise that it is possible to measure work performance, yet work performance is almost always defined from a managerial perspective. The most popular criteria for evaluating selection systems are managers' ratings of employee performance (Arvey and Murphy, 1998). 'Good' performance contributes to achieving organizational goals and, as such, is a constructed phenomenon shaped by the views of an organizational elite. However, one of the greatest challenges to the scientific approach in personnel selection is the pace of change that now exists in the workplace (Patterson, 2001). The success of matching people to jobs assumes that both people and jobs do not change. Yet organizations are now changing at an increasing pace, and job roles and employees must continually develop in order to cope with the changing demands of the workplace. Many selection and assessment methods have been criticized for being too rigid and inflexible to accommodate such change. Ironically, however, change and evolution are central to a constructivist perspective, and innovation and the future utility of organizational psychology in this area may well depend on incorporating more qualitative approaches. The future may be bright for qualitative research in this area after all.

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Forensic Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of this chapter it might be worth starting by some attempt at clarifying terminology in this field. Although this chapter is headed 'forensic psychology', this term is only gradually (but not universally) becoming accepted in the UK. It has been used in its current sense only relatively recently; the British Psychological Society (which is the professional body for psychologists in the UK) established a Division of Criminological and Legal Psychology in 1977. This title emphasized that psychologists working in this area tended to do so in criminal justice and legal settings. The initial choice of title highlighted that when it comes to looking at the causes of crime and attempts to reduce the incidence of crime psychologists needed to be aware of the contribution of other disciplines, including sociology, criminology, political science and economics. After extensive debate it was felt within the discipline that there was a need to present a more distinctive image with a greater emphasis on psychology, and the Division changed its name to the Division of Forensic Psychology in 1999, and the area became referred

to as 'forensic psychology'. Forensic literally means 'of the courts', referring specifically to psychology being involved with legal decision making, including expert witness advice in courts, fitness to plead and evaluating eye-witness testimony. In some countries forensic psychology has been taken to mean just that. In the UK and in many countries throughout the world, however, the term is taken to be broader than this, being concerned primarily with the application of psychology to court settings and in the care and treatment of criminals. The Division exists to represent the interests of the increasing number of psychologists whose work involves them in the criminal and civil justice systems (and not just the courts).

Division membership thus includes forensic psychologists working in academic settings, prison services, mental health, health, education and social services. Most forensic psychologists in the UK are employed in prison, probation and mental health contexts, where they may be involved in such areas as testing and treating people, running group programmes and helping management. Substantial numbers, however, act as consultants to the police in the detection of criminals

and in court settings as expert witnesses. In addition, they may be involved in the training of police, probation and prison officers. Many are employed in research settings, typically in higher education institutions but also in bodies such as the Home Office Research Unit. Like other areas of applied psychology, the forensic psychologist is often needed to provide concrete advice to courts or in institutional settings, to deal with real-life problems in real-life settings, the emphasis being on pragmatic outcomes rather than theoretical developments.

There is a very similar picture to this in many other countries. Examples include Australia, where forensic psychologists are seen as applying psychological knowledge to assessment, intervention, and research in the context of the legal and criminal justice system. They are employed in such settings as corrective services, youth justice, forensic mental health, crime policy and research, and also may be in private practice in related areas, including offender programme development and evaluation, court assessment and advisory services, and crime prevention services. Another example is in the USA, where forensic psychology is seen as referring to 'the production and application of psychological knowledge and research findings to the civil and criminal justice systems' (Bartol and Bartol, 2004: xvii). It includes areas such as law enforcement, policing, institutional and community correctional psychology, psychology and law, victim services, and the delivery and evaluation of intervention and treatment programs for juvenile and adult offenders.

The word 'forensic' was deliberately chosen in the UK (ironically in the context of this chapter on qualitative methods) to emphasize that psychology (as opposed to other academic disciplines in the area) uniquely focused on the importance of utilizing natural scientific approaches when approaching the area of crime. To some extent, though, it has slightly misleading connotations of being primarily concerned with helping the police to solve who has committed a particular crime, with an emphasis on psychological evidence

and profiling. It is important to emphasize in this context that 'forensic psychology' in the UK is now taken to be considerably broader than this, and covers all the areas where forensic psychologists work.

There have always been elements of qualitative methods within forensic psychology, and there are still links with other disciplines (including the recognition that 'crime' is a socially defined concept). At times, the boundary lines between the disciplines are blurred, and it is recognized that a more eclectic approach can be useful when there are practical problems to cope with, which forensic psychologists are often more concerned with. Current debates within the more general field of qualitative research, which Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 2) see as a 'field of enquiry in its own right' have tended to be from a more sociological perspective, and these debates have yet to make any direct overt impact on forensic psychology. There is a tendency within the discipline to concentrate on the individual, rather than to look at wider perspectives. This chapter will thus not dwell to a great extent on these broader issues, but it is felt that in the longer term they will have an impact on the discipline.

It is interesting to note that although there has been a change in the title of the Division to forensic psychology, the British Psychological Society journal in this area still goes under the title of *Legal and Criminological Psychology*. This title implies that articles published are from diverse sources in terms of methodology and discipline, but in practice the majority of articles published in this journal and other journals published in the general area of forensic psychology utilize quantitative paradigms. Despite this (as will be spelt out below), articles may include qualitative elements, sometimes acknowledged and sometimes more implicit.

THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

It is interesting to note that most standard texts on forensic psychology do not devote

much space specifically to the methods used by psychologists working in this area, although many are replete with case studies which are used to help to illustrate points which are being made. To some extent it may currently be taken as axiomatic that quantitative methods are the best way forward, especially when it comes to establishing arguments which will stand the scrutiny of trained advocates in a courtroom situation, or to produce something that will provide 'evidence based practice'. There is also a tendency to perceive the area as one of recent growth which is still attempting to establish itself, seeing that the methods of natural science is the most appropriate starting point. As Wrightsman and Fulero (2005: xvii) stress in one of the standard textbooks in the area, the whole field is in a 'state of formulation and development'. They go on to emphasize that forensic psychology needs to be based on empirical studies, with reliability and replicability of findings (which does not necessarily exclude qualitative approaches).

It must be noted, however, that forensic psychology is above all concerned with the application of psychology to real world problems; inevitably this may lead to the often unacknowledged use of qualitative methods as part of the 'toolkit' of the forensic psychologist. This is not so much driven by an explicit commitment to a qualitative philosophy but more by a growing realization that quantitative methods may be particularly problematic with participants who may have difficulties with language, and that over-reliance on psychometric tests and questionnaires is inappropriate given that many people involved in the criminal justice system may have problems with literacy or may have difficulties with written language. Moreover it is recognized that there are often risks in asking people in, for example, prisons to take part in quantitative based studies when they will be constantly thinking about the need to present themselves in the best possible light in order to persuade authorities that they have reformed and they are ready for release back into the wider community.

There is also the recognition that in many areas the traditional 'looking in from outside' approach favoured by quantitative approaches may not answer important questions concerning criminal behaviour, motives and experiences, and there is often a need to involve participants directly in the research process, which thus involves the necessity of attempting to gain more of the way of an insider perspective. There is also often the need to do pioneering work in a previously unlooked at area, and qualitative methods are particularly appealing as a starting point in what essentially may be an exploratory study, ensuring that what is being investigated comes from the participant, and is not just a reflection of the researcher's preconceptions.

Thus forensic psychologists utilizing qualitative methods may not be doing so for particular theoretical reasons, but because they feel that such methods offer the best way of tackling particular pragmatic problems and at the same time overcome many of the problems alluded to above. Qualitative methods are not seen as a critique of other methods, but more as a complement, especially when it is a new topic area which is being investigated. Nonetheless, aspects of qualitative methods are beginning to filter through, including notions of reflexivity, acknowledging the position and influence of the researcher and appreciating that quantitative methods may involve interpretation.

Given that qualitative methods are thus inevitably being used for pragmatic reasons rather than because of a theoretical commitment to such methods then this chapter is organized around providing various examples of how qualitative methods have been used within forensic psychology (see Table 28.1 for an overview of qualitative methods used in forensic psychology). The various examples covered are commented on, and a way forward is developed later on in the chapter.

There is an enormous range of potential material which could be covered here, so inevitably what is presented in this chapter is a fairly narrow selection of exemplar studies which have utilized qualitative methods. The choice has partly been determined by using

Table 28.1 Overview of qualitative methods used in forensic psychology with illustrative examples

<i>Methods used</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Brief explanation</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Observation	Fieldwork observations of participants	Systematic observation of behaviour in real-life contexts	Buckle and Farrington (1994) observations of real-life shoplifting
Interviews	Semi-structured interview material	Detailed analysis of verbal comments, using a variety of methods	Bennett and Wright (1984) interviewing burglars; Kellett and Gross (2006) on car theft
Focus groups	Semi-structured group discussions focused on a specific area	Detailed analysis of verbal comments, e.g. using discourse analysis	Willott and Griffin (1999) on money-related crimes
Case studies	Detailed examination of individual occurrences	Detailed analysis of real-life events	Slapper and Tombs (1999) on corporate crime
Role play	Results of a replication of a real-life situation	Participants role play a real-life setting, and the results are observed	Haney et al. (1973) on prison role play
Diary	Participant's writings in an ongoing diary	Detailed notes are kept ongoing, and can be used to examine changes over time	Cooper (2005) examined changes in the sexual fantasies of an offender during therapy
Personal construct approaches	Kelly's repertory grids	Analysis of grids focused on a particular aspect of how an individual makes sense of their environment	Winter (2003) on cognitive distortions of violent offenders
Ethnography	Real-life observations (participant and otherwise), interviews	Attempt to understand participant's behaviour	Bloor (1997) on risk taking behaviour of male prostitutes
Discourse analysis	Interviews, transcripts, text	Detailed analysis of discourse	O'Kelly et al. (2003) on judges' interventions in court trials
Action research	Variety, including interviews, observations	Detailed analysis followed by change and further analysis of the results of such changes	Katz (2002) looking at addressing the needs of young parents in prison

studies which provide interesting findings, thus illustrating the pragmatic use of qualitative methods within forensic psychology, as has been argued above. It is hoped that this concentration on certain studies will help to illustrate some of the range of the work which has been done within forensic psychology using this methodological approach, and to bring out the general emphasis on the applications of psychology. An effort has been made to use studies from many different countries to provide a wide picture.

GENERAL USE OF QUALITATIVE METHODS

From the outset it is important to emphasize that the contribution of qualitative methods

is far more widespread within forensic psychology than the casual perusal of recent journals would indicate. Often such work is unacknowledged, but is nevertheless an important part of the research process. An example of this is that quite a number of journal articles published involve working directly with criminal populations, and as has been remarked upon above such participants may have literacy and other such problems. This means that at times test and questionnaire administration can only be carried out via verbal administration or some form of interviewing, including semi-structured interviewing. Such results may apparently be interpreted within a more quantitative framework, but inevitably the interviewing process will have produced material which influences the subsequent analysis of the findings.

Illumination often comes from unexpected sources. This means that some use of qualitative methods may be much more widespread than is usually acknowledged.

Qualitative research methods are being increasingly used, often in tandem with quantitative approaches or as a precursor (e.g. as a pilot study) to the development of quantitative measures. Questionnaires and psychometric measures are extensively used in published forensic psychological research and practice, and pilot work should be an essential part of this process, starting off with checking through the understandability of questions and their responses (perhaps in tandem with statistical examination of internal consistency and other psychometric variables). As has already been stressed there are particular problems with offender literacy and traditional psychometric measures often have to be modified to cope with this difficulty. It may be that these processes are taken for granted, but published journal articles in the area tend to gloss over the procedures utilized in developing measures (although postgraduate dissertations will normally spell out in detail the processes followed in carrying out the studies being reported on). Most studies are likely to have some qualitative contribution, even if it is unacknowledged.

As well as often unacknowledged contributions to studies, qualitative material may be used in an overt fashion to illuminate findings. An example of this is in Wright and Holliday (2005), who carried out a questionnaire-based study of the perceptions held by police officers in the UK of older eye-witnesses. Although the major data gathered were subjected to content analysis, the article included a lot of qualitative material to illustrate the findings. Thus when discussing cognitive interviews (which is a specialized interview technique developed in forensic psychology that tries to improve witness recall by emphasizing different retrieval pathways and by context restatement) the findings are illustrated with the comment from one officer that with older witnesses 'it is a very good idea to explain (the interview) to the witness first, and subject to circumstances,

inject some humour, for example when looking at the scenario from an alternative view' (Wright and Holliday, 2005: 218). This adds to the findings of the research, it opens up potential avenues for future research, and it might have been usefully discourse analysed.

Studies may well throw up serendipitous findings, which as Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall (1994) stress can be an excellent route to further psychological research, and which have led to a large number of very interesting findings within the discipline. The inclusion of qualitative points raised by participants in carrying out a quantitatively based study is probably the mark of a good researcher. Such comments may suggest avenues for further research or provide a partial explanation for the results obtained. An example of the latter is an Australian study reported by Ahmed and Braithwaite (2005), who were looking at tax compliance by ex-university students. In Australia there are high university tuition fees and students are provided with loans which are theoretically repaid via the tax system when a certain income threshold is reached; there is considerable evidence, however, that those who should be making the extra payments are more likely to attempt to evade paying their taxes. This paper includes a complete section entitled 'qualitative observations and data reflections', which includes lengthy pertinent quotations from participants' personal narratives, which help to illuminate their findings. An example here is the claim that 'the most unexpected outcome of the current study was that dissatisfaction with the university course studied played a key role in directly triggering tax evasion' and they continue that 'personal narratives provide insight into how dissatisfaction with university courses increased shame displacement and reduced shame acknowledgement' (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2005: 303) the implication being that 'blame for being deceived and tricked into wasting one's time and money on a university course is directed to tax evasion' (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2005: 304). This may have implications for developments of this nature in other countries.

Specific case studies are presented below, with an emphasis on some of the variety of qualitative methods which have been used within forensic psychology.

Observation and participant observation

Qualitative methods in one form or another have been extensively used in this area, and many studies take as their starting point pertinent observations by researcher working in the field. As has been stressed above historically forensic psychology has its roots in criminology, which lies at the intersection of different academic disciplines with a common focus on looking at the causes and treatment of crime. Amongst these disciplines is sociology, and within the field of forensic psychology there has always been a blurring of the line between where psychology starts and sociology ends. An example of this is work such as Goffman's (1968) famous study of asylums, which is in the ethnomethodological tradition. It is interesting to note that Reber (1985: 252) actually defines this approach as being 'generally used to refer to a body of sociological and psychological research', thus stressing this overlap. There are also extensive studies carried out looking at the possible anti-socializing aspects of being in a closed institution, including institutionalization, developing criminal skills, and becoming socialized into an 'inmate code' (e.g. Morgan, 2002).

Many studies have utilized observational or participant observational approaches, based on studies of offenders in many real-life contexts, such as prison, prostitution, car radio theft, gang behaviour, shoplifting, police behaviour (e.g. discretion and targeting on the streets), courtroom behaviour and jury decision making, etc.

Obvious ethical problems may be involved in such work (especially in terms of participant observation). Nevertheless, this approach does offer the opportunity to do studies that are not really amenable to research from other methodological approaches, and has produced interesting

research findings, which at times have direct applied relevance. There are many examples that could be used here, and the following is but a small selection of such studies.

There have been a number of studies carried out observing shoplifting (stealing goods from a shop, concealing them and leaving without paying for them). An example of this is Buckle and Farrington (1994), who systematically observed a random sample of customers of department stores in two locations in the UK and carried out detailed analysis of the behaviour of those observed shoplifting. In their report of their study they also provided a number of detailed illustrative case examples of shoplifting. The study, which obviously raises some concerns about ethical issues, provided some interesting findings, including the observations that males were more likely than females to shoplift, that most shoplifters in department stores steal relatively small and low-cost items, and tend to purchase goods as well as stealing them. Contrary to previous work which found a higher likelihood of older (aged over 55) people shoplifting, this study found more shoplifting was carried out by younger (aged 25 or less) people. Although they do not speculate upon reasons for the differences they could be related to population differences, time differences, and department store differences. The findings, which indicate that shoplifting is far more frequent than official figures would suggest, add to knowledge obtained through other methods such as victim surveys of retail organizations, self-report surveys, interviews with shoplifters and police, and store detectives' records of apprehended shoplifters. Moreover they may have implications for the further development of anti-shoplifting measures.

Within law courts there have been a number of studies looking at juries, which normally comprise untrained representatives from local communities who are used in many legislatures to decide on the guilt of the defendant (and in some also the sentence). Early work was carried out in the USA which involved actual observations of jury private decision-making processes, and this was

stopped as it was felt it interfered with 'due process' and also revealed the sometimes arbitrary nature of decisions. More recent work has been carried out through courtroom observations. An example of the latter are the series of studies carried out by Baldwin and McConville (1979), who systematically observed jury trials in Birmingham, England, looking at the patterns of decision making, the influence of how cases were presented and how trials were run. In addition, they noted how jury composition matched the general population, whether ethnic minority groups were adequately represented, etc.

Interviews

The greatest use of qualitative methods within forensic psychology has probably been through the use of interviews (and to a lesser extent focus groups). This method has been used with all participants in the forensic world, including law enforcement personnel, court personnel, juries, victims, legislators, and criminals, with the general purpose to gain insights into their worlds. There have in particular been a large number of studies with criminals, in such areas as burglary, violent property crime, female crime, property crime, shoplifting, armed robbery, sex offenders and car theft, many of which have had applied outcomes. As Nee (2004) stresses, it is important to include the perspective of the offender in forensic psychology, and a number of examples are now presented to illustrate some of the diverse findings from such studies. It is interesting to note that a variety of methods have been used to examine the findings from research.

Books have been written such as Pogrebin's (2004) edited readings entitled *About Criminals: A View of the Offender's World*, which looks at a whole variety of different sorts of criminal behaviour in the USA. In part this book focuses on criminals discussing their offences and themselves from their own perspective, so that they can both describe their offending behaviour and outline the reasons for their criminal behaviour, including their

thoughts about their victims. Crimes covered include property, violence, sex, white collar crimes, drugs and graffiti.

A particular example of such work is domestic burglary, which involves the going into (often forcibly) private domestic property in order to steal some of the householder's possessions. The best known work in this area is probably that of Bennett and Wright (1984) in the UK, who interviewed imprisoned burglars and found that burglars were not necessarily just opportunistic but tended to specifically choose targets related to a number of environmental factors, including security features, how accessible the property was, whether it was overlooked and who was occupying it. Nee and Taylor (1988) subsequently replicated this work in the Republic of Ireland, with very similar results except (given the more rural nature of Ireland) the finding that burglars were prepared to travel to find an appropriate target and they were less concerned that the property was unoccupied at the time.

Another example of the examination of the offender's perspective is the work of Willott and Griffin (1999). They carried out a number of semi-structured group discussions involving male offenders in probation settings and prison in the UK who had been sentenced for money-related crimes. Their study focussed on the offenders' criminal activity and the implications of this for their gender identity. A combination of grounded theory and discourse analysis was used to analyse the transcripts, and they interpreted the results within a discourse of male breadwinning to provide for their families and at times using a 'Robin Hood' narrative (i.e. robbing the rich to provide for the poor).

A further example are the Swedish studies by Perrin-Wallqvist and Norlander (2003) who investigated via interviews the neglected area of arson, in this case with a particular emphasis on why young people have played with fire. For investigating this particular problem interviews were particularly appropriate as there has been little previous work, despite the previous finding that many children play with fire, and earlier

studies had found that arsonists often have difficulties in understanding their behaviour and accounting for their motives. Their samples were from the general population, and they found that more males than females reported playing with fire during their childhood (some resulting in uncontrollable fires that destroyed the property of others). Those that did not play with fire said this resulted from parental exhortation, supervision and prohibition, and also fear and respect for fire. For males the motives for playing with fire included curiosity, finding it exciting and fascinating to watch things burning and distraction, it being something to do, whilst for females it was excitement seeking and amusement. For the latter group they also found examples of what they called 'bizarre firesetting', which included using firesetting as a means of expression, as a source of power and as an escape from reality. For most it was a phase they felt they had been through, which for the males they had grown out of by the time of the interview (at the age of 18), but for the females it was something they still did, especially when they were bored. The reasons for such differences are unclear, but they do show the value of findings gained from such a methodological approach, and point to the need to do further research in this area.

Yet another example is the study by Kellett and Gross (2006) who interviewed using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis convicted joyriders in the UK (young people who had stolen cars and driven them for the fun of driving them), and came to the conclusion that such behaviour could be conceptualized as being highly addictive, and similar to other addictions such as alcohol or drug addiction. As is common with many of the studies presented in this section of this chapter, such findings have policy implications in terms of how to prevent future occurrences of such behaviour.

As well as interviewing offenders, there have been many studies looking at crime from the standpoint of others involved in the process. One example of such work is the study of jury decision making; although

direct questioning of juries about specific decisions made in specific cases is not allowed in England, there has been research examining the views and attitudes of jurors who have recently completed jury service. For example, Matthews, Hancock and Briggs (2004) in a partly qualitative interview study found that ex-jurors in England were generally impressed with their experience in the court room, ending with a more positive and confident view of the jury system after their service, and would be happy to do jury service again. They did however feel that less legal terminology could be used and that the evidence could sometimes be presented in a clearer fashion.

Another example looking at crime from a different angle are the extensive studies carried out looking at the effects of victimization, which has led to the general point that many citizens are seriously concerned about the possibility of becoming a victim of a crime, and have an extensive 'fear of crime' which can seriously affect what they decide to do (e.g. Zedner, 2002). This particularly affects older people, and women more than men, and in several cases makes them virtually housebound (particularly at night time). Ironically, statistics demonstrate that those who are most likely to be victims of crimes on the streets tend to be young males who are out on a Friday or Saturday night, and such victims are least affected by fear of crime.

Case studies

Case studies, life history, narrative, documentary and oral history based works have been also used extensively in forensic psychology. Again, such studies allow research to take place in areas that are otherwise inaccessible to study; once again, the boundaries between forensic psychology and other disciplines are particularly blurred here. A typical such study is Hobbs' (1995) work into professional criminals, which is based on interviews carried out over a three year period with people in the UK involved in violence, protection rackets, drug dealing and car crime.

Another would be the extensive studies carried out looking at 'corporate crime' (e.g. Slapper and Tombs, 1999), which examine actual crimes committed by corporations (such as the Thalidomide tragedy, the loss of the space shuttle *Challenger*, or the Bhopal disaster).

There are also individual case studies on criminals who have committed particularly sensational crimes with the nominal aim to suggest what the possible causes of such crimes might be. Sometimes these have been done biographically, and sometimes autobiographically; an example of the latter is Reg Kray (2000), an imprisoned English murderer, who has written an account of his life. Such accounts provide rich material for psychology, often emphasizing possible early childhood influence, life histories and events, environmental effects, experiences, significant others, etc. It is recognized that there may be dangers in generalizing from isolated and rare examples, but this may be the only way in which certain avenues can be examined.

Role-play

Another group of studies which potentially could be included here are the simulation or role-playing studies (although it is recognized that again boundaries are fuzzy, and some of the studies in this area do not really meet the usual philosophy within qualitative methods of treating the research participant as an equal in the process). Here the participants know that what they are doing is an attempt to replicate the essence of some 'real-life' setting, and such studies have the potential to explore areas which are not amenable to other methodological techniques. The most famous forensic example is the American study carried out by Zimbardo and his colleagues (e.g. Haney, Banks and Zimbardo, 1973), where students role-played 'prisoners' and 'guards' over several days within a mock prison setting on an university campus. This study was prematurely stopped when it became obvious that many of the 'prisoners' were in serious distress and the 'guards' were behaving

brutally, supporting an argument for situational determinants that prisons set up their own demand characteristics. This study raises a number of ethical issues, and it is interesting to note that its implications for the treatment of prisoners and the running of prisons have still not been taken completely on board by those responsible for training prison guards.

There have also been extensive role-play studies of juries, particularly after the direct interviewing of jurists after and during trials has been made illegal in a number of countries. These can vary from simple simulations to the complete re-enactment of past trials, and have led to a number of interesting findings looking at person perception and stereotyping biases in such situations, as well as contributing to our knowledge of the dynamics of decision making in such settings. Examples of studies here include the findings that less guilty verdicts were associated with more respectful prosecution lawyers and that more guilty verdicts were associated with judges who spoke less warmly and patiently with defendants. Hans and Vidmar (1986) review a number of these studies from the USA, but it must be remarked that although the results do to some extent fit findings utilizing other methodologies, they can be criticized for being solely intellectual exercises, not being constrained by the seriousness of the actual trial situation, with different social and role expectations and interpersonal dynamics, with no real consequences of the decision reached, and there are not the moral implications of the decisions being made impacting on the participants.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TO FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

This section to some extent overlaps with the next; with its emphasis on application forensic psychology has benefited from utilizing qualitative methods (even if the contribution is not always overtly acknowledged). Some very interesting findings have come to light which have had impacts on police

procedures, avoiding becoming the victim of a crime, offender treatment programmes, etc. Qualitative research has had a major impact in many areas; e.g. Goffman's work drawing attention to the adverse effects of institutionalization, and many studies emphasizing the adverse effects of being in prison, including the development of criminal knowledge (what has been called 'criminal contamination') and the possible anti-socializing effects of the implicit existence of an 'inmate code' with its own set of behavioural rules. Realization of these problems has led to some changes, including some reductions in the use of institutions, especially for people with mental health and learning disabilities. There is now a greater emphasis on aftercare following prison release, and often there are attempts to provide a pattern towards release via transfer to less custodial institutions.

Again, specific examples are provided here to illustrate how qualitative methods have contributed to forensic psychology, with pragmatic outcomes arising from such research.

Observation and participant observation

To pick up from the previous example of burglary, one area where observational studies have led to changes in police practice is the research into the phenomenon of 'repeat victimization'. This refers to the finding that in certain circumstances the same target is likely to be more vulnerable in the future. For instance, there is a tendency for houses successfully burgled once to be more likely to become a repeat victim, as offenders were successful there, they were not caught, they found items of value, it is likely that those items will be replaced, they are familiar with the layout of the house, they know whether there is a dog or not, and what the burglar alarm arrangements are and so on. The work on repeat burglary by Pease (2002) in Huddersfield, England, for instance, led to successful attempts to reduce such behaviour by more targeted

police activity (thus concentrating on watching recently burgled houses) and by making people more aware as to what makes a property more vulnerable to burglary, thus increasing awareness of the likelihood of becoming a repeat victim and the taking of appropriate steps to avoid such occurrence. The work has led to 'target hardening', with greater public awareness of how to make it harder for burglars to enter their property.

Observational work on shoplifting has helped in the redesign of shop layouts, the development of alternative surveillance systems and for store detectives to be better trained at targeting and detecting shoplifters. Similarly observational work on police handling and questioning of suspects and victims have led to extensive changes in police procedures (e.g. in England in terms of appropriate processes with coping with victims of alleged rape).

Interviews

Similar arguments could be put forward in terms of what has been learnt from interview studies. A good example of this is the large scale research project by Indermaur (1995) which was carried out in Western Australia. Indermaur was particularly interested in why offenders involved in a property crime (e.g. in a classic street robbery where there is a confrontation in which the offender demands money from the victim) may use violence. He interviewed 88 imprisoned offenders about 123 instances of where violence had taken place during the commission of either a robbery or a property crime which they had been personally involved with. In particular, he concentrated on the actual confrontation (the 'interactional dynamics') between the offender and the victim. Generally this is planned by the offender, and often violence is avoided through threatening the victim with implied violence, hopefully achieving the aim of carrying out a successful robbery without either of the participants being injured. Some robbers, however, might enjoy the sense of power and dominance from the event, and some victims might resist not

only to protect their property but because they were worried that violence was likely to occur. If the robbery is unplanned then violence may be more likely as the offender may feel to be less in control. Australian research indicates that injuries are less likely to occur when the robber has a gun, presumably because the show of force is sufficiently convincing for the victim to realize that any resistance is likely to be met with serious harm or death.

Indermaur found that violence was used in the commission of a robbery for a variety of reasons, including a way of helping the offender instrumentally to get the desired property, to control the situation better when another person comes onto the scene before the robbery is successfully completed, and to help them to better make an escape. It was frequently claimed by offenders that they were under the influence of drugs and alcohol at the time, but most said that they were nonetheless in control of their aggressive behaviour. As has been found in other studies, many did not think of their impact on the victim, or dehumanized them, or could not recall clearly what it was they were thinking at the time. Several stated that they did not think during the commission of the offence, given how short the time taken was. Often the importance of violence and its possible effects on the victim was minimized.

Some interview studies of burglars have found interesting rationalizations to justify their behaviour, including claims that they perceive themselves as doing victims a favour (as they are likely to make a subsequent profit from an insurance claim), and it gives them an interesting topic to talk about with their friends.

What also came out from Indermaur's study were a number of useful suggestions as to how offenders thought victims could act to prevent violence taking place during the commission of a property crime. The most common suggestion was that the victim should comply immediately and without resistance to the demands of the offender in a non-confrontational manner and should not endeavour to hinder or to pursue them.

His study went on to use a semi-structured questionnaire of 10 victims of violent property crime, and he found that almost all felt shocked, surprised, fearful and horrified by the confrontation. They tended to think initially about survival, but if the event went on over time they began to think of escape. Some victims resisted the offender and attempted to protect their property, which usually resulted in violence. Several indicated that they felt that offenders seemed to be enjoying the violence (even laughing at times about it); this finding was contrary to the offenders themselves, of which only one admitted enjoying violence and none mentioned laughing during the commission of their offence. Some saw resistance as being appropriate to support their self-esteem, and felt that resisting might help to minimize injury. Not resisting of course does not guarantee that violence will not occur. Nonetheless the overall picture here is that the best strategy for victims of robberies is to comply, and not to resist.

Interview accounts with young offenders involved with car theft indicate that resistance by the car owner is often met with violence rather than fleeing the scene because such offences are often committed in groups, and individuals in such groups are affected by the presence of others, and often wish to impress fellow members of the group as to their bravery and skills. Again, the implication from such work is that it is usually safer not to resist such situations.

Developments in interviewing techniques, including 'cognitive interviewing' might be an indication as to how the increasing emphasis on qualitative methods has led to changes in interviewing methodology, especially in cases involving the investigation of crimes. As has been mentioned above cognitive interviewing has been extensively used with witnesses to help them to remember more details about what they have seen by encouraging the use of alternative retrieval paths to memory and by detailed context reinstatement, as well as asking the witness to recall the event from the viewpoint of another participant or in a different temporal

order (e.g. Memon, Wark, Holley, Bull and Koehnken, 1997).

Case studies

Case studies also may have implications; they have been carried out, for example, to look in detail at the results of a particular intervention programme. Cooper (2005) presents a detailed description of the results of using behaviour therapy on a sex offender in the UK. This involved the individual keeping a sexual fantasy diary during his treatment, and looking in detail at changes in life goals and in changes in sexual fantasy. The case study indicated that the treatment may be successful in modifying offence-related sexual fantasy. On the other hand, some of the work examining cognitive behavioural programmes with sex offenders has found that participation in such programmes rather than reducing cognitive distortions can provide offenders with further cognitive distortions which they then use to further justify their behaviour.

Sometimes case studies are used in tandem with other methods; an example here is the study by Kiely and Hodgson (1990) which looked at stress in prison officers in the UK, and carried out an evaluation of exercise as a way of reducing this stress. In their study they conducted interviews with staff at a prison where an exercise programme had been in operation, they surveyed governors concerning occupational stress and they carried out in depth interviews with selected staff who had been sick with stress attributed illnesses. These combinations of methods helped to provide a more detailed picture about stress in the institutional environment, and ways in which they might be reduced.

THEORY AND APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

As has been stressed above there is some degree of overlap between this section and the previous one; the above section has tried

to bring out the applications of qualitative research whilst discussing selected findings. Some of the problems of research in the area will be outlined in the final section of this chapter. The emphasis on the applications of forensic psychology is what comes through as being the aim of this branch of psychology, and thus there has been less involvement with theoretical development. There is also the general concentration on the individual, rather than examining wider perspectives. Despite this, there are examples where useful illumination and development has taken place, and a few of these will be included below; these may be more in terms of general development in theory, rather than the advancing of theory in qualitative methods *per se*. As before what is presented here is inevitably selective; feminist research approaches have not been covered here, for instance, although there are some interesting findings arising from work on domestic violence. Such research is often of a mixed design, with qualitative points used to illustrate points being developed.

Cognitive distortions

One of the outcomes from interview based studies briefly covered above has been to look at the accounts which offenders give as to the possible reasons for their criminal behaviour. The various studies that have been done in this area on violence, for instance, have contributed to the development of theory and have also helped to suggest ways in which techniques can be developed to help to minimize future such occurrences. Novaco and Welsh (1989) for instance have looked at the cognitive distortions of violent males in the USA, and found that such people tend to see the world as being generally an aggressive place, and to perceive others around them to have hostile intentions. They are likely to think that victims will often react violently, and they will interpret victims' behaviour as being challenging and a potential threat. A consequence of this is that they often feel that the other is likely to hurt them if they do not strike first, and thus they will attack

the other to prevent being attacked themselves. Indermaur's (1995) Australian study, for instance, found that a number of his violent offenders saw that they were 'teaching the victim a lesson'. Novaco and Welsh also found that such offenders tend to have difficulties in seeing situations from the viewpoints of others, see a violent response as being the only possible behaviour and tend to over believe in the importance of their first impressions of the other and the situation. As well as contributing to the development of attribution theory, such findings have had a considerable impact on the development of cognitive behavioural programmes, where offenders are encouraged to discuss their offences in detail, and to look at them from the viewpoint of others and to develop alternative strategies for dealing with potentially confrontational situations. Such programmes are extensively used in prisons in the UK, one example being CALM, an acronym which refers to a programme that concentrates on controlling anger and learning to manage it.

Personal construct theory

In the context of this discussion concerning violence it is interesting to note that an approach which some see as being a qualitative method is personal construct theory. Winter (2003) in a British book examining the use of personal construct perspectives in forensic psychology provides an oversight of such applications in the area of violence and homicide. He suggests that violent offenders could construe too tightly, tending to be cognitively simple and unable to communicate well with others, deficient in the ability to anticipate both the construing and the behaviour of others, and lacking in the ability to integrate conflicting information about others. There are obvious parallels (but from a different theoretical perspective) here with the work cited above, and Winter goes on to draw interesting links between cognitive behavioural approaches and personal construct theory. These have a common emphasis on recognizing and attempting to tackle cognitive distortions, and both attempt

some form of cognitive restructuring in an endeavour to make violence less likely to occur as a solution to the offender's problems in the future. This is an interesting example where advances from qualitative methods may lead to the greater integration between approaches, theories and methods.

A similar approach can be found in Houston (1998: 3), who in writing a book on the impact of personal constructs work with offenders in the UK starts by saying 'historically researchers have long been interested in the ways in which offenders make sense of their own behaviour'. She reviews the area from within a cognitive framework, suggesting that criminals may justify or neutralize their behaviour by denying their responsibility, denying the amount of harm done, saying the victim deserves it, condemning the condemners and appealing to other factors such as the need for peer approval. In addition, they may tend to lack understanding of social behaviour and may be unable to empathize with others, thus having difficulty in anticipating or predicting the behaviour of others. Such cognitive deficits may be addressed through programmes such as cognitive behaviour therapy, which involves identifying and restructuring cognitions and providing training in appropriate coping skills. She acknowledges that personal construct approaches have influenced the development of cognitive theory, but still sees the two as having different emphases, in particular the former being more individual in its focus. Moreover, she remarks that 'the subsequent application of the approach to understanding and working with offenders has been surprisingly limited' (Houston, 1998: 20–1).

Ethnography

Another example which could be used is from the field of ethnography, where the results have been subsequently used to attempt to resolve problems which the research unearthed and to draw attention to the role of 'power'. Bloor (1997) carried out a study looking at the risk taking behaviour of male prostitutes in Glasgow, Scotland, especially

in the light of the dangers of the spread of HIV. This study was carried out mainly through observations and interviews, and led to concrete advice as to how unsafe commercial sex and violence could be reduced. In particular, he recommended the encouragement of overt commercial negotiation with clients before sexual activity commenced by outreach workers who distributed condoms at regular prostitution sites. This helped to alter the balance of power between the participants, and to set limits as to what was acceptable behaviour, and also has implications for the study of power in such settings.

PROBLEMS WITH THE APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

The last two sections have given some indication of the range of the contribution that qualitative methods have made to both theory and practice within forensic psychology, but it must be admitted that there are also difficulties involved with working in this area.

For example interviewing has many advantages, but the approach is also fraught with potential methodological problems, some of which may be particularly acute if it is offenders who are being interviewed. These include the possibility that offenders may not be very verbally skilled, they may not have thought about their criminal activity until questions are posed, they may have rehearsed their stories in court and in other settings so that the original is lost, they may have been on courses which have provided them with alternative viewpoints they did not initially have, they may not be telling the truth, they may well want to present themselves in a good light, they may have poor memories, they may have committed so many crimes that recall is difficult, they may have difficulties with recall over prolonged periods of crime, and so on. A pertinent example here is the Australian study by Indermaur (1995) on violent property offenders, who found on checking the actual case histories of his offenders that some had minimized how

much violence they had used, and tended to discuss their less serious offences, whilst others had maximized the violence, giving the impression that their violence was a lot more serious and extensive than the court records indicated. This of course does beg the question as to whether the court records were accurate, and brings home the possibility that the same event may well be perceived in a rather different way by all the participants concerned.

There is also the tendency which has been hinted at above for psychologists to assume that people do make sense of their social world, they do carry around with themselves a set of implicit rules as to how to behave (which they may not necessarily be consciously aware of) and that we do behave purposefully. As Indermaur (1995) noted, many offenders often deliberately did not think about the impact of their behaviour on their victims as a way of coping with their own aggressive behaviour, and Langer (1978) makes the interesting suggestion that a lot of the time we do not behave thoughtfully, but rather act in a 'mindless' fashion, not really thinking about what it is that we are doing. This may be particularly likely when it comes to committing crimes, when criminals are often under the influence of drink or drugs at the time of the event, and are thus unlikely to clearly remember what happened and why they behaved as they did.

The whole qualitative emphasis on meanings and understandings with people from a variety of different backgrounds might need to be further thought through, particularly in contexts such as prisons; many criminals, for instance, deliberately do not think about the impact of crime on their victims. There are also problems with using focus groups, where offenders might be more concerned to impress their colleagues than to contribute to the debate, or might be inhibited because of the presence of others and the need to speak in public.

This does not mean that the method should be abandoned, but rather (as is true of all psychological methods) one should be aware of its relative advantages and disadvantages.

The material gained can be very useful, and has a large contribution to make to forensic psychology, especially in terms of richness of material, and new avenues to explore. Moreover, a lot of the material so gained cannot be obtained by using other methods.

In addition there are problems of generalizability of findings (which is a problem across all psychological methods). There is often a tendency to adopt a 'one size fits all' philosophy, thus over-generalizing the results of particular studies; this suggests that there may be a need to be more cautious when looking at what the implications of a particular research study might be. Variations related to culture, ethnicity, gender, etc., are often not fully recognized in the drawing up of intervention programmes. Coupled with this, there is a growing realization that the meaning that people give their experiences differs enormously from person to person, and that there may be a need to understand more about this before attempting to intervene in a given case. Cognitive behavioural intervention may actually make some offenders more likely to subsequently commit crimes, rather than less likely.

Another problem which is increasingly being recognized is that incarcerated offenders may not be a random sample of offenders; those who get caught and who get processed by the criminal justice system and who end up in prison may not be a random sample of offenders. To some extent this is an intractable problem, but one that is not unique to qualitative approaches. It is possible to use snowballing and other techniques to gain access to a wider selection of participants for some studies, but again such methods have fresh drawbacks of their own.

POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS IN THE APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS TO EMERGING RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

There are a growing number of journals in the area, and a recognition that qualitative

methods can provide insights into the world of criminals. This is evident in the growing number of published papers which utilize qualitative methods. Nonetheless, there are a number of qualitative methodologies which have yet to make a significant impact on forensic psychology; some of these will now be covered.

Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis has yet to make a substantial impact in the area of forensic psychology; interview based studies tend to generally utilize some form of thematic analysis. There have been a number of studies recently which have looked in detail at court transcripts, but such studies have tended to use content analysis (e.g. British studies such as O'Kelly, Kebbell, Hatton and Johnson (2003) who looked at the types of interventions made by judges or Kebbell, Hatton and Johnson (2004) who looked at the questioning of witnesses with intellectual disabilities in court). Subjecting such transcripts to discourse analysis would be an interesting development, and it is envisaged that there will be a growing use of such methods.

A recent study utilizing discourse approaches is that by Osvaldsson (2004), who interviewed ten female residents in Swedish youth detention homes that specialized in assessments and/or treatment, using discursive psychology and ethnomethodological approaches, concentrating on interactions. The study found how various notions of 'normality' are locally constructed and exploited to account for deviant behaviour, typically by relocating the notion of deviance from the subject herself to the social circumstances.

Action research

Another area from within qualitative methods that has a great deal of potential is action research. This particular approach has not been extensively used to date within forensic psychology, and when it has been used it has been on relatively small-scale community-based projects. An example of this is the work

of Marlow and Pitts (1999), who used action research to look at the experiences of public service professionals in a high-crime neighbourhood in London, who were experiencing a transition from a highly centralized service delivery model to a model in which they contributed to more local multiagency strategies to reduce violent interracial youth crime.

There are fewer examples within prison contexts; an example here could be Katz's (2002) mainly interview-based UK project carried out under the Prison Reform Trust which looked at the needs of young fathers and mothers in prison and how these needs might be addressed. As part of this project there was action based research work carried out in seven establishments which ascertained the views of young parents in custody with the aim of developing a useful and accessible advice and information service and an information guide for all young parents entering prison. This method has a lot of potential, but has yet to be extensively used.

Reversal theory

Another interesting example of possible new directions is the work of Kerr (2005) using Apter's (2001) reversal theory. Kerr has done a lot of work on gratuitous violence associated with association football in England, and in particular has recently looked at the theoretical problems posed by hooliganism carried out by older 'respectable' people in their 30s and 40s, who are often employed in good occupations. He suggests utilizing reversal theory might be of potential value here. He defines the theory as a structured phenomenological approach which sees human behaviour to be inherently inconsistent, and that we seek arousal which contrasts with our normal states, be it through gambling, dangerous sports, risky sex, drug taking or (in these cases) football related violence. Whilst not entirely convincing (being a very post-hoc explanation) it does again suggest an interesting avenue for further exploration, and may offer insights into violent behaviour in a number of situations.

Further applied work

Forensic psychologists still continue to rely extensively on psychometric testing; as has already been remarked, there are enormous problems of literacy which beset people who are for instance imprisoned. Thus the conventional reliance on psychometric testing is proving to be increasingly difficult, and there is a need to rely more on interviewing in particular to look at current concerns, such as the effectiveness of intervention programmes, suicide and self-harm in prisons, bullying, failure to complete programmes within prison, and so on. An interesting area here which is worthy of further exploration is investigating why so few offenders who opt to take part in cognitive behavioural programmes in the community actually subsequently attend such programmes; could this be due to them seeing agreeing to take part in such programmes as a way of avoiding being sent to prison, or could it be that pragmatic considerations such as the location and timing of provision makes it impossible to get to, due to child care, work constraints, transport problems, and other commitments are paramount? Could it be due to them finding the course too challenging, and involving mixing with others that they did not get along with?

Interviewing

Further investigation of the meanings and understandings that people have throughout this area is probably where qualitative methods can make the greatest impact. As Nee (2004) emphasizes, forensic psychologists spend a lot of their time interviewing offenders, but researchers often tend to rely on examining large amounts of quantitative data, 'without much reference to the "raw material" of our subject' (Nee, 2004: 3). She goes on to say 'surely a grounded approach to research, using the offender as expert, is a method we ignore at our peril' (Nee, 2004: 4); more attention needs to be devoted not just to the offender's perspective, but also

more widely with all who are involved in the forensic area.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

It is recognized that qualitative methods do have drawbacks in forensic psychology; for instance, direct observation of criminal activity may be illegal, possibly unethical and fraught with other problems (such as the potential danger to the researcher). Some interesting attempts to remedy this have been made, including the use of role play studies, which have been mentioned above. Some researchers have used simulation studies, an example of this being the creation of 'virtual realities' of residential environments, and asking burglars to comment on the relative attractiveness of different properties shown in the presentation, thereby getting some of the information which might otherwise be very difficult to access (e.g. the UK study by Nee and Taylor, 2000).

Forensic psychology is always a changing area, posing new challenges and questions as a result. For instance, there is currently a growing emphasis on victims within the criminal justice system, and a recent growth of using restorative justice based approaches; qualitative research will help to judge the impact of such initiatives on offenders, their victims and the community. Other initiatives such as the introduction of extensive electronic monitoring (e.g. tagging and curfews) need to be researched in terms of the meanings and understandings people have of such interventions. The wearing of a tag may for example become seen as a status symbol by certain offenders. Another contemporary example is the use in the UK of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) where perceived troublemakers are banned from certain locations, for instance; to date, little work has been done on the effect of such orders on the individuals concerned. Other areas which deserve further qualitative research include issues related to multiculturalism, which is yet to be extensively researched in forensic psychology.

Another anticipated change is the growth of multiple methods, the realization that the toolkit of a forensic psychologist includes both qualitative and quantitative methods, and both help to illuminate problems and their solution. Moreover, there is the increasing realization that the most quantitative of studies can nevertheless still provide serendipitous insights which open up new avenues for research or enquiry and which help in the better understanding of current concerns.

As has been mentioned above there are far reaching debates within the general area of qualitative methods as to where social science disciplines and research are developing towards, with arguments as to how (for instance) we are now possibly entering a post-post-modernism phase (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). These debates are yet to make a significant impact on forensic psychology, and will probably need to permeate psychology further before they begin to appear within forensic psychology. Social constructionism has yet to make significant impacts on forensic psychology, given the predominance of a more individualistically based model of the person.

Teaching qualitative methods

One particular problem which is true throughout qualitative methods is the general skills shortfall in the area of teaching qualitative research methods, which has been remarked upon by the research councils. There is a need for more training in qualitative methods at both the undergraduate and the postgraduate level (which currently tends to emphasize quantitative methods). Many departments in the UK may only have one member of staff who is expert in qualitative methods (Madill, Gough, Lawton and Stratton, 2005), and coverage at a postgraduate level is often on the minimal side. A result of this is that many researchers in the general area of forensic psychology tend to concentrate on using methods that they are familiar with, rather than using the most appropriate to answer their particular

research questions. This shortfall needs to be urgently addressed.

There is still, however, a predominant emphasis on quantitative methods, and most of the postgraduate teaching in this area (and indeed other areas of applied psychology) tends to spend considerably less time on qualitative methods. This is not unique to the UK; as Ponterotto (2005) emphasizes, there is currently a paucity of required qualitative research training in graduate-level psychology (forensic and other) programmes throughout North America.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that qualitative methods are extensively used within forensic psychology. A lot of this use may be implicit and unacknowledged, but it is nonetheless present. If the discipline is concerned with the applications of psychology, it is envisaged that use of such methods is likely to increase in the future, but there is a need for more emphasis to be given to the contribution of such methods in research methods courses. As the use of qualitative methods expands in forensic psychology it is likely that its use will become increasingly sophisticated, and there will be a move away from the purely pragmatic utilization of research techniques to broader debates about the philosophies underlying qualitative research. This will also involve a more critical use of such approaches, as there will be a growing awareness of theoretical issues, different approaches and the limitations of particular approaches. There will also be a growing realization of the further potential of qualitative methods to contribute to forensic psychology.

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Community Psychology

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INTRODUCTION: EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Community psychology may be defined most simply as the applied study of the relationship between social systems and individual wellbeing in the community context¹. It is a sub-discipline of psychology, an applied social science and a vocation, as well as an analytical perspective (Levine, Perkins and Perkins, 2005). Like many other sub-disciplines, community psychology is concerned with both understanding the factors that impact upon people's health and wellness as well as ways of working which promote those outcomes. Where community psychology becomes distinct from the other fields of psychology is in its focus on value-based practice, its adoption of an ecological and historical perspective, the recognition of social power differentials and a preference for 'praxis' over theory, research, or practice alone (Levine et al., 2005; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005). Each of these

distinguishing aspects or tenets is expanded upon below.

It is important to note that community psychology has emerged around the world over the past 40+ years, for varying purposes and in unique social, political and cultural circumstances. The common thread in its emergence has been the recognition of inequity and injustice within social systems and the resulting negative impact on people's wellbeing (Dalton, Elias and Wandersman, 2001). Alongside this thread has been a realization of the role that traditional psychology approaches have had in maintaining damaging social relations and structures (Ryan, 1971; Heller, Price, Reinhartz, Riger and Wandersman, 1984). Community psychology has emerged then as a psychology seeking some form of social change, and to enhance wellbeing via social justice (Levine et al., 2005; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005). Within the profession of psychology, the community perspective challenges the traditional modes of scientific theory, research and practice, and seeks to create effective and

sustainable alternatives through which psychology can engage the world to enhance people's wellbeing.

Values

A core belief of community psychology is that values are ever present in the perspective we take, the theories we generate, the research we conduct and the practices in which we engage. This belief questions the validity of the claim traditional psychology makes that it is a neutral and objective social science. Community psychology posits that the pursuit of objectivity is itself a value which, like all values, is based in a set of assumptions and beliefs about the world (that is, epistemology and ontology). Community psychology then holds dear an acknowledgement of these assumptions and beliefs about the world (Heller et al., 1984), and pursues ways of working that reflect values of social change (Jason, 1991; Prilleltensky, 2001). Key assumptions are that our social worlds are unevenly stratified in terms of wealth, class, race, gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Griffin, 1995). The values we then adopt as community psychologists are meant to guide research and action efforts to change this system of inequality (Jason, 1991; Prilleltensky, 2001).

Ecology and history

This tenet comes from the 'ecological analogy', in which the principles of ecology (or environmental biology) are applied to human behavior. The ecological principles of interaction between populations and the community, eco-system and biosphere are analogized to the interaction of individuals with their community, environment, society and world. These spheres of influence or ecological levels are seen as being organized metaphorically like a Russian nesting doll, around the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and include political, cultural, environmental, institutional and organizational spheres. An additional component of such a contextual approach is the temporal, or

historical realm (Suarez-Balcazar, Balcazar and Fawcett, 1992). This ecological understanding informs the belief, now evidenced, that multiple levels of environments influence and affect human behavior (Lewin, 1951; Sarason, 1967; Wandersman and Nation, 1998; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999), and that it is social contexts, rather than psychological or biological deficits, which are the fundamental cause of major social problems (Maton, 2000; Levine et al., 2005).

Power

Power can be understood as the ability to express one's own will. It is a phenomenon that is believed to be experienced in every social relationship through the use of resources, agendas, and ideologies (Lukes, 1986). Although power is not inherently good or bad, it can be wielded to further either purpose. In addition, through the use of resources, agendas, and ideologies, power can become unequally distributed across entire groups of people, leading to domination of one group's interests over another's. Community psychology adheres to the view that this is indeed the case in our contemporary society, and that the effects of this situation have far reaching consequences for the health and wellbeing of all individuals (Marmot, 2004; Levine et al., 2005; Wilkinson, 2005). Power, then, is a focus for study and change, including the hierarchical relationship between researchers or academic experts, and disenfranchised groups (Srebnik, 1991).

Praxis

Community psychology values action in and on the world to effect socially just changes (Jason, 1991). Change is believed to be possible by preventing and/or intervening in damaging social systems, and creating alternatives to the current system in which we live. To do so, we must strive to understand our current dynamic world, test new and different ways of existing, and assess/evaluate their use. Research plays a central role in the

development of knowledge, and is believed to be key in creating, enabling and evaluating these alternatives systems. Community psychology, like many psychologies, values an empirical grounding to action-oriented work and efforts for change (Tolan, Keys, Chertok and Jason, 1990). This intersection of action for change and empiricism, along with the development of explanations (or theory) is termed 'praxis'. Research is a key component of this praxis. Lewin (1946) suggested that to achieve praxis, researchers engage in a cyclical process of action and reflection: action for system or social change with reflection on the process of change. The aim of this cyclical research is to simultaneously increase our understanding of the world, while facilitating a process of sustainable change.

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

It is safe to say that in community psychology, as in other fields, there is no one accepted philosophy of science. However, in order to truly appreciate the fit between community psychology and qualitative research, it is important to briefly state the underlying assumptions about research that appear to be dominant². Specifically, in the minds of many community psychologists, a distinction must be made between *methods* versus *paradigms*. For example, although some social scientists understand and employ both qualitative and quantitative methods, many do so from the perspective of the logical positivist, in which phenomena can only be validated (i.e. found to be true) using deductive, or quantitative means. For these researchers, qualitative methods become the handmaiden of the quantitative paradigm, and are seen to be exploratory at best. Likewise, some researchers adopt the stance of the social constructivist, privileging qualitative over quantitative methods because, to them, context is the sole determinant of truth. For other social scientists (many community psychologists among them) a more pragmatic or

instrumental approach is taken, where both paradigms are recognized as separate philosophical entities, equally useful as tools for approaching knowledge, and the choice of application and method depends upon your research question (Banyard and Miller, 1998; Langhout, 2003). It is from this latter position that we write our chapter; from this point forward, when we refer to qualitative methods, we are speaking from the perspective of the pragmatist.

Many psychology researchers have been reluctant to look beyond the world of the quasi-experimental design. Fears of rigorous methods are understandable, but must be assuaged: the qualitative paradigm has strict standards for quality. Specifically, criteria of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, give researchers important ways to assess and evaluate qualitative work (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). In addition, we believe that many complex social phenomena and circumstances can be comprehensively studied only by using qualitative methodology. For these reasons, it behooves social scientists to take on, understand, and appreciate the qualitative paradigm and its methods.

THE FIT BETWEEN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

As we mentioned earlier, the field of community psychology rests firmly on several core tenets: values, ecology, history, power, and praxis. Many community psychologists have elucidated these and other principles over the years (Srebniak, 1991; Oxford, 1992). Here, we examine our understanding of these tenets and how they relate to, or fit with, qualitative methods.

The commitment to values is highly important to community psychologists. Values drive much of the work in our field, whether as a topic of study, or as a goal for the research process itself. The qualitative paradigm and its methods facilitate this commitment to values by allowing and requiring

researchers to make explicit their own biases, backgrounds, and beliefs, and how these elements affect their study (Kidder and Fine, 1997; Brodsky et al., 2004). Not only is it acceptable in qualitative research for the researcher to have a personal tie to the study; it is expected. It is not expected, however, that qualitative researchers will allow their commitment to stated values (or unstated, for that matter) to truncate a research conversation or blind them to the story in the data. Once making clear their own investment in the research, social scientists must work to remain open to all possibilities while they examine the evidence, and regularly revise their theories (Kidder and Fine, 1997).

Community psychologists have also expressed the necessity of expanding the focus of research and practice to multiple levels of analysis, beyond the psyche of the individual human. This means thoroughly examining the context or ecology of any given phenomenon, and constructing actions that work on multiple levels. In addition to spatial context, community psychology emphasizes the study of temporal context, or the history, of any given phenomenon. Without understanding these enveloping, transactional factors, we believe it becomes very difficult to design a plan for lasting and effective change for people in real-life social circumstances. Qualitative methods share this appreciation of ecology, history, and multiple levels of analysis. Thick description is a stated objective for good qualitative research, in which vivid details of context and history are equally important data to report as what is gathered from the target of study (Erlandson et al., 1993; Banyard and Miller, 1998; Stewart, 2000). Qualitative methods also allow the design of the research and theory itself to evolve and change according to contextual feedback; in this way, any study is crafted to suit the phenomenon, rather than bending the phenomenon to suit a preconceived study (Stewart, 2000).

One of the most recognized congruencies between community psychology and qualitative methods involves the importance of both power and praxis. Community psychologists

hope to equalize the distribution of power in social arrangements, and to facilitate the process of *empowerment*, whereby people, organizations, and communities can gain control over their destinies (Rappaport, 1987)³. One way to do this is by fusing social science research with action for social change to create praxis. Qualitative methods have played an important role in empowerment and praxis, if in no other way than by providing a means for marginalized people's voices and narratives to be heard (Banyard and Miller, 1998; Stewart, 2000; Stein and Mankowski, 2004). These methods can also create an important system of representation, whereby the researcher becomes the steward of stories, experiences, and constructed knowledge of the respondents, rather than just the recipient of data (Stewart, 2000; Stein and Mankowski, 2004).

In this chapter, we will use the lens of our first community psychology tenet, values, to examine qualitative methods. We will also highlight particular studies that we feel exemplify efforts to understand and promote four core values within the study of community psychology (see Box 29.1). These studies were selected first because we believed they were well done and clearly illustrated community psychology's core values through their processes and/or outcomes. A second aim was to include studies conducted by students as well as professionals, and across the international community. Third, we chose to use many studies to give a broad understanding of the qualitative methods landscape, rather than a deeper, more focused treatment of one or two methods. Towards the end of our chapter we shed light on some tensions and limitations of using qualitative methods in our field. Finally, we conclude with a brief recommendation for future directions.

UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY VALUES

Because community psychology values praxis as central to the discipline, qualitative methods are used both as a means for

BOX 29.1 Qualitative Methods in Community Psychology

<i>Community psychology value</i>	<i>Qualitative method</i>	<i>Example</i>
Empowerment and self-determination	Participant narratives	Bond et al. (2000)
	Participant observation, interviews, and document reviews in a program evaluation	Wandersman et al. (2003)
Collaboration and democratic participation	Semi-structured interviews	Tandon et al. (1998)
Health, wellness, and the prevention of psychosocial stress	Focus groups	Totikidis and Prilleltensky (in press)
	Interviews Participant observation, document reviews, and interviews	Prilleltensky (2004) Peters et al. (2004)
Social justice	Interviews 'Cumulative theorizing', participant observation	Narayan et al. (2000) Huygens (in press); Huygens and Humphries (2004)

understanding the world and to promote action to change it. Community psychologists seek to understand how values operate in community settings and actively work to use this knowledge to generate action that promotes our values. In addition, community psychology utilizes qualitative approaches in order to put the core values of empowerment and self-determination; collaboration and democratic participation; health, wellness and prevention; and social justice at the forefront of inquiry and action.

Not only does each of these values provide *content* for study and targets for action but they also suggest a value-based *process* by which research and action are conducted. Optimally, the values we seek to promote in our inquiry and action are also the means by which we engage community members in constructing knowledge and designing action strategies. Whereas the empowerment is a phenomenon of interest, and a desired end result of interventions, it can also be considered a principle for how we conduct research. As we have mentioned earlier, qualitative methods have the potential to privilege the voices of those people and groups with less power, hence

an empowering research process. Participatory qualitative approaches also have the potential to be based in values of empowerment, collaboration and democratic participation, whereby researchers engage community members in the design, implementation, and interpretation of community research. For community psychology, the aim is to conduct research and action in a manner that is congruent with the values we wish to promote.

What follows are a few examples from the field that highlight how community psychologists utilize qualitative methodologies as a way to understand and promote shared values of empowerment and self-determination; collaboration and democratic participation; health, wellness and prevention; and social justice, and how we attempt to infuse these values into the research process.

EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Definition and rationale

Empowerment is a complex, multi-level construct, related to individual psychological

concepts such as self-efficacy, self-determination, and internal locus of control, but operating interdependently at the individual and collective (group, organization, and community) levels (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995). Unlike purely social-cognitive concepts, empowerment is also defined by behaviors (such as critical reflection and participation in decisions that affect one's life or work) as well as knowledge, thoughts, and skills (e.g. political awareness, optimism, effective leadership qualities). Finally, it is both a process (based on those behaviors and abilities) and an outcome (e.g. greater access to, and control over, resources and decisions; Zimmerman, 1995).

Qualitative methods are particularly appropriate for studying empowerment and self-determination for two major reasons. First, phenomenological research strategies, such as ethnographic interviews, focus groups, and participant-observation tend to give participants a more meaningful participatory role, power, and freedom (i.e. more 'voice and choice') in the research process than do experiments, closed-ended surveys, non-participant-observational methods, or use of existing data. Second, the complex, contextually dependent nature of empowerment processes can only be fully explored through the rich and nuanced knowledge gained from qualitative methods. In particular, narrative data collection and analytic methods provide insights into dynamic empowerment processes, opportunities for citizen collaboration, and communal narratives and personal stories, which are themselves empowering resources (Rappaport, 1995).

Exemplars

In the past decade community psychologists have begun to recognize the potential use of individual and community narratives as a way of understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups and as an empowerment intervention strategy (Rappaport, 1995, 1998, 2000; Bond, Belenky and Weinstock, 2000; Maton, 2000). Rappaport (2000: 6)

points to the importance of narratives in relationship to empowerment suggesting,

because empowering narratives are resources, they are distributed unevenly by social class and other such statuses ... The right to tell one's own story is an index of power and psychological empowerment.

Listening partners

At the individual level, the evaluation of the Listening Partners Program (Bond et al., 2000) provides a rich example of how qualitative methods – in this case in-depth interviews – that focus on participant narratives can be both a means of empowering those who have been denied their voice as well as of capturing the experience of women living in poverty. At the collective level, community psychologists have used dialogue and reflection in participatory action research projects to engage communities in the process of building shared narratives focused on empowering members. They have used qualitative methods to explore the disempowering effects of dominant cultural narratives on members of marginalized communities and have studied the impact of empowering community narratives on the lives of participants in school communities, religious communities, and mutual self-help groups.

Empowerment evaluation

Another exemplar of empowerment-focused research using qualitative methods is *empowerment evaluation*, which is an approach to program evaluation that emphasizes the role, and increases the capacity, of program stakeholders to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs (Fetterman, Kaftarian and Wandersman, 1996). It is possible to include quantitative information as part of empowerment evaluation and, in fact, doing so can be of both practical and strategic benefit to program administrators and others. However, qualitative data in various forms are much more conducive to empowerment evaluation because they are more readily understandable to a wider audience of stakeholders. One of

the principles of empowerment evaluation is to demystify evaluation methods and reports (Wandersman et al., 2003).

A program evaluation by a community psychologist, Robin L. Miller, provides a good case study (Wandersman et al., 2003). The Night Ministry in Chicago is a nondenominational faith-based organization that provides outreach, shelter, services and support to male and female prostitutes, homeless adults and youths, persons with chronic mentally illness, sexual minorities, substance users and others. Empowerment evaluation was the strategy chosen to evaluate the Outreach Health Ministry program because they both share emphases on self-reflection, self-evaluation, egalitarianism, and collaboration, which also fit well with the values of the participating ministers and parishioners. Their first task was to take stock of their program by developing a rich description of what actually happens in it. In response to participants' general mistrust of formal institutions and their sometimes bureaucratic methods, the evaluation team settled on an organizational ethnographic approach that included participant observation, interviews, and document reviews:

The ethnographic paradigm was well-suited to the goals of the evaluation team because its naturalistic research strategies enabled researchers to gain experiential knowledge of a phenomenon and close understanding of what objects, activities, events, and relationships mean to people.

Wandersman et al. (2003: 149)

COLLABORATION AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Definition and rationale

The values of collaboration and democratic participation speak directly to the issue of power distribution. Specifically, they are about the process of decision-making, and the creation of organizational structures that work to include those most affected by the decisions. In addition, the notion of democratic participation implies

that each decision-maker will have an equal say throughout the process. These values are related to inclusion and diversity, and can provide tools for facilitating both. However, the practice of collaboration and democratic participation requires a willingness on the part of those in charge to share their power, and to accept decisions made by the group.

Often in the doing of research, social scientists do not include their participants as collaborators in the process, nor do they view their participants as equals, but simply as sources of information who require little in return. Such a non-mutual relationship smacks of exploitation, particularly in community research. In our own experience, community members' lingering resentment and frustration about prior 'one-way' research experiences has made the formation of new relationships with researchers exceedingly difficult, and for good reason: when information is one of your primary resources, it ought to be protected.

Qualitative research methods can be important tools for fostering collaboration and democratic participation. First, qualitative research regularly involves the inhabitation of your respondents' world for participant-observation. In many ways, this means stepping into someone else's shoes – as your experiences from your subjects' vantage point become data, you are more able to value their reality as your own. This can be an important beginning step toward equality and a shift in power. Second, any qualitative study will change as data are gathered and analyzed. There is a natural collaboration here between subject and inquiry, and the voice of the subject guides the inquiry. Finally, in doing qualitative research, no insider knowledge of statistics or experimental design is necessary. Rather, intimacy with the data may be of primary importance. These methods lend themselves to the inclusion of participants who have no research expertise, but are the best authorities on their own experiences. By the end of the process, participants may leave with new skills, knowledge, and personal connections.

Exemplar

S. Darius Tandon and his colleagues at the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA, used qualitative methods to study grassroots community leadership (Tandon, Azelton, Kelly and Strickland, 1998). Their study is a strong example of how collaboration and democratic participation can be facilitated throughout a qualitative inquiry.

In the early 1990s, Tandon's team began a relationship with the head of a grassroots community organizing group known as the Developing Communities Project (DCP) located in the Greater Roseland area of Chicago. The director of DCP identified a need to know more about fostering indigenous participation and leadership, and to learn from existing leaders in the community. A liaison from DCP's board of directors was chosen and a panel of eight community members convened to facilitate and oversee the research process. Nineteen meetings of the panel over one-and-a-half years produced research goals including the use of eventual results as a resource for DCP, the employment of methods that honored voices and stories of community leaders, and the creation of 'a sense of personal contact, rapport, and dialog with the community leader' (Tandon, et al., 1998: 5). In addition, the research team's goals included a focus on ecological context and the use of Participatory Action Research techniques in which the inquiry process is viewed as a partnership (Tandon, et al., 1998). To jointly address these aims, the team selected qualitative methods in the form of semi-structured interviews with 77 community leaders about their experiences.

Community and DCP members shared in the creation of interview questions, the selection of respondents, the interview process itself, the analysis of data, and the utilization of the results. The project culminated in a visual display of five 'leadership trees', user-friendly diagrams connecting rationales for taking a leadership role with particular areas of action. For DCP, these diagrams provided a novel insight into how to support and nurture their local leaders, and how to facilitate

action once leadership is in place (Tandon et al., 1998). In this way, Tandon, his colleagues, and their partners in the Chicago area were able to do important research by creating new decision-making structures that cultivated collaboration, and by opening up the research process to democratic participation with the help of qualitative methods.

HEALTH, WELLNESS AND THE PREVENTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESS

Definition and rationale

Health, wellness and the prevention of psychosocial stress constitute the pillars of wellbeing. Wellbeing is a positive state of affairs, brought about by the satisfaction of personal, relational, and communal needs. While subjective feelings of wellbeing and happiness are important, they do not tell the whole story of wellness. Objective factors such as poverty and access to resources also matter. Physical health and emotional wellbeing depend not only on individual level factors, but also on societal dynamics and circumstances (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005).

Qualitative methods can illuminate the relationship between material conditions and the phenomenology of wellbeing. When using only quantitative measures, a rather deceptive picture of happiness emerges. Above a certain threshold of material wellbeing, people of different classes, gender, or ethnic background report similar levels of happiness on a ten point scale. This has led psychologists such as Seligman (2002) to claim that gender, class or race do not make a difference in levels of happiness. There are multiple psychological reasons why people choose to report high levels of happiness regardless of various conditions of disadvantage; among others, the need to represent oneself as happy and a reluctance to admit sadness or disappointments in life (Eckersley, 2000, 2001). If we were to rely exclusively on quantitative self reports of personal wellbeing we would be highly misled. When talking

with people about their life, people from disadvantaged groups report extensively on the influence of discrimination, poverty, exclusion and oppression on their lives. Unless we get to know people's lives intimately, our sense of their health and wellness is incomplete at best and inaccurate at worst.

Exemplars

What qualitative tools can deliver in the area of health, wellness and the prevention of psychosocial stress is a richly textured description of life's vicissitudes. A variety of qualitative methods have been used to explore people's conceptions of health and wellbeing and to capture their journey from vulnerability to resilience.

To provide a multicultural picture of health and wellbeing, Vicky Totikidis (Totikidis and Prilleltensky, in press) conducted focus groups with members of various ethnic groups in St Albans, the most disadvantaged neighborhood of Melbourne, Australia. The major aim of the study was to gain a theoretical and pragmatic understanding of wellbeing from a multicultural perspective. The research involved focus groups with a total of 29 Anglo, Maltese, Vietnamese and Italian community members. There were two questions in the study. The main research question was addressed by asking community members systematically about positive and negative aspects of personal, relational and collective wellbeing. The second research question was addressed by asking community members to generate ideas on what could be done to improve wellbeing and by identifying issues of concern that emerged throughout the research. The issues identified by the community offer a rich picture of participants' ideals, strengths, needs, as well as possible actions that could improve personal, relational, and collective wellness in St Albans.

The research provided a panoramic view of commonalities as well as factors unique to each ethnic community. In addition to theory development, there is a lesson in this research for practice. Service providers who

attend only to the personal domain of wellness may be doing a disservice to the community. Based on the results of this study, community members want and expect service providers to go beyond the personal and the relational. Numerous examples of transportation, employment, and discrimination challenges were raised. These belong squarely in the collective sphere of wellness. Personal and relational strengths need to be nurtured and continually appreciated, but no amount of caring at the affective level will increase employment or educational opportunities. In this research, focus groups amplified the voice of the multicultural community of St Albans.

Using repeated in-depth qualitative interviews, Ora Prilleltensky (2004) gained access to the stories of women growing up with a physical disability. The research provided accounts of resilience and flourishing that are infrequently associated with physical disability. In this case, the researcher, a woman with a physical disability herself, was able to explore in detail the variegated experience of growing up with a physical disability. The richness of the narratives could not have been captured by quantitative measures.

Participation in a preventive change process can be an enriching experience. When that experience can be accessed through qualitative research methods, we get insight into processes impacting individuals and communities alike. The Better Beginnings, Better Futures (BBBF) project in Canada is a 25-year community-based intervention designed to prevent emotional, behavioral and cognitive problems in children and youth. As a prerequisite, each of the eight sites had to have wide community participation. Community members had to account for 51% of the steering committees managing the project (Peters et al., 2004). Throughout the history of BBBF, a team of researchers took process notes, interviewed residents, participated in community events, developed videos and used a variety of qualitative data gathering techniques to document the evolution of this unique preventive initiative. About 8 years into the project, a team of interviewers sat

down with 81 residents in most of the sites to get their stories. The narratives describe the passion as well as the frustrations of institutionalizing one of the most ambitious preventive projects ever launched in Canada (Pancer and Foxall, 1998).

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Definition and rationale

It is hard to think of an aspect of health and wellbeing that is not affected by the allocation of resources and obligations in society. Social justice refers precisely to the distribution of pains and gains. A common definition characterizes justice as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and burdens. This is at the heart of community psychology, which deems injustice as a source of suffering and oppression (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005). Compelling evidence from multiple studies demonstrates that the poor suffer more than the middle class from a myriad of physical, psychological, and social problems (Marmot, 2004; Wilkinson, 2005). This phenomenon affects the poor all over the world and not only in developing countries.

Exemplars

Qualitative research can help us understand and promote justice. In a remarkable study, the Poverty Group of the World Bank conducted participatory poverty assessments with over 60,000 people in over 47 countries (Narayan, Chambers, Shah and Petesch, 2000a; Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher and Koch-Schulte, 2000b). The two books edited by Narayan and colleagues provide a vivid account of what it is like to live in poverty in urban and rural settings in poor countries. At the collective level, people in the south suffer from two sets of devastating experiences: (a) insecurity, chaos, violence; and (b) economic exploitation. Narayan and colleagues (Narayan, Chambers, Shah and Petesch, 1999, Narayan et al., 2000a,b) interviewed thousands of people who commented on the fear of living with uncertainty and

lack of protection. Lack of order and lawlessness exacerbated the plight of the poor and added a dimension of terror to the material deprivation. A poor woman in Brazil pointed out that 'there is no control over anything, at any hour a gun could go off, especially at night' (Narayan et al., 1999: 7). Chaotic environments in politically unstable regimes are fertile grounds for crime and violence. The poor are the most vulnerable of all as they are often homeless and exposed to random acts of violence. Many observed that the police can be quite brutal and heartless in their dealings with the poor. Even more complained about the lack of institutional protection afforded by the state (Narayan et al., 2000a). Economic exploitation is felt as a trap without escape. Children and adults working in slavery or near slavery conditions have no choice but to relinquish their freedom and abide by rules of despotic employers. The research documented the consequences of living in regimes of injustice. But parallel to stories of despair there were stories of resilience, solidarity and profound humanity.

An example of qualitative studies in the service of social justice comes from Aotearoa, New Zealand. Ingrid Huygens, a community psychologist involved in the struggle to uphold and restore Maori rights, has documented the theory and action of the movement through innovative qualitative techniques. In an effort to inform practice, she set out to learn how Treaty workers disseminate among dominant groups the history of Maori oppression and the rights owed the Maori people under the Treaty of Waitangi (Glover, Dudgeon and Huygens, 2005). Her study of a social transformation in the service of social justice took Huygens to every corner of the country. She participated in conferences and workshops where movement workers shared lessons and theorized about what worked and how. As a participant, she not only recorded other people's perceptions, but she also facilitated learning and growth through a technique she called cumulative theorizing (Huygens and Humphries, 2004; Huygens, in press). After every workshop she would summarize the lessons and present

them to the next group, so that each group could build on the theorizing of the previous effort. She developed visual techniques for diagramming and representing pictorially the insights obtained in learning circles. As a participant of the movement, she upheld the values of knowledge for action, and as a qualitative researcher she contributed to the process of social change by conceptualizing how social justice evolves.

TENSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF USING QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Philosophical tensions

A critical philosophical tension exists regarding research in community psychology. This tension centers on the *purpose* of qualitative inquiry. Namely, what is the purpose of qualitative research in community psychology? Regardless of choice of method, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) have urged community psychologists to use the critical paradigm to inform research. The critical paradigm suggests that knowledge should be in the service of human liberation (Habermas, 1971). Sloan (1996) argues that researchers in psychology need to take a stance beyond neutrality towards critical engagement in social transformation. Whereas action for liberation is a value and an aim in community psychology, not all research conducted by community psychologists has this transformational purpose or potential. Additionally, not all community psychologists agree that our research should be used to promote what are largely political ends (as if inaction is not political?). Dialogues among those in our field reveal that there is no consensus around the notion that our research should be about seeking knowledge in action for social change. Furthermore, there are ethical implications of conducting research with the aim of changing the status quo (O'Neil, 1989). Who decides what actions are valid and who should benefit? What values will be privileged over others (Nelson and Prilleltensky,

2005)? Certainly as in any other community, the answering of this question is a negotiated process that evolves over time, in which some values are privileged over others and in which some voices are inevitably more powerful in directing the discipline's course. What it is important to note is that unlike other disciplines, the discourse about values has been and remains front and center in community psychology, and inevitably has implications for methods. The shared hope is that this tension can only be sufficiently addressed by putting values, power, reflexivity, and structural analysis in the foreground (Flyvbjerg, 2001).

If action is indeed an aim for researchers in community psychology, qualitative methods have limitations. Qualitative research may not necessarily promote action to respond to society's problems. Because of its open-ended stance, qualitative methodologies certainly enable- but do not guarantee-critical analysis or action towards liberation. For a research method to realize this transformative potential it requires an active effort on the part of the researcher to place data collection, interpretation, and theorizing in the social, economic, and political context in order to help transform these conditions (Weis and Fine, 2004).

There are some researchers who have difficulty with the community psychology rhetoric of community, social justice, empowerment and wellness. Even as community psychology purports to be an antidote to more individual-focused psychologies, there is a danger that the understanding of social problems and the strategies offered might still neglect the larger social, economic, and political forces impinging on wellbeing. In a recent book chapter, Lillis, O'Donohue, Cucciare and Lillis (2005: 284) argue that community psychology tends to have a 'dominant bias associated with a liberal world view'. They suggest that the field has a tendency to narrowly define community and misguidedly frames social justice in terms of liberal economic theory. David Fryer, McKenna and Hamerton (2000) posit that the use of the term wellness emphasizes what

is needed thus focusing on deficits instead of strengths and maintaining the status quo while diverting attention away from the need to address root causes. Worse still is the possibility that these concepts have been so often misused to the point of becoming meaningless for the sake of research and inquiry.

Community psychology has also been criticized for emphasizing some tenets of the field over others. The field has long emphasized *community* over *power* and the sense of community metaphor dominated the narrative for the first decade or so (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005). The concept of empowerment was heralded as a way to correct this overemphasis on communion and bring some attention to the importance of power and control over resources. The use of empowerment in research and action, however, has too often focused on individual power and psychological sense of empowerment rather than the dynamics of power or the leveraging of it by individuals and communities (Riger, 1993). Lately, the field has begun to acknowledge the need to balance psychological empowerment and empowering processes with equal attention to social justice that includes a redistribution of resources and the political milieu in which such decisions are made (Speer, 2002; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005).

Issues of scientific legitimacy

In most areas of psychology in the USA, qualitative research generally seems to receive less respect by journal editors and reviewers, funding agencies, tenure and promotion committees, and other arbiters of academic prestige and legitimacy than does quantitative research⁴. This may be due to most qualitative research being less generalizable and less amenable to hypothesis testing than studies done with large, representative samples or experimental designs with random assignment. External validity and experimental control are not appropriate standards of scientific rigor for qualitative research, however. If editors, reviewers, and

colleagues understood and applied the appropriate standards of methodological rigor to qualitative studies, they would see that their internal validity is often stronger than most quantitative research.

Given the many arguments for, and examples of, qualitative methods in community psychology, it may be surprising that community psychology in the USA has historically suffered from the same anti-qualitative bias as the rest of the discipline. Although the *Journal of Community Psychology* (JCP) has always been open to qualitative and theoretical work, the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (AJCP) is the official journal of the APA Division of Community Psychology and it rarely published qualitative studies until the mid-1990s. Qualitative work is now very prominent in all community psychology journals internationally, including JCP, AJCP, *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, and several non-English journals in the field.

Community psychology has always been an applied field based largely on action-research conducted in collaboration with many different professional and client stakeholders. Research in the field has also become increasingly interdisciplinary, including work in community health and epidemiology, evaluation of educational and other prevention programs, policy analysis, multiculturalism, self-help and mutual assistance, and community organizing and development (Maton, Perkins and Saegert, in press). These intersectoral (e.g. university–government–local organization–community) and interdisciplinary partnerships have been one reason community psychologists have adopted qualitative and mixed-method research designs. As the above exemplars illustrate, qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and individual, organizational, and community narratives can provide powerful evidence that is methodologically and analytically rigorous, theoretically dispositive, meaningful to all participants, and thus politically persuasive.

LIMITATIONS IN APPLICATION

Like in other fields of psychology, community psychologists face many of the logistical constraints of organizing and carrying out qualitative research including time and resources. In addition, the nature of taking on any form of social change is often Sisyphean. As community psychologists using qualitative methods, the greatest gap we experience between the 'is' and the 'ought' surfaces as we try to negotiate the application of community psychology values in our research and the contextual demands of the real world. A very practical way in which this tension manifests itself is in the temporal domain. The value of collaboration in research implies that community psychologists devote time to building trust and a shared understanding of project goals and the research process with community members who are project partners. We often hear the stories from community members of researchers coming into the community, collecting data, and leaving without providing any tangible benefit to the community. The resentment and distrust community members harbor after such experiences is both justified and understandable. However, it makes the task of building relationships evermore important yet time consuming, and this extended timeline may not mesh with funding timetables or publication demands. However, in our experience, the quality of the process of engaging community has direct implications for the quality of the research in terms of access and community members' willingness to participate.

A second related temporal challenge concerns tensions between the values of empowerment, collaboration, and participation and stakeholder demands. Ideally, community psychologists work with community members to develop research protocols (particularly for interviews and focus groups) that reflect the informational needs of the community as well as the researcher. Here research is valued for both its contribution to action and theory generation. In our experience, the process of including multiple voices in this process results in higher quality products and

provides opportunity for voice and choice. Practically speaking, however, researchers may not be able to engage in that process until they have project funding with a pre-established protocol that has gone through a lengthy review from funders and an institutional research board. We have found ourselves in this situation in our work and have opted to involve community members in formulating research questions after the fact, returning to our review board often to have new protocols re-approved as the projects unfold. Even with these oversight demands, negotiating the questions to ask and who should ask them can be a drawn-out process with costs in terms of time and efficiency. Moreover, community members can become frustrated with such delays when from their standpoint the need for action is pressing.

Another way that community psychologists ideally apply their values in their research is by involving partners in data collection and analysis. Insiders have a unique perspective and knowledge of community to bring to qualitative research and may be seen by others as having a more legitimate role to play in asking questions. Yet, numerous challenges arise in implementing this practice. First, in the USA, federal regulations make it difficult for university research teams to involve members outside the university in research activities (e.g. data collection, data analysis). All research team members must be certified in human subjects research by the university oversight board. This makes it difficult for community-based researchers to partner with community members in these activities because it precludes the possibility of publishing data collected or analyzed by 'unapproved' community members in academic journals. Therein lies the obvious dilemma because without these publications or the privileges of tenure, researchers may not be able to continue their change efforts in community.

Community psychologists navigate these challenges in different ways, some opting to make clear distinctions between their academic research for publication and their involvement in action research for

the community. Others choose not to partner with community members in this process but in other project activities. When members have not been collaborators in the analysis the data, community psychologists will use member checks to ensure that community members have a way of voicing dissenting views and offering new meanings. However, this falls short of ideal because the community's lack of direct access to the data can reinforce power differentials and the image of the researcher as expert – both of which clash with community psychology values. In the end, values as well as the skills and interests community members bring to the project and other resource demands determine how community psychologists approach decisions in these areas.

CONCLUSION

Community psychology has much to gain by further employing qualitative methods in the effort to make social change. As we illustrated above, qualitative research methods can be key to the integration of community psychology values and aims by balancing process with outcome. In this way, researchers can adhere to values in the research process while achieving real change in human lives and conditions. This was as true for the Listening Partners project in Vermont, or Tandon and colleagues' grass-roots leadership study in Chicago, Illinois, or Vicky Totikidis' work in Melbourne, Australia, as it was for Ingrid Huygens and the Maori people of Aotearoa, New Zealand.

For the future of community psychology and qualitative methods, we advocate two directions. First, more research and action should be devoted to understanding the dynamics of power. Although much attention has been given to the process of empowerment, not enough is known about the substance of power itself, and how it works. Such a complex and varied subject lends itself to qualitative research methods. Leaders in the study of power using qualitative methods include Bent Flyvbjerg (1998)

and his case study of a Danish city planning process, and John Gaventa (1982), who researched coalmining communities in the American Appalachian region.

Second, we advocate the integration of more participatory action research via qualitative methods. To do this, we must as members of the research community attend not only to the needs of our community partners, but also to our own institutional boundaries and constraints. The standard protocol for acceptable empirical research often does not make room for diverse voices. We must work to make the equal participation of 'nonexperts' just as legitimate in the construction of knowledge through research.

NOTES

1 'Wellbeing', or 'wellness', has been studied from many perspectives and is thought to be more than simply good health or the absence of pathology (Cowen, 1994; Kelly, 2000; Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2000). 'Community' can be defined as a group of organisms that interact and share a common environment. In human communities, the environment may be proximal, dispersed, or virtual. In all three forms, the adhering element in community is mutual interests.

2 Community psychologists have frequently discussed philosophies of science in specific conference sessions, on the American Psychological Association division listserv and in other venues. The debate has often been heated, and has created important opportunities for collective reflection.

3 Terms and values such as 'empowerment', or 'community, wellness, and ecology', or 'strengths' may be overused, ambiguous, and frequently co-opted for vague rhetorical purposes. They may lack consensus as to definitions and measures. Yet there is also complexity, conceptual clarity, scientific rigor, and strong empirical support associated with each of those terms (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995; Jamner and Stokols, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Maton et al., 2004; Levine et al., 2005). Community psychologists tend to find real and useful 'pearls' in murky waters.

4 Psychology in other countries does not appear to share this bias, at least not to the same degree.

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Cultural Psychology

Leslie Swartz and Poul Rohleder

INTRODUCTION

Social scientists have been interested in the concept of culture for a long time. The concept of culture – of what it is and where it is situated – is a complex one. For many years, culture was seen as explicit and observable in group and individual activities (Berry, 2000). More recently, culture is seen to include implicit, symbolic meanings underlying behaviour. Helman (1994) describes culture as a

set of guidelines (both explicit and implicit) which individuals inherit as members of a particular society, and which tells them how to *view* the world, how to experience it emotionally, and how to *behave* in it in relation to other people, to supernatural forces or gods, and to the natural environment. It also provides them with a way of transmitting these guidelines to the next generation – by the use of symbols, language, art and ritual.

Helman (1994: 2–3; emphasis in original)

We can therefore see culture as a set of rules and guidelines that inform society about ways in which to experience and behave in the world. These rules can be transmitted and changed over time, and culture is not static.

The commonly held idea that a person or group ‘has’ a culture which is fixed and unchanging, is not supported by the complex and flexible ways in which people live their lives.

There are two general approaches to cultural psychology. In the first view, people see cultural psychology as a discipline on its own, separate from other approaches to psychology, such as social psychology, for example. In the second view, cultural psychology is seen not as an approach which competes with other branches of psychology, but more as a lens through which we can try to understand people – a particular emphasis and concern within psychological research as a whole. For reasons which will become clear, we prefer this latter approach, and this chapter should be read alongside those on community psychology (see Chapter 29), and postcolonialism and psychology (see Chapter 32). In an important founding essay in the history of cultural psychology, Shweder (1990: 1) described cultural psychology in this way:

Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human

psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self and emotion. Cultural psychology is the study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and, dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up.

This locates cultural psychology firmly as an interpretive discipline, deeply interested in the importance of context for meaning, and in the ways in which meaning is constructed and shifts and changes depending on both local contexts and more distant ones such as those of history and broader influences of globalization, international trade and exchange, and even the simultaneously very local and broadly global influence of new technologies like the internet.

As an orientation to cultural psychology, we begin the chapter with a brief outline of the historical development in cultural psychology, starting with a universalist approach, through relativism to a view that everything is culturally situated. We then discuss some of the issues that arise when conducting research which takes culture into account. Table 30.1 gives just a few examples of some recent research studies, using different qualitative research methods. We will refer to some of these studies in our discussion of research issues. We also will take a closer look at the issue of language diversity in cultural psychology, and the use of translation and interpretation. Some text boxes give some guidelines to follow in research.

Finally, we speculate on some future developments in methods in cultural psychology.

APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

There are many approaches to studying and understanding culture. We will here discuss universalist approaches to culture and psychology, then relativism, critical approaches, and, finally, indigenous psychologies.

Universalism

A universalist approach to culture and psychology presupposes that psychological concepts are universal; that is they are found transculturally. The job of psychology, in this universalist model, is essentially to strip away the distracting local forms in which the 'real', or universal, phenomenon is hidden. For example, researchers, mostly from Western systems of thought, would attempt to determine whether psychological phenomena, for example depression, exist in other cultures. Universalists would thus try to show for example that a person in Harare, Zimbabwe, who complains of somatic pain and thinking too much (Abas, Broadhead, Mbape and Khumalo-Sakatukwa, 1994), may be actually considered to be depressed, in the same way that someone in London who complains of low mood may be considered depressed. To a universalist, the key issue here is the depression, seen to be common in both contexts;

Table 30.1 Examples of qualitative research in cultural psychology

<i>Methods used</i>	<i>Sources of data</i>	<i>Example studies</i>
Discourse analysis	Written texts; group talk; interviews	Candela (2005); Keller et al. (2004); Kirschner (2006)
Foucauldian discourse analysis	Interviews	Yen and Wilbraham (2003a, 2003b)
Narrative analysis	Interviews; autobiography	Langhout (2005); Tappan (2005)
Ethnography	Group conversations; participant observation; interviews	Bedford (2004); Estroff (1985); Fadiman (1997)
Grounded theory	In-depth interviews	Gilchrist and Sullivan (2006)
Participatory action research	Texts; drawings	Mohatt et al. (2004); Rohleder et al. (in press b)
Case study	Observation; interview	Köpping (2005); Lawrence, Dodds and Valsiner (2004)
Social representations	Content analysis of print media	Schmitz, Filippone and Edelman (2003)

the somatic pain and thinking too much hides the phenomenon of depression in Zimbabwe from the view of the untrained westerner. Traditionally, universalist approaches have tended to adopt a quantitative approach to methods, focusing on the development of scales which are presumed to measure universal constructs which may appear somewhat differently in different cultural contexts, but which are amenable to essentially the same measuring instruments. For example, there are many locally translated versions of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), all of which measure a supposedly universal construct – depression. In various local translations of the BDI, though, idiomatic expressions from the original version may be translated in such a way as to avoid the use of confusing idiomatic language – for example, the original BDI has a question concerning whether the person feels ‘blue’ or sad. The term ‘blue’, in the universalist model, must not be translated literally as it will obscure the true meaning behind the idiomatic term (Drennan, Levett and Swartz, 1991).

Where do the ‘universals’ of psychology come from, though? Universalist approaches may hide an implicit evolutionism which claims Western culture as top of a pyramid. In this view, westerners (and Western psychologists) know, and understand the ‘real’ phenomena; and our job is to look for the ways in which these universals, very clear in our own culture, are hidden by the cultural practices of others. Not only that, the psychological and emotional worlds of westerners are seen implicitly and explicitly as the peak of human cultural development; other cultural groups are seen as moving along a continuum towards this peak. In the field of mental health for example, Western diagnostic systems may uncritically be used as the standard, representing the core syndromes which may manifest with some variation across cultures. Kleinman (1977) argued that this universalist psychiatry imposed Western models of psychiatric illness across cultures, failing to take into account the actual experiences of distress and suffering of the people they were studying. The result was to look

for a limited range of diagnostic symptoms, rather than explore the emotional experiences of the people being treated or studied.

It is possible methodologically to interrogate the assumptions behind the universalist approach. In South Africa, for example, Yen and Wilbraham (2003a) used discourse analysis to explore talk around culture and mental illness in interviews with psychiatrists, psychologists and traditional healers. They found that discussions around ‘cultural illnesses’, which were understood as a form of distress unique to African patients, was constructed as a less severe variation of Western psychiatric disorders, thus re-inscribing ‘the universals of psychiatric disorder’ (Yen and Wilbraham, 2003a: 552). By using the critical methodological stance of discourse analysis, they could begin to view even diagnostic categories, which are sometimes thought to refer to states of ‘nature’, as texts open to scrutiny.

Relativism

Relativism focuses largely on the idea of mutually incommensurable separate cultures. This is the approach of cross-cultural psychology, which remains a dominant field today. Context is seen as important, and all psychological phenomena need to be understood within context. Universal meanings cannot simply be extracted from data without referring to context.

A key method used in relativist understandings of the world is that of ethnography. There have been many classic accounts of how societies and groups work which underscore a relativist approach – the implicit aim of many of these accounts is to discover and explore the internal logic of apparently strange societies and practices, even when these appear illogical and inexplicable at first blush. The work of ethnographers such as Margaret Mead (1928) and Melford Spiro (1982), for example, which involved the interpretation of notes taken from extensive field-work over a long time, have contributed to ongoing questions about the cultural specificity or otherwise of many developmental theories (including psychoanalysis).

One challenge associated with classical ethnography is that it is extremely time-consuming and not altogether practical in terms of rapid production of research data. It is also increasingly difficult to find funding for intensive ethnographic work. Partly for this reason, and partly for others, which will be discussed below, there has more recently been a turn towards more truncated ethnographies which, though remaining true to the quest to find the internal logic and meanings in various societies and groups, do not require the same level of immersion and input. For example, Rhodes (1995) studied aspects of the culture of health care by regular attendance at case conference and bedside meetings in a hospital. Estroff (1985) was interested in the inner world of psychiatric patients, and as part of her fieldwork as a participant observer, took the controversial decision to take psychotropic medication in order to gain a sense from the inside of what the side-effects of this medication felt like. Her argument, from a relativist perspective, was that one could not understand the inner world and culture of mental illness without experiencing first hand this key feature of what it means to be mentally ill in a society in which psychotropic medication is commonly used.

Critical approaches

From a critical approach, everything is viewed as being culturally situated. This is the cultural psychology position. Cultural psychology claims that there is not one standard psychology, but rather multiple, diverse psychologies. However, cultural psychology attempts to make sense of this diversity, without denying universals. As Shweder (2000: 210) states, cultural psychology is characterized by 'Universalism without the uniformity'. Whereas a universalist approach argues that psychological concepts are found in all cultures, and a relativist approach argues that there are different psychological experiences in separate cultures, a critical approach would argue that all contexts have multiple and diverse cultures, and

psychological concepts can only be understood with a critical understanding of diversity and how knowledge is produced. Critical approaches are not necessarily separate from other approaches, but a key factor in a critical approach to cultural psychology is that it views issues of difference and diversity as being linked to broader social phenomena of power and control. It is not, for example, merely *interesting* that many (probably most) people express psychological distress in somatic terms but that psychiatrists and psychologists tend to use psychological understandings. A critical approach to this issue begins to ask questions about how it is that certain forms of understanding (in this case, a psychologized view of the world) have come to be seen as offering better explanations of the world than other kinds of understanding (such as a somatic view of emotional and interpersonal life). How does the dominance of psychology and psychiatry interlink with processes of colonialism, the global economy, and even the economic power of multinational drug companies? When western psychology meets non-Western ways of being in the world, what does it do to make sense of these ways of being and even to make these ways of being knowable to and controllable by the west? These are all questions within the critical tradition in cultural psychology.

The emergence of the mini-ethnography has been a key method in furthering the critical turn in cultural psychology. We mentioned earlier that large-scale ethnographies where the researcher goes to another culture for a long period of time are expensive and increasingly difficult to fund, useful though the data they produce may be. From a critical perspective though, the process of setting up an ethnographic study of another culture raises questions about power relationships across cultures, who has the right to speak for whom (see Box 30.1), and the ways in which the very method of ethnography may impose narrative structures on the data collected (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Smaller ethnographies, and ethnographies of organizations within the dominant culture enable

BOX 30.1 Critical Question: Who Speaks on Behalf of Whom? The Case of Female Genital Mutilation

Shweder (2002) explores the controversial arguments surrounding the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). He documents some of the arguments put forward by the anti-FGM movement criticizing the practice as a gross violation of women's human rights; a practice which is 'enforced' by patriarchal African societies. Shweder argues that these arguments are put forward from a position of moral disgust and indignation from particular cultural values. These emotional reactions are strengthened by the use of powerful images and words (for example in referring to the practice as 'mutilation' rather than 'circumcision'; circumcision being practiced on many males around the world).

Shweder suggests that many of the arguments put forward by the anti-FGM movement are not always based on empirical evidence, and documents research, and voices of women who have been circumcised who support female genital circumcision. He refers to Fuambai Ahmadu, a young academic in USA, who is a Kono woman from Sierra Leone. She herself has undergone the customary circumcision, and has publicly declared that the anti-FGM discourse of the custom does not reflect her experience or that of many Kono women.

Shweder suggests that the reported practice of FGM provokes what he terms a 'yuck' response, with a recoil of horror at the savagery of the custom. This response is based on Western attitudes towards beauty and the body:

Instead of assuming that our own perceptions of beauty and disfigurement are universal and must be transcendental, we might want to consider the possibility that a real and astonishing cultural divide exists around the world in moral, emotional, and aesthetic reactions to female genital surgeries

Shweder (2002: 222)

Shweder's views are not uncontroversial, but his emphasis on the need to take seriously the question of cultural diversity, however unpalatable that diversity may be, is important.

us methodologically to show that many of the ways in which so-called 'primitive' or 'strange' societies are organized, are not that different from those seen in dominant 'western' culture. Part of the skill in ethnographies of aspects of dominant culture lies in being able to 'make strange' things which may appear 'normal' or ordinary about dominant culture. The critical approach to cultural psychology, then, requires a methodological stance within which even the most mundane and apparently obvious aspects of life become open to scrutiny. This general critical stance towards methods can also of course be transposed into a range of methodological techniques, including interviews, focus groups, and a range of participative approaches.

Indigenous psychologies

Alongside the development of cultural psychology as a focus within psychology as a whole, there has also been increasing interest

in what has been termed 'indigenous psychology', or 'indigenous psychologies'. In similar fashion to the definitions of and approaches to cultural psychology, there are two major emphases in the field of indigenous psychologies. On the one hand, the study of indigenous psychologies is very much within the relativist tradition, attempting to gain an understanding of world-views from the perspective of people who inhabit psychological worlds and realities which differ from one another (Heelas, 1981). This tradition provides important data, and requires careful ethnographic work. On the other hand, however, the study of indigenous psychologies can also be seen as operating from a more explicitly political position which seeks to advance the interests of oppressed indigenous groups in a range of colonized countries. For example, there has been increasing concern with the psychological implications of the subaltern status of indigenous Canadians, of Maori people in New Zealand, and aboriginal groups in Australia, all of whom experience

psychological and health challenges linked to their political status.

The critical turn in the study of indigenous psychologies has also led to debate about methods used in research. For example, Tomlinson and Swartz (2003) have examined a recent text which uses the method of ethnographic fiction and is designed to provide insight into the different approaches to infancy and childrearing across the world. They show that the book has some benefits but is methodologically and politically suspect in that some of the chapters notionally written from 'indigenous', insider perspectives, were in fact written by western outsiders, some of whom had never even visited the countries and groups in whose voice they claimed to be writing. It is not acceptable methodologically, Tomlinson and Swartz (2003) argue, to claim to be able speak in and represent the voice of the other.

The term 'indigenous' in psychology and in society more broadly, is, like the term 'culture', open to abuse. An example of present difficulties with the claims made about indigenous knowledge can be seen in the statements made by the South African minister of health, Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang around the time of writing of this chapter. Dr Tshabalala-Msimang has repeatedly made claims for the health-giving effects of some vegetables and herbs for people who have AIDS, and has been less vocal about the importance of antiretroviral therapies for AIDS. There is good clinical trial evidence for the efficacy of antiretroviral therapies but none for the effectiveness of the remedies Dr Tshabalala-Msimang is promoting. Part of the way in which she justifies her views on this matter is with reference to the importance of respecting indigenous views and remedies (Swartz, 2006). As Farmer (1997) pointed out, if all remedies and practices touted as efficacious by people who are concerned to promote indigenous systems had the range and quality of effects sometimes claimed for them, the rich West would long since have imported and appropriated more of these remedies. When we aim to be culturally sensitive and to promote the rights of

oppressed groups, we need to keep a clear methodological head, and not to make claims which are made without any consideration of evidence and which may in the end not promote understanding.

CULTURE AND ISSUES IN RESEARCH

Neutrality

Researchers come with their own set of cultural values, and we need to take into account the position of the researcher and observer in relation to the culture being analysed (Salvatore and Pagano, 2005). There is no neutral position when studying cultural phenomena. As stated by Gjerde (2004: 153–4):

Each view of culture is positioned and every statement about culture has an ideological dimension. Cultural psychology is per se a critical discipline; anyone who maps cultural phenomena has, implicitly or explicitly, a value orientation that influences his or her perceptions. Hence there is no neutral place from where to observe, interpret, or name cultural phenomena.

In addition, very often we think of cultures as natural, homogenous entities, and do not take into consideration diverse viewpoints within a particular society. This raises questions about who speaks on behalf of whom? Who is a cultural spokesperson/broker? Shweder (2002) raises these issues in his discussion around female genital mutilation (see Box 30.1).

Shweder raises the issue of representivity, and who can speak for whom. In the case of female genital mutilation, for example, does a man from a very patriarchal culture have more status as an insider to speak on behalf of oppressed women in his culture than does, say a woman from another culture who has panfeminist ideas? There is no easy solution to this dilemma. Gjerde (2004) argues that no individual can be representative of a culture, and so it becomes problematic to speak of a 'cultural insider'. What is perhaps important is to provide a balanced view, with an aim to understanding different points of view.

Fadiman (1997) provides an excellent example of an ethnographic study which takes differing cultural interpretations into account. Her award-winning book, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, gives a detailed ethnographic case study of a Hmong child being treated by American doctors. The case study is of a refugee family from Laos, living in California, USA. The family's young daughter was diagnosed with severe epilepsy and received medical treatment from a California hospital. However, her family understood her seizures as being caused by her soul fleeing from her body, and called it by the Hmong name *quag dab peg* which means 'the spirit catches you and you fall down' (referring to the soul being stolen from the body and the person left falling). There existed a continuous clash between the hospital and the family, due to a lack of understanding between the doctors and the family over the illness and its treatment. For example, Hmong understanding of the body and the soul meant that procedures like blood sampling, spinal taps and anaesthesia would be understood as causing the soul to flee the body. Fadiman writes with an overarching political commitment to the particular child receiving the best health care. However, she does so in a spirit of active neutrality and curiosity about different perspectives, with a desire to understand different forms of internal logics.

The need to acknowledge differences

When working in a multicultural context, there are many ways of understanding and making sense of different identities. In order to process these differences in a helpful way, we must acknowledge them, and recognize that they do exist. If we assume that everyone is similar, we risk ignoring individual ways of being. There is a silencing effect in wanting to be culturally correct and non-discriminatory, but in order to achieve a deeper understanding of difference, we need more open discussion of dilemmas. Shweder and Sullivan (1993), however,

caution that although we need to acknowledge differences, we should do so 'without falling back on the interpretation of the other as a deficient or underdeveloped version of the self' (Shweder and Sullivan, 1993: 501).

To do this, we need to also acknowledge our own prejudices around issues of difference. If we are able to reflect upon our own sensitivities about diversity, then we can observe more clearly what others do. Family therapists have developed a helpful way of contrasting two particular ways in which culture is used (Friedman, 1982; DiNicola, 1986). People's 'cultural costume' refers to the beliefs and values that people may hold and have inherited from their particular community. However, these beliefs and traditions may be used as a way of distracting attention away from problems; what authors refer to as 'cultural camouflage'. This may lead to the abusive use of culture in making certain claims. For example, Gibson, Swartz and Sandenbergh (2002) show how people can refuse to change oppressive practices, and gender oppression in particular, on the grounds that these practices are part of an unchanging culture which is immune from scrutiny from the outside.

In the USA, the question of the use and abuse of culture took place in heated discussions around the future status of Elián Gonzalez, a Cuban boy found adrift at sea in November 1999 during an attempt to reach Miami. During a struggle to decide on whether Elián should return to Cuba to his father or remain in Miami with relatives, much political debate ensued on whether it was 'right' for the boy to be raised in a communist culture or a capitalist culture (see Sahlins, 2002).

In the use of 'cultural camouflage', individuals will cite cultural difference as a basis for misunderstandings about a certain problem or difficulty. We cannot get away from 'real' differences that may exist, but what is important is to take these differences into account when trying to make sense of the world. Anthropologists have

suggested that it is possible to work without fully understanding what is occurring across cultures. They talk about a 'working misunderstanding', and suggest that it is not fully possible for one to understand another individual's cultural traditions or beliefs, but that even when we recognize this incommensurability, we can still find a way of working across divides (Sahlins, 2002).

The use of diverse research teams and collaborative research projects can be a useful means by which to facilitate necessary reflexivity and open discussion of dilemmas. Together with colleagues from two South African universities, the authors have been involved in a collaborative, inter-disciplinary teaching research project. This project aims to facilitate students' collaborative learning on issues of diversity, community and professional work, across the boundaries of race, class and culture (see Rohleder, Swartz, Bozalek, Carolissen and Leibowitz, in press a; Rohleder, Swartz, Carolissen, Bozalek and Leibowitz, in press b). In this project a practical module was designed as part of fourth year social work and psychology students' curriculum. The project used a combination of face-to-face workshops and internet-based (E-learning) interaction. One of the universities has a history of having mainly white¹, middle-class students, and the other university having mostly black or coloured¹ students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The project was informed by a participatory action research approach, which emphasizes practical collaboration and reflexivity. Students generated written online discussions around diversity and communities in small groups. These discussions were then analysed using qualitative methods, such as content analysis and discourse analysis. The project enabled students to broaden their awareness around issues of diversity, with many students discussing how their racial, classed and gendered history impacted on their social and professional lives. The project aimed to encourage the necessary reflexivity needed when engaging with differences. However, this is not

easy to do, and many of the students tended to focus on their commonalities and silencing their opinions in the interest of appearing culturally correct (Rohleder et al., in press a).

Multilingualism and the use of interpretation and translation

The issue of language differences is a particular concern in cultural psychology research, when researching different cultures and societies from one's own. In a multicultural, multilingual society (and most societies in the world now are in fact very diverse), clinical and research practice in psychology regularly needs to take into account the translation and interpretation of language.

There are a number of ways in which language difference can be viewed. An empiricist approach to understanding language, regards language as labels used to refer to things that exist in reality. Thus different languages would use different labels for objects and realities that exist across the world. A translator or interpreter would then, relatively easily, supply need to find the appropriate label that describes the object or reality spoken about.

In a hermeneutic or social constructionist approach, more consistent with current trends in qualitative methods, language is seen as the means in which meaning and reality is fabricated, and self-experience is constructed (Bruner, 1991; Burr, 1995). In this model, translation and interpretation become complex activities. We need to consider how language is used in conveying not only information but also emotional experience, and implicit beliefs about status, and about how social life operates. In this hermeneutic model, we also have to take into account 'the extent to which the act of translation implies the construction of a particular reality' (Swartz, 1998: 29).

Interpretation

When conducting qualitative research in cultural psychology, very often interviews are

conducted with participants speaking a different language to that of the interviewer. Thus, an interpreter is needed for the interview. The use of an interpreter needs to be considered when gaining informed consent from interviewees for their participation, and furthermore has implications for the confidentiality of the interviews.

In hospital settings in lower-income countries, staff members who are not trained interpreters are commonly called upon to interpret interviews conducted. Studies have highlighted how the unclear role of these interpreters in the hospital structure, as well as the lack of training around the act of interpreting, may contribute to failures in interpreted interviews (Crawford, 1994; Drennan, 1996, 1999; Elderkin-Thompson, Silver and Waitzkin, 2001).

Vasquez and Javier (1991) outline common errors that are made by interpreters, when parts of what is said are omitted or added on, or sections of messages are condensed, or substituted with other messages. Interpreters may also take on the role of interviewer. These errors are outlined in Box 30.2.

In addition to these common errors, there is also the issue that there is not only one correct translation for a particular word. For example, in India, Shweder (2003) notes how in the Oriya language the word *lajya* may be interpreted as 'shame', 'modest', 'shy', 'bashful' or 'embarrassed'. Similarly, in South Africa the Xhosa word *ukukhathazekile*

in Xhosa may, depending on context mean 'depressed', 'anxious', or 'worried' (Swartz, 1998).

These issues make interpreted interviews difficult. In Box 30.3, we outline a number of suggestions for before, during and after the interview, which may improve its success.

Translation

In psychological research, very often questionnaires or written texts are used as data for analysis. It may be necessary in the research to translate these into different languages. The act of translation may be as difficult as that of interpreting, with similar issues such as there not only being one correct translation for a particular word. Brislin (1986) suggests some translation methods which may help in obtaining best possible results. These are outlined in Box 30.4, and include back-translation, the need for conceptual equivalence, bilingual translation, and a translating committee.

This approach to translation, though useful, often does not take into account the power relations that are involved in the translating process (Drennan et al., 1991). Cultural representations may be suppressed or advanced by those who hold power (Gjerde, 2004). Conceptual representations that are constructed by the investigator may not be equivalent to the research subject's representations (Shweder and Sullivan, 1993).

BOX 30.2 Common Errors Made by Interpreters in Interpreted Interviews

1. <i>Omission:</i>	This is when an interpreter leaves out sections of a message given by a person speaking. This commonly happens when a large amount is said in the interview.
2. <i>Addition:</i>	The interpreter adds to what a speaker has said, often to make what is said more clear or polite.
3. <i>Condensation:</i>	Here an interpreter summarizes what has been said, according to what he or she views as being most important. This summarized view, and emphasis on what is most important may differ significantly from the views of the interviewee, as well as the interviewer.
4. <i>Substitution:</i>	Here an interpreter replaces what is said, with something that has not been said. This arises out of responding to assumptions that arise in every social interaction.
5. <i>Role exchange:</i>	The interpreter starts to take over the role of interviewer and may substitute their own questions for those posed by the interviewer.

BOX 30.3 Suggestions for Improving Interpreted Interviews

1. *Preparation*

- It is important for the interviewer and interpreter to discuss and have a clear understanding of each others' roles, how the interview is to be structured, the aims and purpose of the research interview, and how issues and problems will be dealt with as they arise in the interview.
- It is essential that the interviewer engages with the interpreter around any issues or suggestions that the interpreter may have.

2. *Introducing the interview*

- In addition to discussions around confidentiality and informed consent, the interviewee needs to be informed as to how the interview will be structured and what the roles of the participants are. It can be suggested to interviewees that their responses can be delivered in a manner that allows for periodic interpretation of what is said, rather than long, continuous narratives. Interviewees can also be invited to ask questions and raise any concerns that they may have.

3. *Conducting the interview*

- It is important to conduct the interview with consideration of the interviewee's feelings and comfort. It is useful to periodically clarify with the interviewee how the process is working.
- Interpreted interviews are usually long and can become tedious, resulting in fatigue, irritation and frustration. It is important to discuss and deal with these feelings as they arise. Breaks in the interview may be required.

4. *Discussions after the interview*

- It is useful for the interviewer and interpreter to sit for some time after the interview and discuss what happened. Issues and points that were raised during the interview can be clarified. The impressions of the interpreter as to the interviewee's behaviour or approach may provide some useful data.
- Depending on the focus of the interview, it may elicit some traumatic material which may have upset the interpreter. This must be addressed – and, indeed, planned for about afterwards.

BOX 30.4 Suggestions for Translation of Texts

1. *Back-translation*

The text is translated from the original source language to the target language. A second translator then translates the translated text back to the original source language. The back-translated version can then be compared to the original version, and adjustments made until both are conceptually as similar as possible.

2. *Need for conceptual equivalence*

Conceptual equivalence refers to the equivalence in the meaning of the items in source and translated texts.

3. *Bilingual use of questionnaires*

For example, bilingual people are asked to complete versions of the questionnaire in both its original and translated languages. Their responses can then be compared to check for accuracy of the questions asked.

4. *Translation committee*

A committee can be used to discuss aspects of the translated texts.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Cultural psychology is a discipline which is still evolving. As the world changes, with more shifts in populations through war, natural disaster, commerce and tourism, the cultural landscape of the world is changing too. Cultural psychology came of age in an era when issues of cultural difference seemed much less complex, and boundaries between cultures more clear. We now live in a world in which there is confusion about the role of cultural tolerance and respect in the light of ever more obvious manifestations of cultural intolerance, xenophobia, racism, and terrorism. In some sense the easy idea that 'if we all just respect all cultures everything will be better' has now disappeared – not that this complacent and somewhat romanticized view was ever really accurate.

The disciplined approach of cultural psychology to questions of reflexivity and difference, especially in these difficult times, has much to offer to many who are struggling to find ways to navigate diversity issues effectively and with integrity. Qualitative methodologies such as mini-ethnographies and critical discourse analysis are particularly useful, as they allow for reflexivity and the exploration of diversity and the dynamics of power in social contexts. As highlighted above, the role of the researcher as well as the researched in the construction of knowledge is a key area of exploration, in answering such critical questions as who is talking for whom. As an approach, cultural psychology does not by any means have all the answers but it certainly helps us to ask the right questions and to think about ways of going about answering them.

NOTES

1 We use the classification of racial categories 'white', 'black', 'coloured', as is commonly used in modern-day South Africa to identify groups of people. However, we acknowledge the negative connotations of these terms, as the use of these categories also carry with them a history under apartheid in South Africa, where sections of the population were classified and

kept separate from each other according to these racial categories.

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Cognitive Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Writing a chapter on the application of qualitative methods to the study of cognitive phenomena immediately runs into a problem: cognitive psychologists have from the outset held the view that one cannot trust self-reports of individuals as complete or accurate records of the cognitive processes that underlie their behaviours. Therefore, the story goes, one must adopt an independent, objective and measurable stance to investigating cognitive phenomena, which, by necessity, requires quantitative methods. In contrast, we suggest in this chapter that a full and useful understanding of cognitive phenomena and the behaviours that underlie them is achievable only through the rigorous application of a programme of mixed methods that capitalizes upon the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative stance adopted by conversation analysts (e.g. Shotter, 1993), however, is problematic for cognition. To apply qualitative methods in cognitive psychology, you have to assume that language reflects thought – otherwise, there is no ‘cognition’ to study. The alternative, adopting a constructionist stance in

which language becomes the object of study rather than the vehicle, is, we argue, untenable for cognitive psychology. In this chapter, we assume that qualitative research into cognitive phenomena necessitates a reflective rather than constructive stance.

First, we review the historical context, both past and recent, in which quantitative methods have come to dominate cognitive psychology. Second, we outline a set of reasons why we believe cognitive psychology must make recourse to qualitative methods. Third, we outline some of the key qualitative methods used to study cognitive phenomena, and exemplify them with studies from the cognitive domain, focusing especially on design cognition – an area we have been investigating over the past two decades. Fourth, we illustrate how qualitative and quantitative methods are best practiced together through a case study from our own recent research involving a study of expert reasoning in insurance-fraud investigation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Cognitive psychology, as a distinct sub-discipline within psychology, is primarily

concerned with advancing a theoretical understanding of the mental processes that underlie behaviour and action. As such, cognitive psychologists are concerned specifically (though not exclusively) with the nature of so-called 'procedural knowledge', that is, the knowledge that people possess about how to do things. The concept of procedural knowledge captures the idea that the mind applies rules, methods, tactics, strategies, heuristics and the like during cognitive processing, whether such processing is aimed at low-level perception, recognition and retrieval, or high-level thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, judgement, decision making, and hypothesis testing. Procedural knowledge is viewed as being distinct from 'declarative knowledge', which reflects a person's factual understanding about the world. So, for example, an experienced designer will have sophisticated procedural knowledge about how to organize their activity so as to develop an effective design solution under relevant constraints (e.g. time and cost). At the same time, a designer will also be able to deploy detailed declarative knowledge of design concepts (e.g. previously encountered design problems and solutions). Although some researchers (e.g. Claxton, 1978) have argued that the procedural-declarative distinction may not stand up to close scrutiny, it is generally viewed as a useful theoretical device for understanding and modelling cognitive processes. Indeed, the dominant cognitive theories of learning, memory and skill acquisition (e.g. Newell, 1991; Anderson, 2000) embody this basic distinction as part of their proposed cognitive architectures.

The limited introspective access that people have to procedural knowledge was recognized in cognitive psychology since its inception as a research discipline. For example, one of the earliest pioneers of the cognitive approach, Ulrich Neisser, emphasized that 'preconscious' processes were fundamentally important for ongoing cognition yet were inaccessible to verbal description (Neisser, 1963). One important aspect of procedural knowledge from a methodological

perspective is that it is often tacit, implicit and intuitive. Individuals can be seen to apply procedural knowledge to perform cognitive tasks without being able explicitly to report the knowledge that they brought to bear (see Berry and Dienes (1993) for an extensive review of relevant evidence). Self-report difficulties seem to reflect an access limitation: knowledge is possessed yet it cannot be retrieved for introspective verbal description. Two crucial implications derive from this access constraint for researchers interested in studying cognitive processes. First, introspective self-report techniques may often be of reduced utility in that people may be unable to give anywhere near a complete account of their task-orientated strategies and procedures. Second, introspective self reports may have negative utility in that people may unwittingly provide inaccurate or misleading accounts of their procedural knowledge when prompted by the researcher. Studies have suggested, for example, that introspective descriptions of cognitive processes may primarily reflect post hoc *rationalizations* aimed at justifying the outputs of implicit processes that took place during a task (e.g. Wason and Evans, 1975; Lucas and Ball, 2005) or self-generated causal *theories* devised to account for behaviours (e.g. Nisbett and Wilson, 1977).

Some researchers (e.g. Morris, 1981) have argued that just because self reports are sometimes inaccurate does not imply that this is always the case. Indeed, White (1988) reports several experiments showing verbal reports to be veridical. As Evans (1989) points out, however, although accurate self reports of procedural knowledge may *sometimes* be obtained using introspective techniques, if no a priori criteria exist as to when self reports will be accurate, then the practical value of these techniques remains doubtful. To date, no clear-cut criteria have been forwarded (though see Ericsson and Simon (1993) for some suggestions in this regard).

Introspective methods of self-reporting may be of limited value to the researcher interested in investigating procedural knowledge, but such methods do seem to be of

value in providing an understanding of people's declarative knowledge. Evidently, people have much greater access to factual than to procedural knowledge. For example, they are adept at verbally expressing characteristic concepts that pertain to domains they are skilled at working in, including the nature of common problems and tasks and criteria that are applied to determine the adequacy of solutions. Schadbolt and Burton (1989) have argued that structured interviewing techniques (where the researcher guides the inquiry in a formally-planned manner) can be particularly useful in eliciting declarative knowledge. Indeed, one of the key challenges for cognition is to understand how humans organize their declarative knowledge internally. This turns out to be hard to study quantitatively (since measurement of output allows only inference about internal structure), but more amenable to qualitative methods that can reveal something of the richness and complexity of knowledge organization.

The realization that procedural knowledge was inaccessible had a major impact on early methodology within the emerging cognitive tradition. The standard technique for studying procedural knowledge that became established involved setting short, controlled laboratory tasks, based around factorial, experimental designs and obtaining objective performance measures (typically response latencies and errors) from which underlying cognitive processes were inferred theoretically. This experimental method still dominates cognitive psychology, although other laboratory-based approaches such as computational modelling and neuroscientific imaging studies are now also a key aspect of contemporary research. Even as the experimental method started to gain ascendancy in cognitive psychology in the 1960s and 1970s, however, it was realized that the method may have its own inherent limitations. In the next section we overview three arguments for the use of qualitative methods in cognitive psychology that derive from recognition of the limits of a purely quantitative research enterprise.

ARGUMENTS FOR QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Understanding high-level cognition

There is no doubt that experimental approaches based on quantitative measurements of behaviour have led to enormous developments in our understanding of low-level cognitive phenomena associated with, for example, perception, recognition, and language understanding. Likewise, laboratory-based studies that present participants with small-scale tasks that can be tackled within a short time-frame (i.e. seconds or at most a few minutes) have helped advance an understanding of the high-level processes involved in reasoning, decision-making and problem-solving. The experimental method, however, has proved much more limited when it comes to studying cognitive processes that extend over longer periods of time. Indeed, some tasks, such as design problem solving or scientific exploration, may extend over many months or even years. The quantitative approach is simply not intended for the study of extended thought processes that presumably involve many stages of information processing before a final solution or decision is attained. In contrast, a qualitative approach can trace the organization and sequencing of processing over extended stages of goal-directed activity.

Furthermore, the experimental approach needs to be theory-driven to operate effectively in that it revolves around the deduction from a stated theory of logically necessary and empirically testable predictions that can be tested by means of factorial manipulations. Ideally, such manipulations should give rise to 'crucial' experiments, where quantitative data arbitrate in favour of one theory over competing theories. This method is not well suited to research in novel areas of psychological research where theoretical models are ill-defined and where inductive, exploratory data gathering can be more useful. Despite efforts over the past few decades to extend cognitive research into real-world

domains involving goal-oriented reasoning, problem solving and decision making, these domains are still characterized by a lack of advanced psychological theorizing, such that experimental analysis often remains of little value.

Capturing situated and distributed cognition

Two additional aspects of real-world cognitive activity – especially as it plays out in professional work contexts – render it impenetrable to standard quantitative, experimental approaches. First, such activity is highly ‘situated’ such that processes are shaped by organizational and cultural goals, social structures and interpersonal interactions. Take design activity as an example. Much commercial design is bounded by the company context in which it takes place. As such, design processes are heavily influenced by the constraints and affordances that derive from team members, team managers, organizational priorities, and local, cultural conventions (e.g. Reid, Culverhouse, Jagodzinski, Parsons and Burningham, 2000).

Second, real-world cognitive activity tends to be highly ‘distributed’ in that cognition is not located within any single individual but is mediated through complex interactions between multiple internal and external knowledge repositories, including other members of teams and external artefacts (e.g. Suchman, 1987; Lave, 1988; Busby, 2001). The ‘distributed cognition’ approach (e.g. Hutchins, 1995) even goes as far as to argue that a traditional view in which context and culture merely modulate the internal cognitive processes of individuals is mistaken. Instead, it is proposed that ‘cultural activity systems’ can have cognitive properties of their own that reflect emergent properties of the whole rather than simply being the sum of the properties of the individuals working within the system.

Some of these notions appear quite radical for the discipline of cognitive psychology, since factors associated with social and organizational elements of activity are

controlled out of the analysis in experimental studies of de-contextualized cognition. Our own perspective (Ball and Ormerod, 2000a, 2000b) is that different research endeavours within the cognitive framework are directed toward different research goals – sometimes individual-oriented and sometimes organization-oriented – and it is perfectly legitimate to take a different theoretical stance when studying task-based cognitive processes, dependent on one’s research agenda. At the same time, different research foci (e.g. on the individual or the team) can lead to quite different accounts of cognitive processes. For example, Hutchins (1995) observed how the well-established laboratory-based phenomenon of ‘confirmation bias’, a tendency for individuals to engage in verifying rather than falsifying tests of hypotheses) was absent in team hypothesis-testing in navigational decision-making. Like Hutchins, we have also provided evidence for another well-known cognitive phenomenon, ‘satisficing’ (where problem solvers fixate upon a satisfactory solution rather than exploring options to go beyond mere satisfactory outcomes) dominating individual design practice, but being managed out of team-based design contexts (Ball, Lambell, Ormerod, Slavin and Mariani, 2001).

Informing technological design

Recently, qualitative methods have gained a prominent role in the study of cognitive phenomena in order to inform the design of technological systems. The emphasis of such research is applied rather than theoretical: the aim is to understand situated and distributed cognitive processes so as to guide the design and development of computer-based technologies that can facilitate work practices (e.g. medical reasoning, business decision making, criminal investigation, military command and control). Computer-based facilitation may be of two primary forms. First, technology can fully automate key aspects of work-oriented processes, essentially replacing the human operator such

that she or he is left with a monitoring function, only having to engage in skilled interventions when automated systems fail. Examples of automated support technologies include the flight-control systems on contemporary passenger aircraft or emergency shut-down systems in process-control industries such as nuclear power production. Second, computer-based technologies can act as cooperative systems, working alongside the human operator in an assistive manner (e.g. helping to structure problems, represent complex data sets, pursue process simulations, and facilitate decision making). Many current computer-aided design (CAD) systems have this cooperative emphasis.

One intriguing phenomenon associated with technological systems development that has both theoretical and methodological implications is the 'task-artefact cycle' (Carroll and Campbell, 1989). This refers to the observation that the study and analysis of real-world tasks motivates the development of technological artefacts aimed at supporting such tasks, with these technological artefacts, in turn, affecting the very nature and conditions of task performance. In essence, artefacts are implicit psychological hypotheses that need to be tested through subsequent empirical evaluation. Thus, the researcher not only needs to conduct studies aimed at informing system design, but also has to assess the impact of such systems once they have been embedded within the workplace.

The reality of the task-artefact cycle means that the process of technological system design is not only ongoing and iterative in nature but is also steeped in complexity. Indeed, cognitive research has been at the forefront in clarifying many difficulties that lie at the heart of the relationship between humans and advanced technological systems. Bainbridge (1987), for example, discusses the 'ironies of automation' that arise when human operators are replaced with automated devices. For instance, automated process-control systems can leave the human to do tasks that the system designer could not envisage how to automate (e.g. monitoring for rare abnormal events

arising from unpredicted interdependencies). Similarly, Sarter and Woods (1997) have shown that people may over-attribute capabilities to intelligent systems (i.e. mistakenly assuming that because a system can authoritatively automate one aspect of functionality then it can also automate other aspects of functionality). We, and many others, contend that it is only really through a primarily qualitatively driven approach that the applied researcher can penetrate the rich and subtle dependencies that are associated with the task-artefact cycle. In this way, qualitative cognitive psychology is central to enabling effective design and evaluation of advanced interactive technologies in computer-supported work environments.

TYPES OF QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Table 31.1 summarizes the main qualitative methods used in cognitive research to advance an understanding of people's procedural and declarative knowledge. The table distinguishes between two broad classes of qualitative method: those that are primarily applicable for studies of relatively de-contextualized cognition and those that address the complexities of fully contextualized cognition.

De-contextualized studies entail observing an individual whilst they are working in isolation on small-scale versions of tasks that relate to their domain of expertise. In a sense, such studies aim to include a level of control over the individual's environment whilst still simulating key aspects of problems and opportunities that might arise in typical work activity. For example, a professional designer might be given a design brief that can be tackled over a one-hour period, with access to computer-based tools and external knowledge repositories, but without the input of other designers, managers, or clients. We provide detailed discussion of two de-contextualized methods below: verbal protocol analysis, which is deployed to gain insight into people's procedural knowledge, and card

Table 31.1 Overview of qualitative methods used in cognitive research, with illustrative examples taken from the domain of design research

<i>Method</i>	<i>Behavioural trace obtained</i>	<i>Basic approach to analysis</i>	<i>Example application of the method</i>
Verbal protocol analysis	A concurrent think-aloud record of the current contents of short-term memory produced by an individual tackling a small-scale version of a domain-based task.	The application of a coding scheme to categorize processes that are inferred to underlie the think-aloud record. The analyst can examine the coded protocol for patterns and sequences of processing over time.	Ball, Evans, Dennis and Ormerod's (1997) study of expert design entailed the application of an a priori coding scheme to categorize episodes of problem identification, solution generation and solution evaluation to enable identification of the strategic organization of behaviour over time.
Video protocol analysis	A concurrent visual record of an individual's activities, including gestures, bodily movements, external manipulations, pen-and-paper output, and screen capture of computer-based interaction.	Visual depictions can be used to clarify codes applied to think-aloud protocols. Coding schemes can also be applied to categorize observable actions and manipulations.	Ball, Ormerod and Morley's (2004) study of spontaneous analogizing in engineering design combined verbal protocol analysis with the use of video-recorded sketching activity to augment the coding of analogical reasoning processes.
Card sorting	A description of dimensions and categories within them by which individuals or groups delineate conceptual knowledge, from which internal mental organization of knowledge can be inferred.	People sort domain object descriptions into categories. Sorts may be free (participants determine dimensions and the number and type of categories under each) or fixed (dimensions and categories presented by the researcher).	Ormerod et al. (1999) used a free card sort method to explore the organization and strategic prioritization of domain knowledge by specialist designers of educational tasks.
Cognitive ethnography	Records deriving from fieldwork observations focused on the situated assessment of activity, with an emphasis on observational specificity, purposiveness and verifiability (e.g. through data triangulation).	Coding and analysis of fieldnotes, conversation transcripts, video records and documents. The analyst can examine coded material for patterns and sequences of processing over time.	Ball and Ormerod's (2000b) study of commercial designers used cognitive ethnography to gain insights into natural processes of 'design re-use' (e.g. of previous solution ideas) in order to develop a computer-based tool to support re-use in innovative design environments.
Diary analysis	Concurrent diary entries maintained by individuals who are working on tasks in real-world contexts. Diary entries may be structured at their time of production under pre-specified headings.	The application of a coding scheme to categorize processes that are inferred to underlie diary entries. The analyst can examine the coded diary for patterns and sequences of processing over time.	Ball, Evans and Dennis's (1994) study of pre-expert design entailed the application of an a priori coding scheme to categorize cognitive processes that were reflected in designers' diary entries to enable identification of the strategic organization of design behaviour.

sorting, which is deployed to gain insight into the organization of people's declarative knowledge.

Unlike de-contextualized approaches to studying cognition, contextualized methods tackle head on the issues surrounding situated and distributed aspects of real-world cognitive activity. Such methods tend, therefore, to be focused on the cognitive phenomena associated with groups engaged in work-based activity, and not just the individual cognition of group members. The requirement for observational analyses of behaviour in situated environments means that cognitive psychologists end up using techniques such as ethnography (e.g. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) that have traditionally been more the province of sociologists and anthropologists. We discuss the role that ethnographic methods have played in recent cognitive studies below. As we will see, a key question for cognitivists is the extent to which ethnography can be adapted so as to render it sensitive to the aims of cognitive psychology (i.e. to understanding the nature of people's procedural and declarative knowledge).

An important feature of our own approach to using qualitative research in cognition is that we do not adopt either de-contextualized or contextualized methods exclusively and in isolation. To do so, we suggest, brings the problems rehearsed in previous sections. Using de-contextualized methods exclusively runs the risk of missing the time course and complexity of cognitive phenomena, and potentially of changing the nature of the cognitive activity under study by removing it from the context of performance aspects (e.g. the contribution of others) that are critical to its real-world nature. At the same time, the exclusive use of contextualized methods runs risks of accounts based on rationalizations of cognitive performance, both those of the individuals under study and those of the researcher. The importance of 'triangulation' of observations needs to be emphasized. For example, ethnographers will typically seek to demonstrate a key theme from different views of the domain of study. The discipline of cognitive science seeks to

provide strong theoretical accounts of human cognitive activity by providing converging evidence from experimental, computational modelling, and neuropsychological sources. In our own work, illustrated in the case study of insurance fraud investigation described below, we adopt a similar approach to theory building and testing, by triangulating observations and tests across different contextualized and de-contextualized methods (see also Dunbar and Blanchette (2001) for a summary of interesting research on scientific reasoning that is based on triangulating naturalistic and laboratory methods in what they refer to as an 'in vivo/in vitro' approach to cognition). There is, of course a risk in building and testing theories through triangulation across methods: a number of weak convergent observations do not combine to offer a strong test of a theory. Each data set must stand on its own merits as high-quality research.

Verbal protocol analysis

It seems obvious that, if you want to understand how people are able to undertake a cognitive activity or what factors prevent them from doing so, you should ask them. However, the unreliable nature of introspective self-reporting means that introspection (i.e. getting individuals to reflect on the processes and knowledge that underlie their performance) is rarely employed in cognitive research. In some respects, this is a pity, since one often reads reports of measured cognitive activity where no attempt is made to engage participants in reflecting about their own performance. Eliciting rationalizations of task performance (i.e. accounts after the event) from individuals and groups has been shown not only to provide useful insights into cognitive determinants of difficulty and success, but also to offer practical benefits for learning and problem-solving (e.g. VanLehn, Jones and Chi, 1991).

Another class of qualitative techniques is generally better for eliciting a reliable understanding of people's procedural knowledge. These techniques entail behavioural

observation that is *concurrent* to the tasks that are being tackled. For example, people can be monitored informally in their natural work environments whilst they engage in their professional activities (examples of such observational approaches in cognitive psychology are discussed below). Alternatively, a more formal observational study can be undertaken in a laboratory setting with an individual tackling tasks analogous to those normally dealt with, but under tighter levels of experimental control. In such contexts the researcher can obtain a blow-by-blow video record (or 'protocol') of behaviour. Such data can be analysed so that underlying thought processes may be inferred. A fuller understanding of underlying procedural knowledge can be obtained by also asking the participant to 'think aloud' whilst they are working on a task. The resulting think-aloud trace – or verbal protocol – can likewise be analysed to provide insights into the nature, organization and sequencing of activities so as to enable inferences to be made about the procedural knowledge used in tackling a task.

This think-aloud technique is arguably one of the best qualitative methods for understanding procedural knowledge in domains involving extended stages of thought (Ericsson and Simon, 1980, 1993). A strength of this approach is that it can be used in conjunction with other behavioural recordings (e.g. video records of physical work activities, facial expressions, and bodily movements) so as to provide a rich account of procedural aspects of behaviour. One interesting development in recent cognitive research is the use of quantitatively based eye-movement tracking as convergent data to support qualitative insights gained from verbal protocols (see Ball, Lucas, Miles and Gale (2003) and Lucas and Ball (2005) for studies using eye-movement analysis and think-aloud protocol analysis as complementary approaches that converge on a single account of cognitive processes involved in hypothesis testing behaviour).

The elicitation of verbal protocols from people engaged in problem solving and reasoning has become a respected method of

cognitive enquiry since Ericsson and Simon's (e.g. Ericsson and Simon, 1980) presentation of powerful arguments supporting the validity of this approach. As a basis for their arguments, Ericsson and Simon formulated a detailed information-processing model of cognition that explicated the mechanism underpinning people's production of verbal reports in response to various verbalization requirements (e.g. instructions to think aloud, requests to reply to concurrent probes, or instructions to produce retrospective reports). Within this model, concurrent verbal reports provide details of the information 'attended to' or 'heeded' by a participant at any particular point in time in that they directly reflect the *current contents* of short-term memory. According to this model, it is important in analysing think-aloud verbalizations to appreciate that one is dealing with the 'products' of cognitive processes rather than self-reported 'descriptions' of cognitive processes. This means that underlying processes can only be inferred by the researcher on the basis of careful and systematic interpretation of protocol content.

Ericsson and Simon (1980, 1993) additionally differentiate three 'levels' of verbalization, each level associated with an increasing number of mediating processes between the heeding of information and its externalization. Level 1 involves direct articulation of information that when heeded exists in a verbal code. Level 2 occurs when heeded information is encoded in a non-verbal form (e.g. as visuospatial imagery) which must be recoded into a verbal description. Level 3 arises in situations where the task instructions require the participant to verbalize only selected types of heeded information or information that would not normally be attended to during a task. This three-level characterization of verbalization is significant since it provides a foundation for formulating specific predictions concerning which think-aloud procedures are most likely to be reactive (i.e. to change the actual processes being studied). The upshot is that think-aloud requirements may have problematic effects when they require a degree of

processing additional to that involved in the direct articulation of verbally-heeded information, as in Level 1 situations. Indeed, after reviewing a large number of studies, Ericsson and Simon (1993) conclude that thinking aloud does not affect the structure and course of processing for Level 1 verbalization, whilst for Level 2 verbalization it may slightly decrease the speed of performance. However, Level 3 verbalization appears to have a distorting influence on normal, task-based processing.

Another issue that Ericsson and Simon (1980, 1993) address is the 'completeness' of concurrent verbal reports. One key omission that they discuss relates to the intermediate products of recognition or retrieval processes. Such intermediate products do not register in short-term memory, although the final products of these processes are reportable. For example, recognizing a familiar face occurs directly without any apparent intermediate storage of facial features. The second type of omission concerns the intermediate products of 'automatic processes' that have become so well practiced as to render any conscious attention to intermediate products unnecessary. Automation of processes is, of course, generally regarded as an intrinsic aspect of expertise, and is closely associated with the concept of recognition-primed retrieval (see Klein, 1998), both in situations where skilled performance involves perceptual-motor processes (e.g. games or sports) and in domains where it involves higher-level reasoning processes (e.g. medical diagnosis or design).

When it comes to the collection and analysis of concurrent verbal reports, the approach taken depends critically upon the degree of rigour that is being sought by the researcher. If the researcher wishes to test a specific hypothesis using verbal reports, then it is necessary to adopt a formal method for protocol analysis. However, many studies, particularly those that use protocol analysis in the formative stages of research in novel domains, adopt a more anecdotal or schematic method of protocol analysis that tends toward more subjective descriptions of verbalizations. The researcher reads through

the protocol and groups it into what they consider to be patterns or classes of activity, as if creating a flow chart of the participant's behaviour. These analyses are relatively easy to conduct, but suffer a consequent loss of rigour (e.g. see Anderson, Farrell and Sauers, 1984). In contrast, formal protocol analysis aims to describe objectively each verbalization with a pre-determined coding scheme. Protocol analysis can also differ in its intent. A top-down analysis is conducted to test a specific cognitive theory. It is top-down, in that the theory is used to create expectations of the kinds of behaviour to be observed in the protocols. A bottom-up analysis is used to investigate tasks where little is known in advance about likely performance. Top-down and bottom-up analyses can be either formal or anecdotal. In general, even if one does not have a specific cognitive theory to test before collecting verbal reports as data, it is a good idea to try and follow as many of the methods for a formal protocol analysis as possible, depending, of course, on the time and resources available for conducting the analysis. Formal approaches to protocol analysis entail five key stages, which are summarized in Table 31.2.

The card sort method

The protocol analysis method outlined in Table 31.2 involves assigning components of data sets, in this case concurrent verbalizations, to categories that have shared and interpretable meanings. A similar categorization approach underlies the card sort method. A card sort can be conceived as being a specific technique for undertaking the coding stage of protocol analysis (though it can be applied to domain objects or types as well as protocols). Using this technique, individuals sort piles of cards or other objects (or their computer-based equivalent) into discrete categories according to a particular dimension. The resulting assignments are interpreted as indicators of the mental organization accorded to the same knowledge set. For example, Adelson (1981) investigated differences between novice and expert

Table 31.2 Stages of verbal protocol analysis

Stage	Focus	Methodological recommendations
Elicitation	This stage includes recording the verbal protocol, either digitally or onto tape.	If one is collecting protocols across different conditions, it may be necessary to calibrate and balance talkative and quiet participants across conditions according to the amount they verbalize. Participants will require some training and practice in verbalizing using a 'warm-up' task (e.g. anagram problem solving). Participants may need instruction in the kinds of verbalizations they should make. A useful technique is to show a video of someone else verbalizing whilst performing a different task. Participants tend to stop verbalizing whilst concentrating. To get them talking again it is important to use neutral prompts (e.g. 'Please keep talking'). A prompt such as 'What are you thinking now?' might be interpreted by a participant as a cue that they have done something significant that requires justification.
Transcription	This stage entails the production of a written record of the session, including all verbalizations and the times at which they were made.	Transcription can take several hours per hour of recording, and is best undertaken using a transcribing tape recorder with foot pedal for easy review of utterances. It is best to transcribe every utterance, even when these seem irrelevant to the study. The researcher should not be tempted to paraphrase or to correct syntax and speech errors since the unprocessed transcript represents the raw data of protocol analysis. Prior to the analysis of a protocol the transcript needs to be segmented into meaningful units that reflect speech related to specific topics. Segmentation requires judgement as people do not speak in punctuated or complete sentences, and may change topic mid-utterance. Pauses in speech can guide segmentation, since pauses often signal initiation or completion of activities (as well as mental concentration). Perhaps the most rigorous approach to protocol segmentation is to use discourse analytic methods for identifying speech markers as appropriate places to break text (e.g. Belkin, Brooks and Daniels, 1988). Segments determine the grain size of protocol analysis, and so the decision on how to segment is critical to theoretical interpretation.
Coding	This stage involves applying a coding scheme to the transcript to capture underlying task-oriented processes.	A formal protocol analysis needs a coding scheme (based on existing theory) prior to data collection. Informal studies construct a coding scheme in the light of the obtained protocol: One method is to use a sample of transcripts to generate the scheme, and a different sample for the eventual coding, analysis and interpretation. A good scheme should use as few categories as possible to describe all processes, whilst reliably distinguishing between different processes. It should have a restricted vocabulary that removes unnecessary words and synonyms. Typical coding schemes consist of two or more components. One component may describe the cognitive act (e.g. read, remember, infer, paraphrase, communicate, evaluate), another component may describe the object of the cognitive act (e.g. the design object under scrutiny, a specific problem instruction, a remembered analogy), while yet another may describe the outcome of the act (e.g. new design idea, critique, a memory, an analogical mapping). It is important to check that the codes are applied reliably to the transcript segments (e.g. using independent coders and calculating inter-coder reliability scores, or recoding a sample of the data after a delay to check for 'drift' in code assignment).

(Continued)

Table 31.2 **cont'd**

<i>Stage</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Methodological recommendations</i>
Interpretation	This stage involves interpreting the coded transcript to identify the nature and organization of the knowledge and cognitive processes determining behaviour.	Whether interpretation involves theory testing or process description depends on whether a formal or informal analysis is being undertaken. In either case, a parsimonious interpretation should be sought, identifying the major processes and knowledge underpinning behaviour. One key task is to compile the coded segments into process descriptions (e.g. in analogical problem solving, there are retrieval, mapping and solution components). The researcher needs to group segments in a meaningful way to reflect sequences of related behaviours. A good way to derive process descriptions is to construct 'problem behaviour graphs', which are graphical representations of how behaviour changes over time. Problem behaviour graphs often take the form of goal-directed graphs, with the highest level goal at the top of the hierarchy and lower-level sub-goals underneath. Byrne (1983) presents a variant of the problem behaviour graph — the 'object transition graph' — which shows how the focus of activity shifts across domain objects during planning tasks (e.g. planning a meal). The outcome of interpretation is a theoretical description of cognitive processes and knowledge structures. The researcher may develop this theory by running experiments to test specific hypotheses. Another validation technique is to construct an artificial intelligence model that simulates the theory. If running the model on a computer produces the same behaviour as participants then this provides valuable support for the theory used to construct the model. There is a danger of circularity with this simulation approach if the data collected to construct the model are then used to test it. It is better to verify the simulation with data from similar, but related tasks, to those used in the original model-construction phase.
Verification of model	This stage involves testing specific hypotheses that derive from the theoretical outcome of protocol analysis.	

computer programmers using a sort method in which participants sorted sets of words used in programming terminology. She found that experts sorted terms according to conceptual similarities (e.g. placing the words 'do', 'while' and 'repeat' in a category of 'flow of control' terms), whereas novices sorted terms according to superficial relatedness (e.g. placing the words 'bits', 'of' and 'string' in the same category).

As with verbal protocol analysis, categorization schemes may be determined a priori. For example, Davies, Gilmore and Green (1995) tested a widely held view among computer scientists that 'object-orientated' descriptions are a more natural way to think of programming concepts than 'function-orientated' descriptions, by having expert and novice programmers sort samples of code into categories organized according to dimensions differentiating between types of object or types of function. They found, contrary to the hypothesis under test, that even experts in object-orientated programming were more accurate in assigning samples of code to categories under the functional dimension than the object dimension.

In our own work, we often use free sorts, in which participants determine for themselves during the sorting process the dimensions under which to categorize items and the number and type of category associated with each dimension. One reason for using free sorts is that they allow us to elicit much more new information about domain knowledge and skill: we can use sorts to construct as well as test theory. The dimensions and categories that individuals produce provide important cues to knowledge and conceptual organization. Differences among individuals can then be assessed by comparing sort outcomes using descriptive statistical methods of multi-dimensional scaling and cluster analysis. For example, Ormerod, Fritz and Ridgway (1999) presented specialist task designers (authors of textbooks) and non-specialist designers (experienced teachers) with sets of GCSE (middle school) examination questions, and asked them to sort them repeatedly according to 'dimensions that are most significant

to you as a professional'. We found that the sorts produced by teachers tended to cluster together, while there was little consistency in the categorizations of designers: contrary to most of the literature in which differences between individuals in terms of their knowledge organization decrease with increasing expertise, individual differences in organization of knowledge about mathematics tasks actually increased. In design domains, a sign of elite expertise is being eclectic, that is, able to produce high-quality designs that are unlike those produced by others. There is evidence (e.g. Feltovich, Spiro and Coulson, 1997) that being different to other experts may be a hallmark of elite performance in other domains such as in the diagnosis of rare illnesses.

Another advantage of free sorts is that one can explore the order in which dimensions and categories are produced, under the assumption that individuals will produce significant or dominant conceptual descriptions of domain items before they produce less important or less well known ones. This technique involves participants undertaking repeated sorts of the same sets of cards, usually under some instruction to produce the first dimension that comes to mind, or to sort in a prioritization of what they consider to be the most important or meaningful dimension. For example, in Ormerod et al.'s (1999) study, the teachers sorted the questions initially according to the mathematics skill and knowledge that the tasks tested (geometry, algebra, etc.). More surprisingly, the specialist designers initially sorted the questions according to superficial features (e.g. the length of the questions, the presence of pictures and familiar content items), and only generated conceptual sorts after sorting under four or five different superficial dimensions. The study revealed the role that goal-directedness plays in the way experts organize their knowledge. All participants had the same deep level of mathematics concepts, and to the teachers this was the most significant and easily accessible dimension. For specialist designers, the superficial aspects of questions were most salient since

they are the features that differentiate novel from run-of-the-mill assessment tasks.

Cognitive ethnography

Sociologists and anthropologists define ethnography in a variety of ways. Some equate ethnography with any method that involves an element of in situ participant observation (e.g. Taylor, 1994). For others, the defining feature of ethnography is not its basis in participant observation but its epistemological stance, which is firmly rooted within a socio-cultural frame of reference (e.g. Hutchins, 1995). We have argued previously (Ball and Ormerod, 2000a, 2000b) that no encompassing definition of ethnography exists that denotes a set of necessary and sufficient attributes. As such, ethnography may best be seen as a 'radial category' that involves a core 'prototype' – encompassing features such as situated and rich observation, openness, reflexivity, personalization, historicity, observational intensity and participant autonomy – as well as variations from this prototype.

We will not reiterate our detailed arguments for this view of ethnography here, but simply note that it seems legitimate for researchers to claim to be using ethnography even when some of its prototype features are violated. Thus, cognitive psychologists may adopt an ethnographic approach when they pursue the study of situated behaviours using multiple observational methods such as interviews, observations of team discussions and incidental conversations, document analysis, information-flow analysis and social network analysis. Where cognitive psychologists differ from sociologists and anthropologists is not in their use of data-collection methods but, instead, in the theoretical gloss that they apply when interpreting the resulting data. Cognitive psychologists will be goal-directed toward interpreting their observations in terms of cognitive theories concerning the nature and organization of procedural and declarative knowledge. As such, we use the term 'cognitive ethnography' as a way to refer to the observational

fieldwork conducted by cognitive psychologists, as this clarifies the 'analytic intent' of this research. Our use of the term cognitive ethnography owes much to the equivalent term proposed by Hutchins (1995: 371), who invoked it as a way to refer to his approach to studying cognition 'in the wild'.

Cognitive ethnography's concern with a 'theory-oriented' analysis of observed behaviour aligns it very closely with traditional ethnographic approaches that involved the analysis of the rites, rituals, ceremonies and social contracts of tribal societies (e.g. Malinowski's (1967) foundational studies of the Trobriand islanders in the Western Pacific). This alignment derives from the fact that the pioneering work of the early anthropologists was motivated by an overarching analytic focus to construct a theoretical account of the functional role that tribal activities played in the life of the culture (e.g. to promote social cohesion). In this way, both traditional ethnography and cognitive ethnography stand in clear opposition to the approach of 'ethnomethodology' that now dominates much research on socio-technical systems design and computer-supported cooperative work (e.g. Anderson, Button and Sharrock, 1993; Hughes, Sommerville and Bentley, 1993; Button and Sharrock, 1998; Dourish and Button, 1998). This is because ethnomethodology prides itself on the view that 'it is simply not possible to go beyond members' knowledge, the knowledge that persons have of their own doings' (Button, 2000: 331). Button's argument is that ethnomethodology, in striving for an analytic account of the methods and practices through which work activities and interactions are assembled and organized, is unable to provide insights that are not already known by those who make up the focus of the investigative study. From a cognitive perspective, of course, this view is deeply problematic, as cognitive psychologists have no belief in the claim that research can simply reveal processes that are 'already known' to people in some explicit sense. Nearly half a century of cognitive research has clarified that much

members' knowledge is simply not available to introspective access and should not, therefore, be explicitly recognizable when the mirror of ethnomethodological description is placed in front of them.

Our conception of cognitive ethnography is characterized by three features (see also Ball and Ormerod, 2000a, 2000b). First, it relies on small-scale data collection based around representative time slices of situated activity. As such, it demonstrates 'observational specificity', as opposed to the intensity of a prototypical ethnography. Second, cognitive ethnography is 'purposive', in that its mode of questioning focuses on issues that are informed by the intention to intervene with, or somehow affect, existing work practices. These intentions, moreover, are inherently cognitive in nature and emphasis, such as understanding the interaction between expert designers' problem solving strategies and external information repositories (including other designers) with the aim of developing computer-based interventions to facilitate or enhance design-oriented interactions (e.g. Ball et al., 2001; see also Christensen and Schunn, 2007). Third, cognitive ethnography places a strong emphasis on 'verifiability', in terms of validating observations across observers, datasets and methodologies. As such, it challenges the prototypical ethnographic emphasis on personalization, and at the very least requires the explication of the role played by reflexivity in data capture and analysis.

The essence of cognitive ethnography is situated observation, a feature shared with all forms of ethnography. Thus, the researcher spends significant (in comparison with other cognitive research methods) periods of time in the presence of those involved in the object or domain of study. The researcher establishes relationships with those around them, and uses these relationships to facilitate the acquisition of information about how individuals and groups practice in the domain of interest. Thus, data collection may comprise formal and informal interviews, transcripts of meetings or of conversations overheard during the course of observation, descriptions of

domain documentation and work tools and systems. In contrast with other qualitative methods for cognitive psychology, the data include personal observations and reflections. For example, if the researcher senses tension or hostility in a workplace that is not revealed explicitly in behaviour, it is entirely legitimate and important to record this as an ethnographic observation.

Cognitive ethnography is especially well suited to addressing applied questions of the type that dominate research on human factors, since it maintains levels of objectivity that enable replication by other observers, as well as the validation of its findings through a process of methodological triangulation involving experimental methods. To put the issue in a nutshell, commercial clients are not going to commit large sums of money to expensive systems on the basis of research that does not focus clearly upon the clients' goals or deliver verifiable findings. Note, however, that validation of findings does not necessarily imply the search for statistically valid reliability or frequent consistent observations of the same cognitive activity or phenomenon. Designers will want to know what people 'normally' do when they conduct a task or use a system, but they may be equally interested in exceptional events that reveal potential sources of error or failure or examples of novel or good practice. Where ethnographic studies yield unique but significant observations, validation is likely to come from cross-method triangulation. Often such triangulation may come in the form of instantiation of a design hypothesis based on the observation within a technological system, which is subsequently evaluated via either further ethnography or use of de-contextualized methods.

A CASE STUDY OF QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR COGNITION

In this section we describe a research project that demonstrates how qualitative and quantitative research methods can be mixed to study cognition in practice. The project was funded

by a UK Research Council/Department for Trade and Industry joint initiative. The project was motivated in part by practical need (the Association of British Insurers estimates that fraud losses from personal insurance alone are in excess of £1 billion per annum). It was also driven by collaboration between government and industry to develop technologies for tackling the growing problem of insurance fraud. Our research became part of a task-artefact cycle in which a need drives empirical research in the workplace to specify technologies that subsequently change the work people do. Ironically, one of the main contributions of the project was to *prevent* the implementation of technologies in some insurance companies that might, on the basis of our research, have had a negative impact on successful fraud detection and investigation. Furthermore, the project was motivated by our own research interests in expertise and complex decision-making.

Ethnographies of fraud detection and investigation

The project began with a series of ethnographic studies, observing in situ the work practices of insurance company staff handling and investigating claims (for a more detailed description see Morley, Ball and Ormerod, 2006). We conducted four observational studies, varying between two and four weeks in duration. The locations of the studies included claims handling offices of insurance companies (both commercial and personal claims), specialist claims investigation units, and investigations departments of loss adjusters (third party specialists who collect and assess evidence regarding claims). In our choice of locations, our research can already be seen to be motivated by cognitive goals: the claims handling offices provided *novice* contexts where staff typically had less than one year's company experience, while the investigations departments provided *expert* contexts, where staff specialized in investigating fraud and typically had five or more years' company experience.

In each study, the researcher collected field notes of work activities in company offices, recorded meetings, interviewed company employees and inspected company documentation, formal practices and existing technologies. An open and inclusive approach to data collection was adopted, with all activities treated as targets for recording. The duration of each study might, for some, preclude their description as ethnographic, but the stance we adopted to data collection and interpretation bears all the hallmarks of ethnography. All forms of data were of interest, including the researcher's own feelings and beliefs. We were open to any form of outcome: for example, at the outset of the project we were told by senior managers not to expect much evidence of ability in fraud detection among insurance claims handlers, an assumption that was shown by the studies to be false. Moreover, the research was truly immersive: for example, on one occasion the researcher found herself observing from a loss adjustor's car during a 'stake out' of a potential fraudulent claimant.

The outcome of the studies consisted, in the raw, of twelve hand-written notebooks compiled by the researcher during the studies, totalling in excess of 200,000 words. Typically, notes were made during the studies but off-line, the researcher returning to her desk at approximately hourly intervals to record details of her most recent observations. A typical eight-hour day yielded approximately 2000 words of notes. In addition, she recorded meetings and interviews, which were subsequently transcribed and added to the resulting data.

The resulting data were subjected to four different types of processing, analysis and interpretation, which are illustrated in Table 31.3. The example illustrated here documents a single event reported in the ethnographic data where a claims handler spotted a mismatch between the value of a stolen car supplied by the claimant in the original claim form and the value reported in a fax of the purchase receipt that was sent after the company requested evidence for the car's value. In addition to narrative notes, on

Table 31.3 Methods of analysis used in the insurance fraud study, as applied to one example observation from the ethnographic data

<i>Method</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Notebook reporting	Researcher documented daily observations and added meetings and interview transcripts.	[Notebook segment]: '10.30 am: BW (claims researcher) says she has spotted something odd – client claims original purchase receipt was lost in the post, sends fax copy, when validated by company figures had been altered. Intends to pass on to supervisor' + verbal transcript.	'Raw data' of ethnography, comprising notebooks plus other relevant documents encountered during observations.
Narrative analysis	After each observational study, the researcher drew out key emerging themes.	[Notes on narrative analysis from internal project report]: 'Almost all claims handlers (researchers) were observed detecting anomalies, but only senior ones ("researchers") followed them up'.	(i) Internal reports to industrial sponsors, detailing process observations, problems and enhancements; (ii) Broad theoretical themes for further exploration.
Event selection	Notebooks and transcripts were trawled for instances of anomalies that pertained to potential fraud or beliefs about insurance fraud.	[Example anomaly]: 'Claimant claims original purchase receipt was lost in the post, sends fax, when validated by company figures had been altered' (suspect case).	Exemplars of domain expertise, and materials for seeding a database for an expert system to aid the process of detecting insurance fraud.
Event categorization	The events found in the previous stage were categorized by domain experts using a repeated card sort method. Each repetition elicited a new dimension for classifying (Type, Focus, Evidence, Outcome, etc.).	[Classification of anomaly]: <i>Type</i> : Claim anomaly <i>Focus</i> : Insured's behaviour <i>Evidence</i> : Document mismatch.	Classification scheme capturing: type of event (claim anomaly, general belief, etc.), focus (e.g. on insured's behaviour, third party, claim handler, etc.), evidence for anomaly (e.g. document mismatch, information withheld, excessive information).
Protocol analysis	Verbalizations of investigators were coded and interpreted. In addition to coding via domain classification scheme above, each segment was classified according to cognitive act (e.g. generate, evaluate, infer, summarize, etc.), and cognitive output (suspicion, explanation, test, etc.).	[Verbalization segment no. 34, from claims handler BW, notebook 2 page 26]: Segment [BW: 2: 26:34]: '... it might be ... like ... they diddled with the figures on the receipt and faxed it so as ... cos it degrades it so we wouldn't see it was fiddled ...' <i>Cognitive act</i> : Generate. <i>Cognitive outcome</i> : Explanation of anomaly suspicion.	Interpretation of coded protocols revealed classes of expert behaviour, including 'explanation building' that went beyond available information, hypothesis testing that alternated verification and falsification strategies, and procedural decision-making on when to proceed with or stop claim exploration.
Experiments	Expert (investigator) and novice (claims handler and student) groups were given deductive inference tasks with insurance and general knowledge contents, to test a hypothesis that these groups differ according to the inferences they tend to draw when testing hypotheses.	[Stimulus material example given to participants]: Rule: 'If the theft is genuine, then the value of a car claimed by the insured will be less than the documented purchase price'. Instance: In one case, the claimed value was greater than the documented purchase price. Task: How do you reconcile these statements?	Experts drew fewer logical inferences (e.g. the Modus Tollens inference for the example here: 'The theft is not genuine') than the novice groups when the inference confirmed a fraud hypothesis. Instead they drew extra-logical explanations (e.g. 'They might have misremembered the value when claiming initially') that 'disable' the inference.

this occasion the researcher also was able to take an audio recording of the claims handler's verbalizations while she worked on the claim. The claims handler, one of the few with more than three years' company experience, was concerned about the mismatch, which might be interpreted as indicating that the client had fabricated the faxed receipt. She then referred the claim to her supervisor, who passed the claim on to the company's special investigation unit.

The narrative analysis of the notebooks focussed initially upon determining problems in existing practices for fraud detection and investigation, as well as opportunities for enhancing processes. Thus, the goals of the client organization undoubtedly influenced the narrative themes that emerged. At the same time, we were interested in contrasting the behaviours and knowledge of specialist investigators with less experienced claims handlers as a way of understanding the cognitive components of investigative expertise. The analysis revealed that both specialists and non-specialists were adept at detecting anomalies in claims that might be indicative of fraud. For example, one claims handler was observed to comment that it was strange how a claimant reporting a vehicle theft had stated they had only one set of car keys but had nonetheless returned two sets with their claim form.

Observations of this kind are of practical importance: for example, most technological efforts for fraud reduction focus on methods for detecting anomalies that might indicate fraud, yet it appears that even inexperienced staff were able to detect anomalies readily. The companies we worked with had been proposing to install voice stress analysis and data mining technologies that would allegedly detect anomalies automatically. We argued that to do so would alter and perhaps inhibit the natural ability of people to detect and infer anomalies indicative of fraud while at the same time generating lots of false positives. However, the analysis revealed that claims handlers were neither skilled at, nor supported in, pursuing and resolving anomalies once detected. Indeed, in

one of the companies we studied, claims handlers were monitored and rewarded on the basis of the number of calls handled alone, and so were disincentivized from delaying a call to explore an anomaly further. This issue exemplifies an important advantage of using an ethnographic method to explore cognitive phenomena, which is that it allows knowledge and skills of individuals to be understood fully within the context in which they are performed. Non-specialist claims handlers did not lack ability for fraud detection; they simply had no organizational vehicle for capitalizing upon their ability.

Revealing declarative and procedural knowledge of fraud through card sort and protocol analysis

One of the features of cognitive ethnography is that the outcomes of one approach to analysis become the data for the next approach to analysis. So, for example, the key theme of spontaneous anomaly detection led to a phase of event selection and categorization, in which the data were systematically trawled for instances of anomaly detection, reporting or description. These instances might refer to specific claims or to general beliefs about fraudulent and genuine claims. Approximately 400 instances were identified in this way. We undertook a card sort study, in which domain experts sorted the instances repeatedly under dimensions that were significant to them. Descriptive analysis of the sorts produced five types of anomaly report (specific case anomalies, beliefs about frauds, beliefs about fraudsters, search actions, etc.), seven anomaly foci (the insured, the vehicle, a third party, policy, etc.), and a set of between 3 and 10 anomaly descriptors for each focus (e.g. for policy, they included 'excessive cover', 'claimant not covered' and 'data mismatch with other documents'). The set of anomalies was then made available to the industry software developers in the research team as a database for an expert system. The classification scheme also provided a design for a dialogue (using drop-down menus for

each dimension of classification) for capturing new anomalies spotted by claims handlers with minimum disruption of the normal claims handling process (this software is described by Ormerod, Morley, Ball, Langley and Spenser, 2003).

The anomaly sorting also provided a domain object coding scheme for subsequent analysis of the verbal protocols of specialist investigators, verbalizing concurrently while investigating suspicious claims, which were recorded as part of the ethnographic studies. To this coding scheme, we added a priori categories of cognitive act (e.g. read, summarize, infer, generate, evaluate), and categories of outcome or intent of the cognitive act (e.g. a test of a hypothesis, an explanation of an anomaly, a suspicion). The transcripts were segmented and loaded into a bespoke database which contained coding fields with drop-down menus for each of the coding dimensions, and two researchers coded each of the transcripts and once complete checked for inter-coder reliability.

The use of verbal protocol analysis allowed us to explore the cognitive processes employed by this expert group, and enabled us to challenge some important phenomena established in laboratory studies of human reasoning and problem-solving. For example, in contrast to Simon's (1981) observation of satisficing in hypothesis generation, specialist investigators were frequently seen to pursue multiple alternative hypotheses in parallel. This result complements our observation described in a previous section of design teams pursuing multiple design hypotheses (Ball et al., 2001), and suggests that contextualized methods can challenge established cognitive phenomena even at the level of individual performance. Also, in laboratory studies of hypothesis testing, individuals tend to show 'confirmation bias', that is, a tendency to select evidence that can only verify rather than falsify their hypothesis (e.g. Wason, 1960). Again, the verbal protocols in our study revealed that specialist investigators set out specifically to collect evidence that might falsify their current hypotheses. The collection of falsifying evidence is,

of course, a natural consequence of pursuing multiple alternative hypotheses in parallel: evidence that supports one hypothesis may falsify an alternative hypothesis.

At the same time, some verbalizations revealed a conscious decision by investigators to try and 'knock down' a particular suspicion they were entertaining. Investigators described this type of testing as part of their enactment of a presumption of innocence, that is, claims should be presumed to be genuine unless suspicions of fraud can be proved conclusively. This outcome from the protocol analysis is consistent with a key theme emerging from the narrative analysis: an important distinction between specialists and non-specialists was in the way they treated suspicions. The non-specialists tended immediately to interpret all anomalies as suspicious and as evidence for potential fraud, while the specialists typically tended to find ways of accounting for or dismissing anomalies and resolving suspicions. This expert behaviour is consistent with the way that insurance companies typically deal with fraudulent claims. One goal state for a company is to repudiate (i.e. present grounds for refusing to pay) fraudulent claims. However, criminal prosecutions are rare, since companies have little to gain by pursuing expensive legal cases. A more important goal state is to identify as fast as possible any false positives, that is, claims that are genuine but appear at first to be anomalous, since the damage that can be done to a company's reputation and market position by even a few cases where genuine claimants are treated as fraudsters is potentially enormous.

From qualitative observation to quantitative testing of a theory of fraud investigation expertise

One of the main theoretical arguments that we developed on the basis of our ethnographic analysis was that, in the domain of fraud investigation, experts develop strategic knowledge that specifically supports the goal of rapid detection of false positives. We were able to illustrate this theory of strategic

expertise with examples from the notebooks and protocol analysis. To provide an objective test, we conducted an experiment to test a hypothesis deriving from this theory. The experiment again compared expert (specialist investigators) and novices (claims handlers and an out-of-domain student control), and explored the kinds of deductive inference that each group drew for different examples of insurance or general knowledge (for a report of the experiment, see Ormerod, Barrett and Taylor, 2005).

In the experiment, participants drew 'conditional inferences'. For example, given the following statement 'If the aeroplane crashes then the pilot will die', and the instance 'In one case, the pilot did not die', the logically valid (*Modus Tollens*) inference to draw is 'The aeroplane did not crash'. It is commonly found that participants in reasoning experiments do not draw the logical inference, but instead develop an extra-logical explanation of the instance, such as 'The pilot ejected just before the plane hit the ground' (e.g. Elio and Pelletier, 1997). In our experiment, we used as conditional statements materials taken from the event classification: it was critical that the materials be entirely realistic. For example, a common belief of insurance investigators is that a theft of a modern car will usually require the use of a key to gain entry. A staged theft, where a car is reported as stolen but has actually been sold or destroyed, is sometimes indicated by the absence of one of the keys that has been given to a confederate to steal the car. Thus, a rule of thumb is 'If a reported theft is genuine, then the claimant will possess both sets of keys': the logical inference to draw given a failure to provide both sets when asked is that the theft is not genuine. We hypothesized that, if specialist investigators adopt a strategy of trying to avoid false positives, then they should be less likely than other groups to draw the logically valid inference, and more likely to draw an extra-logical explanation such as 'The claimant may have lost one set of keys'. The results confirmed our hypothesis, with the specialist investigators drawing 30% fewer inferences of this type than the

claims handler and student groups, though there was no difference in inference rates with statements based on general knowledge.

The case study illustrates the three features of a cognitive ethnography described in a previous section: specificity of observations, purposiveness of data collection and verifiability of outcomes through triangulation across methods. The observations were subjected to contextualized narrative analysis and also to de-contextualized investigations via sorting and protocol analysis. They were also used as the materials for experimental studies of reasoning expertise in the domain of insurance fraud investigation. The project illustrates the move through the research process from qualitative to quantitative methods (ethnography to experimentation), and also addresses Neisser's call for increased ecological validity by using the products of ethnography, card sort and protocol analysis in follow-on quantitative research.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have exemplified a particular approach to the use of qualitative methods that is inclusive of quantitative elements. We believe that researchers must be open to exploring cognitive phenomena through mixed methods if they are to capture the real nature of cognitive activities. Powerful phenomena revealed in quantitative studies of individuals in laboratory studies (e.g. satisficing, confirmation) disappear in qualitative studies of individuals and teams in realistic contexts. The reverse can also happen: for example, Dunbar and Blanchette (2001) point out that the proliferation of spontaneous analogical problem-solving and communication in real-world work and discourse all but disappears in laboratory studies unless experimental participants are explicitly instructed to analogize. It is clear that any method used to study cognitive activities, be it quantitative or qualitative, runs the risk of either failing to detect the true nature of the activity or even of changing the activity itself. Our plea for mixed

methods rests on the view that one must triangulate observations of cognitive phenomena from multiple methodological perspectives. As one moves from single to multiple method approaches, the study of cognition becomes much more time-consuming but far more meaningful.

In some research domains (e.g. problem-solving in realistic contexts, socio-technical systems design), the use of qualitative methods is increasing but, perhaps because of the time-consuming nature of qualitative methods, quantitative methods remain the norm in mainstream cognition. The reality is that it is only when interventions (technological, educational, process) are made into 'normal' human performance that qualitative methods become desirable. However, as our own research exemplifies, a distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is not easy to maintain. When we count the instances of anomalies of different types in the notebooks from our ethnographic studies of insurance fraud, are we using qualitative or quantitative methods?

The fuzzy boundary between approaches can be dissolved almost completely. For instance, in one study we used an experimental method to explore how couples collaborate to remember how they had catalogued digital photographs using a novel software browser (Ormerod et al., 2004). We then conducted a verbal protocol analysis of the transcripts of couples collaborating around this task, which revealed unexpected strategies for constructing memories of hard-to-recall items. We subsequently undertook a narrative analysis, adopting an ethnographic stance to our exploration of video recordings of the experimental sessions. This narrative analysis revealed unexpected role playing by some couples, where one partner would appear implicitly to adopt the role of organizer while the other would adopt the role of overseer and critique. Interestingly, where couples maintained the same roles in both cataloguing and retrieval sessions (which were separated by two weeks), they were much more successful in retrieving target photographs from the browser than when they switched roles

or did not adopt them. Our use of mixed methods allowed us to gain a much richer understanding of the causal agents involved in collaborative remembering. Moreover, it demonstrates that mixing methods need not necessarily imply a move from stages of qualitative observation to stages of quantitative validation: sometimes the sequence can usefully be reversed.

Proponents of experimental and modelling methods raise vociferous arguments against those adopting qualitative methods, and the same is true in reverse. Yet, given our arguments concerning the difficulties of establishing a pure distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches, maybe such soul-searching is ultimately unnecessary. We conclude that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods resides, as far as proper methods for the study of cognitive phenomena are concerned, in a statistical nicety rather than a psychological reality. What starts off as a qualitative exploration of a domain of cognitive activity often ends up as quantitative, and vice versa.

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Postcolonialism and Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial psychology is not in its infancy, but rather an embryonic stage – that is, if we judge a sub-discipline by who is producing knowledge. Although there are a range of texts from which psychologists can draw and that speak to issues of interest to psychologists, there are currently few psychology scholars contributing to what is explicitly called postcolonial theory and research. Therefore, by way of orienting the reader, we start this chapter by outlining some of the key tenets of postcolonialism. This must of necessity be brief and unsatisfactory, not least because postcolonialism itself is a slippery term, representing the gathering together of a variety of theoretical writings and understandings under one rubric. Turning to research itself we discuss the politics of research (specifically the politics of location and the politics of representation) within the framework of postcolonialism. We consider what the broad research aims of a postcolonial psychology would be as well productive sites for such research. We provide examples of qualitative research in postcolonialism and showcase two postcolonial studies,

linking them to the research aims identified and outlining some of the methodological issues that they raise. We open the discussion of learning from other social science disciplines, and finally, we speculate on the future of qualitative research in postcolonial psychology.

POSTCOLONIALISM: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Postcolonial theory emerged chiefly because of a burgeoning critical awareness of colonialism and its aftermath within Commonwealth literary studies with the break-up of the British Empire (McInturff, 2000a). Postcolonialism, however, is a contested term, with much debate being conducted about the (non)meaning of the term. Indeed, Young (2001) argues that postcolonialism is not really a theory at all but rather a set of conceptual resources. There is no single methodology but rather a constellation of shared political and social objectives that draw on a range of insights and theories (including poststructuralism, postmodernism, feminism, Marxism and psychoanalysis).

The commonality in various forms of postcolonial critique centres on the intermingling of the past with the present in ways that illuminate how power relations of the present are embedded in colonial history. The ramifications of colonialism in both colonizing and colonized countries are highlighted through analysing the politics of anti-colonialism, neocolonialism, race, gender, nationalisms, class and ethnicities. The experiences of the marginalized periphery are foregrounded and set against the hegemony of 'Western' knowledges, and the material, cultural and psychological factors in maintaining and disrupting colonial and neocolonial power relations are examined (Sagar, 1996; Young, 2001). For instance, postcolonial scholars study social phenomena such as the 'Third World' diasporas in 'First World'¹ communities, the construction of novel cultural practices under imperialism, the transportation of indentured labour and slavery, the representation of the colonized subjects by the colonist in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity, the creation of nations and nationalism in relation and opposition to the influential discursive practices of Europe and the USA.

Postcolonial critics argue that the prefix 'post' in postcolonial does not mean colonization ceased when the European nations' flags came down and the colonized nations' flags went up. As Ashcroft et al. (1995: 2) put it, 'all postcolonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neocolonial domination and independence has not solved the problem ... Postcolonialism is a continuous process of resistance and reconstruction'.

As with any other field, there have been dissensions and debates within postcolonialism itself. By way of example some of the concerns raised are that: there is a tendency to homogenize colonialism (whereas colonialism was in fact a diverse, heterogeneous affair); the impact colonization had on societies that were colonized is overemphasized (Ahmed, 2000; Young, 2001); much work in postcolonial studies is textual and therefore does not attend to the socio-material conditions of colonialism (Parry, 2004); and

postcolonialism is most visibly conducted from the centre, notably the USA and Britain (Young, 2001).

RESEARCH: POSTCOLONIAL THEORY IN ACTION

Research in postcolonial psychology is, in many respects, an exception to the rule in psychology where qualitative research has had to fight the dominant quantitative paradigm for a space in legitimate knowledge production. In postcolonial research, qualitative research is the dominant mode of investigation although there is the odd quantitative study to be found (see, for example, Hunter's (2002: 175) analysis of national survey data that uses a 'historical framework of European colonialism and slavery').

Postcolonial research, apart from being mainly qualitative, is inextricably linked to politics, not least of which is the politics of research. This takes on a number of dimensions. Firstly, methodologies that create vantage points from which to colonize or objectify the subjects of research have been critiqued (Lal, 1999; Smith, 1999). Much of the psychological research conducted in Africa, which has shifted over time from a colonialist to a neocolonialist endeavour with the gradual sophistication of the research, provides a good example of just this (see Bulhan's (1993) thorough review of this). Secondly, research that excavates the 'Third World' for the advance of 'Western' theory has been problematized (Lal, 1999; Smith, 1999). Gilbert (2000), for example, found that 45.4% of the publications concerning Africa appearing in *PsycLit* from January 1990 to December 1999 were affiliated to an institution outside of the African continent, with North American institutions accounting for the majority of these. Thirdly, the fact that the knowledge that is being generated in 'Third World' contexts is frequently modelled on 'First World' issues has been critiqued. For example Macleod (2004), in an analysis of South African research in psychology, found that knowledge is being generated chiefly

about urban, middle-class adults living in the three wealthiest provinces.

Bearing this in mind, postcolonial researchers need to pay careful attention to the politics of their research. This implies more than a mere acknowledgement of power relations and politics, but an explicit commitment an emancipatory project. In the following sections, we concentrate specifically on the politics of location and the politics of representation, both of which pose particular challenges to the postcolonial researcher. We discuss research aims and choice of research sites. After showcasing two research projects and discussing insights from anthropological research, we review the politics of knowledge dissemination.

THE POLITICS OF LOCATION

Research and theory within a postcolonial frame, as with other critical psychologies, implies being constantly vigilant and reflective in terms of self, other, context, process, assumptions and theory. Much of the discussion concerning this type of practice has, in qualitative research, gone under the rubric of reflexivity. In this, the multiple, contradictory and socially constructed interactive and reflexive positionings of practitioners, researchers, academics and participants along the axes of race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation and religion are acknowledged and deconstructed.

Postcolonialist writers, however, add a new dimension to this type of reflexivity in talking of the politics of location. An analysis of the politics of location involves, in addition to the above, an analysis of the epistemic privilege of academic discourse, the presumed authenticity of native accounts, and the political intellectual location within which we choose to position ourselves – e.g. feminist, anticolonial, antiracist (Lal, 1999). This moves the reflexive account beyond a scrutiny of individual subjectivity that has the danger of slipping into an (at times guilt-ridden) confession of the researcher's positioning or their emotional investments,

and that fails to acknowledge the intricacies of the micropolitics of research interactions that criss-cross insider–outside boundaries in dynamic and complex ways. A politics of location contends with the nature of one's insertion into a research process, with the relational space that is created in this process, with the imperialism of the research endeavour, with the insider or outsider status of the researcher (or as Smith (1999) points out the multiple ways in which we are insiders and outsiders) to the community of people being studied, and, finally, with what differences in positioning mean in the actual analysis rather than leaving the self-confessions as a circumscribed prologue.

An example of this kind of analysis of the politics of location is provided by Sonn (2004) who, as a black South African immigrant in Australia working with Aboriginal people, problematizes the oppressor/oppressed, black/white binaries that structure much critical discussion about power relations in research settings. He argues that they mask other dimensions of power and privilege, such as professionalism and location within an academic institution. In his paper he grapples with his location as simultaneously an insider, a position created by processes of black othering, and an outsider, a migrant with a 'different history, culture, social and psychological reality' (Sonn, 2004: 142).

The politics of location in terms of knowledge production in postcolonialism is, however, a complex affair. Responses to Said's work in terms of this provides an illuminating illustration. Exile, as both an existential and epistemological concern featured prominently in Said's (1993, 1994) understandings of the intellectual endeavour. Said believed that the ethical intellectual must always occupy a position of outsider or exile: 'outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, unco-opted, resistant' (Said, 1994: 52). This allows for the possibility of distance from and discomfort in both 'home' and the new location, and therefore the possibility of 'challenging the system, describing it in language unavailable to those it has

already subdued' (Said, 1993: 404). Exile, for Said, is not material only, but may also be metaphorical in the sense of alienation from familiar traditions – 'restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others' (Said, 1994: 53). In the postcolonial world, this type of alienation can be as true of 'First World' researchers as of 'Third World' researchers, both of whom are inevitably caught in empire's after-effects. Collins (1999), for example, talks of the black intellectual in the USA as an 'outsider within'.

Several scholars have responded to this. McInturff (2000b) points out that exile works only because we once belonged somewhere and that there are limits to exile, a point that Said (1993, 1994) in fact did not deny. Zeleza (2005) warns against the fetishism of exile in that beneath structural and political reasons for exile may lie an 'angst of flight' from being 'African', 'Arab', 'Asian' or 'Latin American'. Exile in the global North, he argues, can represent a desire for academic legitimacy and the marketability that such a centre provides. Indeed, critics such as Dirlik (1994) and Ahmad (1992) have contested the status and the knowledge claims made by postcolonial migrants who live in exile, but who carve out a space of postcolonial privilege through their politics of location in the American academy. The postcolonial migrant/intellectual, Ahmad argues, has created postcolonial studies and its concomitant modes of inquiry by conducting research in privileged institutions that are alienated from the real material context of global capitalism and 'Third World' conditions of cheap labour and economic poverty.

To conclude, paying attention to the politics of location implies being aware not only of the anticolonial or antiracist position that one chooses in designating a mode of inquiry, but also of how those positions choose us as researchers. How does our own privilege as researchers influence what social and psychological phenomenon we study, how we study this phenomenon and why we study it? Our mindfulness of our politics of location in

our research has to work towards disclosing and making visible those assumptions that are intractably embedded in our autobiographical trajectories of class, race and the location of our work in either the 'First World' or 'Third World' academies. By revealing the conflicting and multilayered architectural design of those assumptions and how the politics of location shape structures and positions, we are better equipped to understand how we make meaning of our objects of study: i.e. how we represent people and the world in our research paradigms.

It is important to note here that this acknowledgement of the politics of location does not mean that we can only aspire to partial and situated knowledges. The politics of location is imbricated within the production of critical investigation and analysis. Walby (2000), in a paper entitled 'Beyond the Politics of Location' takes up this point. She acknowledges the importance of including an understanding of differences of social location in feminist theory, but simultaneously makes a strong case for the power of argument, for reasoned debate, that moves the discussion beyond a recognition of existing social groups to one in which redistribution and transformation become possible agendas. She cites Mohanty's (a well-known postcolonial feminist) work as fitting into the latter category. She believes that Mohanty is often misinterpreted as arguing for situated knowledges, whereas she (Mohanty)

is not content to leave white western feminism as a situated knowledge, comfortable with its local and partial perspective. Not a bit of it. This is a claim to a more universal truth. And she hopes to accomplish this by the power of argument.

Walby (2000: 199)

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION

In the politics of representation, the 'authorial Self confronts and inscribes the Other as a "captive" object: an object that we capture via new technologies of inscription – such as tapes, surveys, interviews, word processing,

videos, and so forth' (Lal, 1999: 117). The inscriptions are then represented in the form of research reports, journal articles and theses. The politics of representation is complex, a complexity captured in the debates in postcolonialism about voice. In subaltern studies, for example, Guha (1988) and others raised questions about how the colonized muted subject and small voice is represented in history, how the subaltern's identity is constructed and through what channels or mediums the identity of the subaltern gains expression. In Spivak's (1988) famous essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak', the young Bengali widow, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, did not speak not because she was silenced or muted, but rather because she was depicted as someone who was not capable of being in a dialogically constituted speaker-listener relationship. The question for Spivak is not whether the subaltern can speak, but whether she has been given the space, the privilege and the status of an equal communicator in the dialogical relationship. The historically muted subject in subaltern studies historiography cannot speak because this communicative space is not provided where her/his agency can be asserted or inserted. The terms of representation, the channels of communication and the language which she can use to express her agency are either decided by the colonizer or the ones who come to rescue her oppressed subjectivity. With regard to the latter, Spivak (1988) argues that the desire to represent the Other in authentic terms is a utopian politics, rooted in the epistemic violence of imperialism.

Thus representation in postcolonialism does not imply overcoming differences to evidence the true, authentic experience of participants in a particular situation. Rather, it is about recognizing that representation is a production and not a reflection of reality; that it is a process in which the discourses and silences invoked by the researcher and those invoked by the participants in question meet, challenge, dovetail, diverge, and generally construct new, hybrid understandings. It means creating points of departure rather than arriving at set understandings.

As Young (2003: 705; emphasis in the original) puts it:

There are always already meanings, intentions, and subjectivities spinning off into future significations because of what researchers can and cannot hear, because of traces of the past and present that are unspeakable, because of subjectivities that shift and contradict the *very telling* of stories, the *naming* of experience.

It means asking questions about the processes and mechanisms through which the Other is constituted rather than invoking the authenticity of the Other (a project encouraged by Spivak and Mohanty as well as Foucault). And, where voice must inevitably be thought of, Young's (2003) notion of rhizovocality proves useful. Rhizovocality is multiple and contingent; it is

difference within and between and among; it highlights the irruptive, disruptive, yet interconnected nature of positioned voices (including the researcher's) that are discursively formed and that are historically and socially determined – irrupting from discursive pressures within/against/outside the research process.

Young (2003: 707; emphasis in original)

The politics of representation is inextricably linked to the politics of location, something often not acknowledged. Spivak (1988: 275), in discussing a Foucault–Deleuze conversation, states quite strongly that 'the banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing, politically canny subalterns stands revealed; representing them, *the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent*'.

Mohanty (1991) extends this by positing that in representing 'Third World' women in particular ways, 'Western' women are inevitably engaged in a process of self-representation. She argues that 'Third World' women have been represented by 'Western' women as victims – victims of male violence, of the colonial process, of the familial system, of the economic development process, of Islam. In marking 'Third World' women with the signifier of 'Third World' difference in addition to the sexual difference marking women in general, 'Western' women are

representing themselves as secular, liberated and in control of their own lives. Mohanty (2003: 223) writes that her main goal in writing 'Under Western Eyes' was to 'make clear that cross-cultural feminist work must be attentive to the micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle, as well to the macropolitics of global economic and political systems and processes'.

What has not been touched on yet in terms of representation and an aspect of research that is undertheorized is the question of language and translation. Swartz (2005: 510) refers to linguistic imperialism, in which indigenous languages are replaced by the languages of colonizers, thereby silencing the subaltern: 'The subaltern's experience of his or her own life in translation [is] caught forever between the disenfranchised mother tongue and the public voice'. This extends the traditional understanding of translation within research in which rigorous back translation is recommended to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. This rather technicist approach to translation ignores the power relations inherent in who designs the initial instrument and commissions the translation, who does the translation (Drennan, Levett and Swartz, 1991) and what silences and erasures are produced in the translation process. Situations that require face-to-face interpretation produce complex social dynamics. The researcher may view the interpreter simply as a language specialist or, more complexly, as cultural specialist or as advocate for the participants (Drennan and Swartz, 1999). Each of these contain their own set of potential colonizing power relations.

RESEARCH AIMS

Fundamental to the politics of research are the research aims – what questions are asked and how they are posed. While there clearly could be a host of pertinent research questions in postcolonial psychology, underlying these should be three fundamental aims. Firstly, readings of psychology that neglect colonialist history and postcolonial power

relations should be undermined. Given the paucity of acknowledgement of the colonialist or postcolonialist problematic in psychology, this may well stand for a large chunk of psychological research currently being conducted. This process would involve 'researching back', as Smith (1999) so aptly puts it after the 'writing back' phrase used in literary studies. An example of this would be to 'research back' on how postcolonial subjects have been theorized, produced and reproduced in mainstream psychology. The purpose here would be to undermine the manner in which the Other has been treated in psychological research, which is generally through invisibility, pathologization or exoticization. It would be to highlight how, as either the invisible and silent/incoherent absent trace or the pathologized present, the Other is the substance that inhabits and defines the norm (white, heterosexual, middle-class males living in liberal democratic states). This implies taking both the colonized and the colonizer (in their multiplicities) as the objects of investigation; it implies questioning generalizations (especially those emanating from the centre) and routinely asking the question 'Which people, which women, which children do you mean?'

The second aim would be to produce contextually relevant and theoretically driven studies that interweave the intra-psychic with the postcolonial problematic, the personal with the political. An example is researching identity in formation of postcolonial diasporas, borderlands, and the transnational migrant communities in Europe, North America and Africa. Postcolonial research has emphasized this mixing and moving, continuous and ongoing process through which many 'non-Western/European' immigrants reconstitute and negotiate their identity in transnational ways (Bhatia and Ram, 2001, 2004). The web of contradictory discourses related to home, tradition, community, nation and loyalty experienced by new immigrants as well as their children demand that we rethink our traditional notions of immigrant adaptation and acculturation (Bhatia and Ram, 2004; Bhatia, in press).

The third aim would be to produce knowledge that has an explicitly liberatory intention. In this, the complexities of colonialist legacies, neocolonialism, and postcolonial power relations that intersect gender, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, ability and age would be acknowledged and undermined. Abstractions that pre-define who the Other, the colonized, are would be refused. Contradictions and disparities contained within oppressive discourses and practices would be identified and dissected, creating spaces for emancipatory hybridity. Silences created by the erasure of the Other in imperialist power relations would be highlighted. Transversal relations of commonality across those marked by 'Otherness' would be identified, communicated and acted upon in strategic ways (see Macleod, 2006).

RESEARCH SITES

In order to engage with the postcolonial problematic, postcolonial research needs to be conducted in real, virtual or imaginary meeting sites or liminal spaces. The notion of liminality is, of course, not new to psychology (denoting the threshold between sensation and the subliminal). Bhabha (1994: 4), however, uses it in a different sense, describing a liminal space as an 'interstitial passage', similar to the art historian Renee Green's description of a stairwell – 'the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white' (Bhabha, 1994: 4). It is important to pay attention to these liminal spaces because 'the boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presencing' (Bhabha, 1994: 5) Thus liminal spaces are the spaces in which racialized, classed, and gendered differences are simultaneously held in relief and, paradoxically, shown to be a chimera. They are spaces in which the past occupies and simultaneously ceases to occupy the present – where continuities and discontinuities join hands.

In locating research at these sites, the researcher creates the opportunity for

destabilizing binary oppositions, showing how their necessity is premised only on concealed projects of power and hegemony (Quayson and Goldberg, 2002). Binary oppositions (centre/periphery; black/white; self/other) are shown to be interdependent, with, for example, 'Western' subjectivity depending historically on interactions with subjugated others and currently on dialogical encounters created through transnational migration and globalization.

Conducting research in liminal spaces is, however, a complex affair. Lal (1999: 111) argues that we should understand the research process as a function of the site within which the research is conducted:

Where the social world that is being investigated is a sexist and hierarchical one, the process of research is sure to become a sexist and hierarchical social interaction.

She locates this statement within her own research, in which she had to gain access to participants through gate-keepers, one of whom demonstrated his power over the women workers in his factory by calling them into his office to indicate how he could summarize their work patterns through straight observation. This was intended, states Lal, as a gesture to minimize the class and gender differences between herself and the production manager. However, for her it merely opened the distance and created the effect of distancing her from the women on the shop floor who were the participants of her research.

INVESTIGATIVE PRACTICES

So, how do postcolonial researchers actually conduct research? Within disciplines, such as literary studies, anthropology and history, where postcolonialism is reasonably well established, methods such as colonial discourse analysis, ethnography and historiography are popular. However, other qualitative methods are starting to be taken up by postcolonial scholars, as evidenced in Table 32.1.

Table 32.1 Examples of qualitative research in postcolonialism

<i>Methods used</i>	<i>Data source</i>	<i>Brief explanation</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Colonial discourse analysis	Mostly written texts and archives, but other sources, including interviews and even music	Analysis of discourse (often but not always Foucauldian) highlighting (neo)colonial constructions of the Other	Initiated by Said (1978) in <i>Orientalism</i> ; Holden (2001); Moane (1994); Nyairo and Ogude (2003)
Narrative analysis	Interviews; autobiographies	Exploring the conditions of possibility in which the colonized and colonizing subject emerges	Asher (2005); Sieng and Thompson (1992)
Historiography	Archives; texts	Reading against the grain to uncover blind spots and recuperate evidence of subaltern agency	Subaltern studies group (e.g. Guha, 1998); Swartz (2005)
Genealogy	Texts, archives	Utilizing Foucauldian notion of descent to trace the emergence of colonial subjects and objects	Butchart (1998)
Organizational analysis	Texts, organizational records and arrangements, interviews, training videos, observation	Analysis of (neo)colonial institutional practices and power relations	Prasad (2003)
Case study	Interviews, observation, records	In-depth study of specific case (group, organization or individual) in which (neo)colonial power relations are manifested	Reineke (2001); Sampaio (2004)
Ethnography	Interviews, participant observation, records, policy, media	A de-centred practice that overcomes its colonial history by examining the subject position of the ethnographer, collapsing the 'us' and 'them' assumption and privileging local knowledge	Parameswaran (2002); Racine (2003)
Comparative research	Interviews, archives, texts, observations	Contextual analyses of systems (often educational) or texts in ways that undermine the West as the given	Hickling-Hudson (2002); Mohanty (1999); Morton (2003)
Participatory action research	Participation in individual and group dialogue and action	Accountable research that is driven by participants and that focuses on change within a given (neo)colonial setting	Guruge and Khanlou (2004)
Deconstruction	Texts, interviews	Employment of Derridean concepts such as <i>différance</i> to expose exclusions and absent traces in (neo)colonial discourse	Power (2006)
Visual analysis	Images (e.g. art, films, landscapes, drawing)	Analysis of images as signifiers of (neo)colonialism	Rajan (2002)

As with any other critical approach, the investigative practices contingent upon postcolonial research require reflection. In this section we use two research studies (Mohanty's (1999) comparative study and Butchart's (1998) genealogy) as examples of investigative practices engaged in by postcolonial researchers. Each speaks to the aims identified above in different ways. For each we discuss their implicit methodological problematics in terms of postcolonial research.

Mohanty (1999) analyses the exploitation of poor 'Third World' women and the naturalized assumptions about work and the worker in the sexual politics of global capitalism. She uses geographically located case studies across three divergent settings (women lacemakers in India, women in the electronics industry in the USA, and the working lives of black and minority women inside and outside the home in Britain). Using secondary sources, Mohanty (1999: 365) uses a comparative methodology to illuminate 'global processes which inflect and draw upon indigenous hierarchies, ideologies, and forms of exploitation to consolidate new modes of colonization'. There are obvious geographical and sociocultural differences between these women. However, Mohanty's work indicates that despite these differences, ideologies of domesticity, femininity and race form a common basis for the construction of these women's identities. Crucially, their identities as workers are constructed and reproduced as being secondary to their familial and domestic roles. While these ideologies are taken up in different ways (the lacemaker's work is essentially invisible, the women in the electronics industry's work is temporary, and black and minority women's work is an extension of familial roles and loyalties), they are predicated on transnational gendered and racialized processes of exploitation.

Mohanty's work thus speaks to the aim of identifying transversal relations of commonality across those marked by 'otherness'. Methodologically, Mohanty deals with the difficulties potentially attendant on

cross-cultural and case study work. Comparison across cultures can result in the homogenization and essentialization of cultural groupings while case studies run the risk of highlighting the local, the particular and ignoring the global. Mohanty avoids these pitfalls in a number of ways. Firstly, she shies away from comparison based on a categorizing exercise. Instead she analyses the ideological construction of a transnational issue. In other words, instead of analysing the work that women do or the occupations in which they are concentrated, she is interested in the construction of 'women's work' in terms of notions of appropriate femininity, domesticity, (hetero) sexuality, and racial and cultural stereotypes. Secondly, in combining a comparative analysis with a case study approach, she 'illuminates global processes which inflect and draw upon indigenous hierarchies, ideologies, and forms of exploitation to consolidate new modes of colonization' (Mohanty, 1999: 365). Thus she folds the global in on the local, not reducing them to each other, but illustrating their 'parallel, contradictory and sometimes converging relations of rule' (Mohanty, 1999: 365). Thirdly, she is clear that her work is not about attempting to locate 'common experiences' of 'Third World' women, but rather about recognizing 'common interests'. This shift allows for the possibility of a cross-national solidarity that does not draw on an essentialist notion of women's experiences. Fourthly, her argument is about the *process* of gender and race domination (domination effected through 'the minute and global processes of capitalist recolonization of women workers'; Mohanty, 1999: 383) rather than the *content* of the 'Third World'. The process she outlines is one in which global patriarchal capitalism defines women's work as temporary, flexible, invisible or domestic and thus subordinate to their familial and domestic roles. Fifthly, her comparison is grounded in the concrete realities of women's lives (how and where they work), rather than culturalist notions of self and other. Sixthly, she is explicit in pointing out that 'because similar

ideological constructions of “women’s work” make cross-cultural analysis possible, this does not automatically mean women’s lives are the *same* but rather that they are *comparable*’ (Mohanty, 1999: 366; emphasis in the original). In other words, it is the incorporation of ‘Third World’ women into a global economy that informs her comparison that is attuned to history and social location rather than some ahistorical notion of culture or experience.

Butchart (1998) uses genealogy to study the relations between socio-medical practices and knowledge of the African body. Drawing on Foucauldian theory, he overturns the common understanding of a pre-existing, original African body having been distorted and disfigured by colonialism. He traces how: in Renaissance thought (the period coinciding with the initial colonization of Africa), bodies were known through the study of authoritative texts; in the Classical age, the African body was classified along with other objects of natural history; missionary medicine evangelized Africans to ‘wean’ them of their ‘heathen’ superstitions concerning the body and disease; mining medicine simultaneously individualized the African body and regulated its functions and conduct; psychiatry and psychology crystallized the African ‘personality’ as an object of intervention; public health problematized spaces between bodies and fabricated the social body; and, finally, how the clinical gaze of clinical medicine plumbed the interior of the body to make its recesses open to medical manipulation.

Butchart (1998) is, in many senses, ‘researching back’ about both the exoticization and pathologization of the African body. Methodologically, he uses genealogy to overcome the difficulties of the myth of origin in which a particular time is reified and particular understandings of experiences, mentality and subjectivity are essentialized. As Sunder Rajan (1993) points out, a non-colonialist space remains a wish fulfilment. The ‘indigenous’ cannot pass the test of having been free from colonial or neocolonial influences. Instead of essentializing the indigenous African body, Butchart shows

how the African body, mind and society were constructed in multiple ways as objects of analysis and domination through socio-medical technologies.

Butchart (1998) discusses how this understanding is made possible through the deployment of the ideas of descent and emergence in genealogy. Descent undermines assumptions of unbroken continuity, showing, instead, a heterogeneity of what was imagined to be consistent. Emergence upsets attempts to seek for neatly ordered, indexical origins of things. Instead of ‘great events’, objects and subjects emerge through haphazard dominations, subjugations and struggles. Butchart draws out methodological requirements of such a Foucauldian-based analysis. Firstly, one should not be thinking of power as a fixed form. Rather, power works through a variation of practices, discourses and knowledges that condense in disciplinary technologies. Secondly, because power is reproduced in concrete practices, analyses should move from capillary points to more general mechanisms. In other words, instead of studying the formal centres of power, an ascending analysis that starts with mundane, everyday practices should be performed. Thirdly, analyses should not be concerned with power at the level of conscious decision or intention but should rather be conducted at the point where intentions are invested in real and effective practices. Fourthly, analyses should avoid linguistic reductionism with discourse referring not only to language but also to concrete practices (such as the doctor’s hand palpating the body or built space conditioning hygienic habits).

LEARNING FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES

Given the paucity of postcolonial research in psychology, shifts in understandings in other social science disciplines in terms of research could prove useful. For example, the rise of postcolonial theory has, in part, provided ethnography and qualitative studies in anthropology and education with new ways of thinking about how the vectors of

culture, power and knowledge intersect in doing fieldwork in different cultural sites. In particular, the edited book *Writing Culture* by Clifford and Marcus (1986) offered a significantly new and radical rethinking of the classical colonial works in anthropology. The book presents us with a provocative and complex vision of how the key concepts related to describing and interpreting cultural codes, social practices and lived experience of others is suffused with both the poetical and political elements of culture. The new ways of doing ethnography and writing and making interpretations about culture no longer involve just an analysis of the historical, linguistic, cultural practices that shape and give meaning to every day cultural routines and events. Rather the new critical anthropology looks at cultures 'as composed of seriously contested codes and representations' in which the poetic and the political, the literary and the social scientific genres of writing are mutually constituted (Clifford, 1986: 2). It focuses on textual analysis and rhetoric that highlights

the constructed, artificial nature of cultural accounts. It undermines overly transparent modes of authority, and it draws attention to the historical predicament of authority, the fact that it is always caught up in the invention, not the representation, of cultures.

Clifford (1986: 2)

It highlights the ways in which different modes of interpreting culture are tied to historical, institutional and postcolonial contexts in which these interpretations are produced.

The issues of representation have to do with not only 'what' is being written-up about postcolonial cultures and the postcolonial condition, but also who gets to speak and write, under what conditions, at what junctures, and who gets to collaborate with whom. The various discourses of self and other are shaped by many interpretive moves. The new outline for a postcolonial, critical ethnography locates the analysis and interpretation of cultures as made of 'partial truths' and contested realities. Clifford (1986: 19) writes that in the new critical anthropology

[C]ulture is contested, temporal and emergent. Representations and explanation – both by insiders and outsiders – is implicated in this emergence.

INTO THE FUTURE: POSTCOLONIALISM, RESEARCH AND PSYCHOLOGY

Because of its origin in literary and cultural studies, postcolonialism has been dominated by textual and theoretical work. We argue that solid qualitative research has much to offer the broad field of postcolonialism, and that it is in this direction that scholars should be moving. We are not suggesting that research should be used to test postcolonial theory – a positivist assumption that separates theory from practice. Rather we believe that by illuminating the 'nuts and bolts' of people's lives and interactions, qualitative research will provide fresh insights and new perspectives in postcolonialism, simultaneously magnifying and deepening current understandings.

Furthermore, postcolonialism brings a new and interesting dimension to qualitative research – in particular an acknowledgement of a constellation of power relations that has, for the most part, been lacking in qualitative research. Postcolonialism affords qualitative research new vistas, new questions, and new reflections. Conducting research from a postcolonial perspective will, however, never be an easy endeavour – issues of the politics of location, the politics of representation, where research is conducted, what questions are asked, how the research is conducted and how knowledge is disseminated will not be passed over with simple explanations. Despite this, it is a necessary, but also neglected, component of the social science project.

Turning to psychology itself, Bhatia (2002) shows how the power to represent the 'non-Western Other' has always resided, and still continues to reside, primarily with psychologists working in Europe and America. The exporting of Euro-American universal psychology 'as is' for the consumption of 'Third World' psychologists has led to

a neocolonialism or 'second colonization' (Nandy, 1989: xi). This kind of colonialism colonizes the mind as well as the body and

helps generalize the concept of modern 'West' from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The 'West' is now everywhere, within the 'West' and outside; in structures and minds.

Nandy (1989: xii)

This neocolonialization takes place in psychology through the under-representation of, for example, African experiences in psychological literature (Nsamenang, 2000; Mpofu, 2002), the normalization and universalization of white, middle-class male characteristics (Sampson, 1990; Sonn, 2004), the reproduction of particular understandings of what psychology is about (or what Montero and Christlieb (2003) call 'symbolic colonialism'), the provision of tools of measurement that are complicit in modes of (neo)colonialist forms of regulation and governance (Bulhan, 1993), and the skewing of the production of knowledge through dependence on 'Western' sponsoring agents and publishing houses, unequal research resources, conference locations, and publishing practices (Staeuble, 2005).

It is because of this that postcolonialism has started to make its mark on psychology. Postcolonialism has much to offer psychology scholars interested in qualitative work. It offers the potential of deconstructing the 'centre' as the normalized present and foregrounding the 'periphery' or the absent trace, while at the same time avoiding the search for the myth of origin. It allows us to theorize hybridity and multiplicity while not slipping into rampant relativism. It dialogues with 'First World' theory while simultaneously challenging the neocolonialist assumptions produced in this context. It brings to foreground the relationship between Euro-American psychology and the status of indigenous psychologies in the rest of the world. It undermines readings of psychology that neglect colonialist history and postcolonial power relations, that are complicit in (neo)colonial forms of exploitation, that under-represent or else exoticize particular categories of

people, or that normalize and universalize the white, middle-class male. It attunes its understandings to socio-historical conditions that permeate local and global power relations, interweaving the intra-psychic with the postcolonial problematic.

NOTES

1 The terms 'Third World', 'First World' and 'Western' are placed in inverted commas to highlight their complex and contested nature. We acknowledge, for example, that 'Third World' can be used in a negative sense of backwardness or as a positive identification in the form of the emergence of a subversive voice bursting onto centre stage (Minh-ha, 1987).

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Review and Prospect

Wendy Stainton-Rogers and Carla Willig

After many years in the wilderness, psychology does now seem to be taking a 'qualitative turn' – or perhaps it's better to say 'qualitative (re)turn'. In publication terms this has not so much been happening in the high-end (predominantly US) journals. True, there has been a noticeable upturn in the number of qualitative papers they now accept (Rennie, Watson and Monteiro, 2002; see also Chapters 25 and 26 in this handbook). Generally, though, these journals remain a barren site for anything but the standard fare. While the walls of the establishment bastions are gradually being nibbled away, it is no more – at present, at least – than a minor incursion on an establishment that continues to be highly sceptical and protectionist (Kidd, 2002).

In other words, qualitative methods are becoming increasingly popular in psychology, but at present this is happening largely outside of the US caucus, where progress is much less promising. As we mentioned in the introduction, new journals have been launched in the UK (*Qualitative Research in Psychology*) and in Germany (*Zeitschrift für Qualitative Forschung*). Special editions devoted to qualitative work have been

published in Canada ('Qualitative research: History, theory and practice' in *Canadian Psychology* in August 2002) and in Europe (examples include Volume 3 of the *Journal of Health Psychology* in 1998; Volume 9(4) of the *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*; and Volume 13(6) of the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* in 2003 devoted to action research). The authors in this volume are also mainly drawn – with notable exceptions – from outside the USA. We suspect its audience might be predominantly so as well, though change is happening and we will wait and see.

This handbook is another instantiation of the growing importance of qualitative research in psychology and its strengthening influence upon our discipline. As its editors even we have been surprised and delighted when editing the chapters by just how vibrant a movement it has clearly become, not to say the sheer amount ofchutzpah evident among its champions in the face of a still pretty hostile establishment. Working on the various drafts of the 31 chapters that make up the body of this volume has left us seriously impressed by the bounty of what is now on

offer; the range and diversity of the methods being developed and the scale and range of innovation being pursued within the many different approaches.

In our more optimistic moments we would like to think that psychology is at a 'turning point', like a coiled spring about to launch a whole range of new ways of theorizing our subject and researching within it. Not only that, but we have high hopes for making psychology more relevant and, especially, more inclusive through the use of qualitative methods. There is also a clear motivating groundswell in the determination to use qualitative methods to break through historical prejudices.

In this last chapter we will review and celebrate what has been achieved. Psychologists who have turned to qualitative methods have not done so as an end in itself. It is not just a 'fashion thing'. Nor is it a 'wimping out' thing either, even though this accusation is often made, especially about psychology students who opt to use qualitative methods for their dissertations. Qualitative studies are not a 'soft option', as any student keen to avoid the need for rigour and statistics soon finds out. Indeed the very lack of simple, standard, well-oiled procedures with 'no brainer' decisions about what statistical tests to use makes qualitative work the much harder option.

So why do it? Given the personal and professional costs (and indeed, the dangers faced – see Andrew Bengry-Howell's account of researching 'car modifiers' and 'cruisers' in Chapter 2) there needs to be some strong motivations. Here we will argue that the 'qualitative (re)turn' has, in our opinion, come about from the pursuit of four somewhat interconnected agendas:

1. The 'to boldly go' agenda – to open up new frontiers and to explore new worlds (actual and metaphorical) that have not existed before or that psychology has not been able to reach before.
2. The pragmatic agenda – to *do* things that cannot be done using quantitative methods, or can be done better.
3. The 'reinstatement of psychoanalytic approaches' agenda – the desire to rehabilitate the

unconscious as a legitimate zone for psychological inquiry.

4. The social justice agenda – to resist mainstream psychology's claim to political neutrality, challenge its self-serving deployment of elite power and to champion the rights of marginalized groups and realign psychological research as emancipatory.

We will look at each of these in turn. We will selectively illustrate them by reference to many of the chapters in this handbook.

'TO BOLDLY GO'

Like the Starship Enterprise using warp drive to cover the immense distances involved in intergalactic exploration, qualitative researchers want to do things and go places that psychology has not been able to reach before. The analogy is not so obscure, since recent technological progress has had a major impact on the growing popularity and diversification of qualitative methods. Rapidly expanding and evolving innovations in information and communication technologies are opening up new forms of analysis (as described in Chapter 19 on the use of qualitative analysis computer packages) and a whole range of new sites of data collection, most notably the internet (see Chapter 18).

Blogging, video-casting and the recording of telephone interactions (for instance, for quality control purposes) are progressively blurring the distinction between the public and the private, and creating an explosion of texts (in terms of volume and diversity) that would have been unimaginable even five years ago. As Wilkinson and Kitzinger (in their Chapter 4 on conversation analysis) point out, this makes possible the sharing of data sets among researchers and research communities, changing the nature and texture of analysis and interpretation.

The development and lowering costs of (and hence increasingly widespread availability of) camera phones, disposable cameras and webcams, and the proliferation of reality TV are generating and publicizing an ever expanding range and modality of

source texts. The lived experience of ordinary (and extraordinary) people is being made accessible as it never has been before, offering qualitative researchers a growing wealth (or perhaps burden) of discursive material to scavenge. This motley offers new opportunities for interpretation and analysis, as described, for example, in Chapter 17 on visual methods and Chapter 23 on the use of video diaries for research in developmental psychology.

Indeed, it is more fundamental than that. The 'social' and the 'cultural' are rapidly going to need redefinition, in a world where location is no longer the barrier it was to communication. If, as Wilkinson and Kitzinger (Chapter 4: 56) claim, conversation is the fundamental site of social life and the most important 'medium through which we are socialized, through which we conduct our daily interactions and ... through which social institutions are managed', then interpersonal communication itself is clearly undergoing profound change – at least for those able to engage in its new forms.

As conversations become more possible across large distances, between intimates parted by relocation and between strangers worlds apart in distance but sharing common cause or interest, then the conversational negotiation and management of meaning will happen in unprecedented ways. The rationales for co-operative action and conflict will change, as will the ways and means by which such action can be planned and carried out.

But technology is changing a lot more than conversation. Quite literally the ways in which people live and experience their lives are undergoing rapid and dramatic change – from seeking friends, lovers and sexual partners to selling or exchanging goods; from political and religious proselytizing to organizing rebellion and resistance; from medical consultation to on-line counselling, people are doing things differently, as individuals and as collectives of different kinds. In this 'new world' psychologists have a whole new landscape of human behaviour and experience to explore that either did not exist before

or was hidden (rather than enacted in front of us as it is now).

Moreover, its very availability and visibility offer all sorts of new avenues for research. Experiments and surveys are increasingly being conducted on-line, of course, so technological innovation is also having an impact on quantitative research. However the impact is far greater in the qualitative field. Many new methods would not be possible without new technology. The fine-grained analysis of conversation analysis (Chapter 4) is a good case in point. Another is on-line interviewing (see Chapter 18).

THE PRAGMATIC AGENDA

As Flick (2002) points out, '[q]ualitative research has always had strong links to *applied* fields in its research questions and approaches'. Qualitative research in psychology is no exception. For many (perhaps most) qualitative psychologists, what spurs them on is a keen determination to open up psychology to new fields of influence and push forward what it can achieve.

Organizational psychology

Let us begin with organizational psychology, which is a good example of a psychological sub-discipline that is generally viewed as heavily committed to the quantitative approach. Historically most of its work was based on psychometric testing (for example, to evaluate skills for job selection) and even when dealing with more ephemeral matters (such as job satisfaction) occupational psychology has traditionally adopted a positivist stance. Silvester (Chapter 27: 490) observes that:

This research has provided an important evidence base for the scientific practice of employee selection. It has also undoubtedly increased the popularity of organizational psychology as a discipline capable of promoting enhanced worker performance, and ultimately, organizational success.

Indeed, as Danziger (1990) has elegantly demonstrated, utility was a powerful driver

for the introduction of quantitative methods into psychology, especially in applied fields like occupational psychology. Quantitative research was attractive because it was seen to be capable of producing and interpreting just the right kind of numerical information needed to increase productivity in both commercial and educational settings:

Twentieth-century psychology's infatuation with numbers would not have blossomed into an all-consuming love affair had it not been for the usefulness of statistical constructions based on group data.

Danziger (1990: 136)

From the chapters in this handbook it is evident that across a broad range of psychology's applied disciplines, this 'love affair' with numbers and measurement is slowly beginning not so much to turn sour, but certainly to cool down. This is because quantitative methods are not proving the panacea that they had been seen to be. What is going on in occupational psychology is a good case in point. Silvester (Chapter 27: 491) gives as an example recent work on job analysis:

[A]n important but less discussed function of job analysis is to foster a shared understanding of good and poor performance. In this instance, job analysis is not so much a 'scientific' process of uncovering an underlying objective reality, but an active process of sense-making to shape a collective understanding of the role and performance expectations.

She then gives two illustrations of where occupational psychology has come to 'recognize the legitimacy and importance of different groups in what is meant by good performance' (Chapter 27: 495). The first is a study conducted by Patterson et al. (2000) on the job analyses for a range of medical roles of general practitioners (GPs). The other is her own investigations of the roles of Members of Parliament (MPs) (Silvester, 2003) and of local councillors (Silvester, 2004).

Silvester makes a strong case for her use of qualitative methods when conducting research on the bases on which to select prospective British Parliamentary candidates.

First are the pragmatics – a political party needs to make good choices if they are to gain political power, and need to know what the electorate want. The role of an MP is changing, and old stereotypes are not a good basis for choosing who can win votes and, if and when they get elected, can operate effectively in the role. Much the same (though less glamorously, perhaps) is true for GPs and, indeed, doctors in general.

Again old assumptions – that all you need to do is 'find the right chap' (in other words, 'someone like us') – are not only going to be dangerous, in that poor selection can lead to life-threatening blunders. They are now recognized as unacceptably biased and required by good practice and by British law to be replaced by more equitable 'fair selection' procedures. Thus the adoption of qualitative methods is driven by a social justice as well as a pragmatic agenda (more on this in the next section).

Moreover, as Silvester points out, qualitative research can also offer insights into the mechanisms of discrimination – and thus inform action that can be taken to challenge, redress and prevent it. She offers Koczwara's work on perceptions of what constitutes a 'good leader' (Koczwara and Silvester, 2006) as a good example. Koczwara conducted interviews and observed managers in practice in an international investment bank, and demonstrated that despite rating individuals equally on numerical rating scales, managers systematically looked for different qualities in men and women as indicative of 'leadership potential'. Thus the qualitative methods used in the study were not only able to show prejudice that was obscured (presumably because of demand characteristics) in the quantitative data, they also made explicit the differential judgements themselves. These results can then be fed back to managers (for example, through training) as a means to promote anti-discriminatory practice.

Finally, Silvester notes that qualitative research in occupational psychology is also gaining acceptance because of a gradual recognition in the field of the sheer

complexity of processes like organizational change. Most importantly, she observes a new willingness to recognize that such processes are not universal but highly context dependent and are influenced by contesting standpoints. They work differently in different kinds of settings, and different individuals and groups adopt different stances on what, for example, constitutes 'effectiveness' and 'success'. Silvester exemplifies her points by a qualitative study of innovation in the Spanish ceramics industry (Carrero et al., 2000).

In other words, in complex situations it becomes less and less possible to provide clear-cut quantitative research evidence on which to base practice (i.e. evidence-based practice). Rather, the data indicate strong contingency and contested judgements, values and meanings. The question is no longer 'what works?' Rather the questions are 'what works in what situation and with whom?' and, more fundamentally, 'works for whom and in what way?' This is where qualitative methods come into their own, since they are suited to the study of phenomena like 'innovation' and 'creativity'.

Health psychology

Like in occupational psychology, when mainstream health psychology was established in the 1970s in the USA it took (and still takes):

a conventional, 'scientific' approach to the field. It assumes that knowledge can be uncovered through scientific research processes, ... focuses on measuring, predicting and changing health and illness behaviours and seeks to discover the 'truth' about psychological factors and health.

Chamberlain and Murray (Chapter 22: 392)

Especially given its close association with biomedicine, this is hardly surprising. As in other sub disciplines however, the longer-term history of health psychology is not so clear cut, with connections (albeit rather tenuous) with psychosomatic medicine based on psychoanalytic theory.

Nevertheless, mainstream health psychology continues to be decidedly dismissive of

qualitative methods, especially in the USA (its major site of action). In their chapter on health psychology Chamberlain and Murray illustrate this by reference to the special edition of the APA journal *Health Psychology* published in 2004, reviewing 25 years of 'progress' in the field. There is only one brief mention of qualitative methods in the whole volume – a comment in one paper that 'health psychologists seeking to contextually anchor their research may want to consider qualitative methods' (Yali and Revenson, 2004: 150).

Of specific interest here is the way health psychology's professional relationship with medicine has led to a particular pressure within psychology to supply evidence for evidence-based practice, in the context of the growing move towards evidence-based medicine. Developed by the Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group at McMaster University in Canada as a 'new paradigm for medical practice' (Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group, 1992: 2420):

Evidence based medicine is the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. The practice of evidence based medicine means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available external clinical evidence from systematic research.

Sackett, Rosenberg, Gay, Haynes and Richard (1996:71)

Evidence-based practice is part of a wider movement that is increasingly referred to as 'the audit culture', where quality targets are pre-specified and performance is audited by reference to these targets. Generally it relies entirely on quantitative research to supply the 'evidence' required:

Qualitative studies are routinely excluded from evidence review and policy development: it is quantitative data which are used to assess the nature and scale of the social processes in which governments seek to intervene. For example, the development of UK policies to tackle child poverty and social exclusion has been marked by the publication of authoritative reviews and strategy documents drawing on quantitative studies and routinely gathered statistics ... Qualitative research is conspicuous

by its absence in these influential texts. Informing them is a wider swathe of research reports, again relying exclusively on quantitative evidence.

Graham and McDermott (2005: 21)

Interestingly for our purposes, in medicine itself there is now a growing desire to broaden the evidence base for clinical practice by opening it up to qualitative research, albeit mainly in fields like sociology and nursing rather than medicine *per se* (Green and Britten, 1998; Popay, Rogers and Williams, 1998; Barbour, 2000).

However, such a move does raise issues about the suitability of qualitative data as 'evidence' and establishing validity criteria for it. There is an expanding debate on this issue emerging; see, for example Emden and Sandelowski (1998, 1999), Whittemore, Chase and Mandle (2001) and Cho and Trent (2006). To summarize a broad discussion, qualitative researchers have generally abandoned any attempt to compete with the validity criteria of quantitative work – as Kahn (1993) has argued, this amounts to little more than a 'procedural charade'. They see no reason for it, arguing that qualitative work has profoundly different goals and values and cannot be judged on the same criteria.

In his piece on 'a farewell to criteriology', Schwandt (1996) makes a case for quite different ambitions – instead of 'theory-centred, value-neutral, atomistic, disengaged' research, he proposes conceiving of it as a form of 'practical reasoning' achieved through 'enabling conditions' in which a community of interpreters engage in dialogue, rhetoric, conversation and creative imagination. There are strong resonances in this clarion cry in many of the chapters in this handbook. A good example is in Chapter 29, where the 'strict standards for quality' in qualitative research are listed as: trustworthiness (including credibility), transferability, dependability and confirmability'.

It is within this context that we can begin to examine the shift to qualitative methods being used in health psychology. There is the 'pull' – the ability to achieve goals that cannot otherwise be attained. And there is, in this

context, a strengthening 'push' – quantitative research is not delivering the goods. For instance, cognitive algebra models of health-related behaviour (such as the Health Beliefs Model and the Theory of Reasoned Action) were specifically designed to enable theories of behaviour change to be tested hypothetico-deductively. Yet in the context of the UK's National Institute of Public Health Excellence seeking an evidence-base to inform recommendations for practice, these models have been shown to have extremely limited capacity to predict how people can be persuaded to behave in more healthy ways (Taylor et al., 2006).

More generally conventional quantitative research, and the meta-analyses based upon it that are used to provide the basis for policy and practice recommendations, are simply not all that helpful in an area like this. Efforts to make evidence-based recommendations for 'good practice' interventions are floundering when applied to health-related behaviour. One reason is the individualizing nature of this kind of research in health psychology, and, in particular, its ignorance of (and hence failure to address) the profound impact of socioeconomic variables.

As in occupational psychology, quantitative research and data analysis in health psychology offer poor evidence of 'what works' in terms of health promoting interventions. The evidence base is patchy, of poor quality, and usually highly contingent. While there is some – albeit limited – evidence that, say, certain smoking cessation interventions 'work' (in that they persuade significant numbers of people to give up smoking), the nature of the research limits its utility. For a start, almost all studies last only for short periods. Success is measured by the proportion of participants who have not smoked for periods usually within a period of a few weeks to, at most, a few months. With studies of physical exercise the same is true – the only evidence available is short term, and about compliance to the regime. There are effectively no studies where behaviour change is investigated in relation to its impact upon health status improvement itself.

Qualitative health psychologists have therefore been motivated to seek understanding and insight rather than ‘what works’ evidence. Chamberlain and Murray’s Chapter 22 illustrates the diversity and inventiveness of this growing body of work through studies of, for example, the impact on families of a child with a chronic medical condition, of dietary practices in people with diabetes, of understandings of and meanings given to inorgasmia in women, and discourses on obesity. The effectiveness with which qualitative methods can explore contingency and context is illustrated by studies of the interplay of race and health in relation to prostate cancer, the health-related experiences and meanings operating in indigenous cultures and the services provided to bisexual people.

THE REINSTATEMENT OF PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES

In their chapter on psychoanalytic approaches (Chapter 7) Stephen Frosh and Lisa Young describe how qualitative approaches have brought in a ‘new openness to investigations of “meaning” ...[and hence] to the potential of psychoanalysis as a conceptual and methodological tool’ (Chapter 7: 109).

The ‘new’ social psychology, with its roots in social constructionism, Foucauldian critique and methodologically scrupulous qualitative research ... offers a grounded way in which to articulate the psychosocial bases around which personal and social accounts of experiences and beliefs are constructed.

In fact a surprising range and number of psychology’s disciplines share a common history of a strong influence of psychoanalytic ideas, theories and methods, including counselling, developmental, forensic, health and occupational psychology. Within the last half of the 20th century the mainstream of these sub-disciplines generally turned aside from anything as ‘unscientific’ as subjectivity and the psychic forces operating within it. The 21st century marks a growing desire within psychology – on its fringes at least – to rehabilitate Freud’s ‘dream work’ – ‘the tricky,

hard-to-observe ways in which unconscious material finds its way into consciousness’ (Chapter 7: 108) – as a legitimate target for psychological inquiry.

In terms of developmental psychology (Chapter 23), for instance, its ‘founding fathers’ were mainly drawn from a psychoanalytic tradition. As Burman (Chapter 23: 425): notes, ‘Piaget was an early member of the Psychoanalytic Association and underwent and conducted analysis himself’. It is counselling psychology (Chapter 25) that can probably trace its roots most directly back to psychodynamic theory and Freud’s development of ‘the talking cure’ for psychological distress and disturbance. This tradition has been somewhat sustained by counsellors in their practice throughout the intervening period, particularly outside the USA. Even so, in research terms we see the familiar pattern – a fallow period that is now beginning to open up to qualitative methods. By contrast, clinical psychology (Chapter 24) had its origins firmly in cognitive-behaviourism, manifested at its inception 1949 at a conference in Boulder, USA, by being promoted as an applied field of psychology designed to train and regulate ‘practitioner scientists’ with the tools and techniques to diagnose and treat psychological disorders.

Frosh and Young give a number of reasons why a growing number of qualitative psychologists are becoming willing to introduce psychoanalytic ideas into their theorizing, and, in particular, into their data analysis and interpretative techniques. Psychoanalysis offers them an additional interpretative language – for instance, about the role of emotional investment in subject positioning. More than that, it offers access to potentially new interpretative insights – that, for example, an account may be provided less as an explanation or mere ‘telling it like it is’ than as a form of defence. A good example is Burman’s work on charity advertisements using depictions of children (Burman, 1999).

‘[P]sychoanalysis conceptualizes discourse as a site where the internal world of psychic reality is expressed and revealed ... A psychoanalytic reading

goes 'behind' the text as the positions that individuals construct through their talk are taken to be indicative of anxieties, defences and particular ways of relating.

Frosh and Young (Chapter 7: 109)

What is critical in this respect is a shift arising from the 'significant advances produced by discursive social psychology' where 'psychoanalysis, rather than viewing [psychic phenomena like] repression as *individual* in operation, needs to perceive it as *socially* produced' (Chapter 7: 110; our emphases). This rehabilitation of psychoanalytic theory and its use as an analytic tool for analysing and interpreting qualitative data is gaining in popularity across a range of methods.

However, specifically psychoanalytic methods such as the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) method (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) are, as Frosh and Young themselves argue, more problematic. They ask on what basis researchers using this technique can present their reading as 'accurate', and are unconvinced by the claim of 'recognizability'. As they point out, 'the problem here is that an interpretation may be agreed upon by various people all looking at something from the same perspective...but this does not mean that it is right' (Chapter 7: 00). Discomfort at the way this method creates the conditions that inherently privilege the researchers' interpretation has been expressed by a number of leading qualitative psychologists including Parker (2005: 108) 'on the grounds that is individualizing, essentializing, pathologizing and disempowering – a "researcher knows best" set of moves' (Chapter 7: 115).

Ricoeur (1974) has a telling name for it – the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' – interpretation that regards the psychoanalyst as having and the analysand as lacking the capability for insight about what is 'really' going on. As we set out in the next section, such moves are even more strongly criticized by community psychologists and psychologists conducting action research, who both strongly challenge all interpretative claims that devalue the self-knowledge of those

who are the subjects/objects of research. Postcolonial psychologists would go further, as we shall see in the next section.

In part the solution is the simple segue into regarding textual analysis of any form as, firstly, one among many readings, and, secondly to see interpretation of data as 'the production of effects rather than the naming of truths' (Chapter 7: 116). Frosh and Young stress that psychoanalytically informed narrative analytic research of the kind they do:

is not analogous with 'psychoanalysing'... Rather it is the research relationship and the narrative produced within this research relationship that is under scrutiny. Therefore, throughout our analysis we attempt to anchor psychoanalytic ideas in the texture of the research relationship and a close reading of the text, processes that require commitment to reflexivity and systematic narrative analysis respectively.

Frosh and Young (Chapter 7: 117)

THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

The press to 'make things happen' is itself often inspired by a range of interconnected ideologies that share a commitment to liberation and social justice. These ideologies include countering structural inequalities (that used to be called Marxism), feminism and its potent women-liberatory agenda, and the wider anti-oppression, anti-imperialism movement around the politics of class, disability, race, sexuality and other modes of discrimination and exclusion. Hanlin and her colleagues express it well in Chapter 29 on community psychology:

It is hard to think of an aspect of health and wellbeing that is not affected by the allocation of resources and obligations in society. Social justice refers precisely to the distribution of pains and gains. A common definition characterizes justice as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and burdens.

Hanlin et al. (Chapter 29: 532)

For many qualitative psychologists the social justice agenda is what primarily motivates their rejection of quantitative methods, as they are seen as a technology (or possibly

more accurately a *techné*) designed for the governance and regulation by the powerful of the powerless. From this perspective the measurement of human action and experience is a mechanism of control – a manifestation of an ‘audit culture’ (as described above) based on imposing norms, setting ‘quality standards’ and forcing people to conform.

It may go too far to suggest that qualitative psychologists have specifically adopted these methods as an explicit means of resistance against psychology’s establishment. Some (perhaps many) would want to be seen simply as pragmatists merely choosing ‘the best tool for the job’ without any reference to politics at all. There is no one-to-one link between being anti-establishment and using qualitative methods (Parker and Burman, 1993).

For a start, as Willig (2001) points out, conventional hypothetico-deductive studies can include the collection of qualitative data, as a preparatory step and/or to be analysed using researcher defined categories; what Kidder and Fine (1987) call ‘small q’. In this handbook we have concentrated on ‘big Q’ research, that is ‘open-ended, inductive research methodologies that are concerned with theory generation and the exploration of meanings’ (Willig, 2001: 11). These aspirations are not ideological in themselves – in the liberationist pursuit of social justice sense as outlined above. They do, though, provide the ideal ‘tools’ (both theoretical and methodological) to pursue such ideologies.

Some of psychology’s sub-disciplines are inherently less ideological: cognitive psychology (Chapter 31) is a case in point. Others are very much so by the very nature of their development, with action research (Chapter 3), community psychology (Chapter 29) and postcolonial psychology (Chapter 32) being the most prominent – though a number of others (such as health psychology) can also adopt social justice as a core value.

However, in many cases our own impression is that framing research within a particular ideology can have more to do with how particular researchers position themselves than anything necessarily to do

with any specific method or sub-discipline. Chapter 30, for example, which explicitly adopts a critical stance, would have been very different if written by another author – such as from the cultural relativist position of the classic ‘psychological’ study reported to ‘Western Civilization’ by Margaret Mead (1928). Having said all that, when perusing the chapters in this handbook it is evident that it is social justice ideology that has persuaded many psychologists to adopt qualitative methods. In this section we will look in a little more detail at what is clearly a theme that pervades the handbook.

Action research

Drawing on the work of Reason and Bradbury (2001), in Chapter 3 Kagan and her colleagues identify this as one of the three main purposes of action research: ‘to increase well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of individuals, and communities and to more equitable and sustainable relationships within the wider ecology of the planet’ (Chapter 3: 32).

As they point out, there is nothing new in psychologists seeking to understand social problems in order to change them and study the effects. They trace the history of this approach back to the work of prominent psychologists in the USA, particularly Kurt Lewin (1946) who set up a Research Center for Group Dynamics at MIT, although there were a number of others such as Collier (1945) who were also influential. At much the same time psychoanalytically informed psychologists at the Tavistock Clinic in the UK were seeking to bring about social change through their research. There is also a strong tradition of action research in Scandinavia (such as through the Norwegian Industrial Democracy Project in the 1960s; Emery and Thorsrud, 1976) and in South America (e.g. Thiollent, 1947).

Not just in Latin America, action research has been profoundly influenced by the concept of ‘the pedagogy of the oppressed’ initiated by Paulo Freire (1972). His aim was to challenge and transform the way that those

who provide services (like education, social and health care) and those who receive them relate to each other. Emancipation of those subjected (and made abject) to all forms of commercial and social intervention is at the core of action research: 'the challenge is not so much a collaboratively defined practical problem as the collaborative exploration of an existing social problem in order to achieve social transformation' (Chapter 3: 37).

Community psychology

In a similar vein, community psychologists strive for socially just changes through the work they do with excluded and marginalized communities. As described in Chapter 29 they 'utilize qualitative methodologies as a way to understand and promote shared values of empowerment and self-determination; collaboration and democratic participation; health, wellness and prevention; and social justice' (Chapter 29: 527).

Empowerment in community psychology research is enacted through both directly providing 'a means for marginalized people's voices and narratives to be heard' and more vicariously through the researcher becoming 'the steward of stories, experiences and constructed knowledge of the respondents, rather than just a recipient of the data' (Chapter 29: 526).

Thus community psychologists seek to empower in two ways. First, they do their best to make the research process *itself* more empowering. They use qualitative methods that give participants a more meaningful participatory role, power and freedom (i.e. more 'voice and choice'). They engage community members in the process of building shared narratives that will have greater impact as representative of the community rather than simply being treated as the lay views of individuals. They increase 'the capacity of program stakeholders to plan, implement and evaluate the programs' (Chapter 29: 528). And by demystifying the research process and avoiding arcane language to report its findings, the research itself is able to be more of a collaborative venture.

The second empowerment strategy involves community psychologists using their positions and power *as* researchers to champion the causes, rights, entitlements and priorities of the oppressed. In this sense community psychology research is claimed as political action in itself.

Postcolonial psychology

However, it is within the postcolonial approach to psychology (Chapter 32) that there is the most determined challenge to systems that 'create and sustain power relations of domination' (Foster, 1993: 56). We can see it in the lead-in to a chapter on 'interpretative methods' included in a volume on research methods produced by South African social scientists in the wake of that country's liberation from apartheid:

It is estimated that 40% of South Africa's wealth is owned by only 7% of the people (Wilkins, 1988), but what does that mean for the people concerned? What is it like to be very rich? What kinds of life do rich people live? Or, conversely, what is it like to be one of the many millions of South Africans who live below the poverty line? These are the kinds of questions that can be addressed by interpretative research methods – methods that try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification and measurement.

Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999: 123)

The ideological agenda here is absolutely explicit. In a similar post-apartheid South African book on *Critical Psychology* Catriona Macleod (who co-authored Chapter 32) states baldly that in critical psychology research its politics demand that 'at the very least, there should be an explicit focus on power-relations and undermining exclusionary and discriminatory practices' (McLeod, 2004: 524–5). The root motivation for qualitative research in this view must *always* be to expose, oppose – and, ultimately depose – elites who mistreat, marginalize and exploit others.

In Chapter 32, Catriona Macleod and Sunil Bhatia note that there is no single

methodology of postcolonial psychology, but rather 'a constellation of shared political and social objectives that draw on a range of insights and theories ... [that centre] on the intermingling of the past with the present in ways that illuminate how power relations of the present are embedded in colonial history' (Chapter 32: 576).

Given this focus, it is hardly surprising that postcolonial psychology has taken such a strong and innovative lead in pushing forward the social justice agenda. It directly challenges research that creates 'vantage points from which to colonize or objectify the subjects of research', or 'excavates the "Third World" for the advance of "Western" theory' or that seeks to impose 'First World' pre-occupations on research in 'Third World' settings (Chapter 32: 576). As Smith, another postcolonial theorist, has pointed out, among Maori the word 'research' is 'probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary' (Smith, 1999; as cited in Chapter 22 of this volume).

Macleod and Bhatia draw particular attention to the 'politics of location'. Through this, they argue, postcolonial psychology gives a whole new prominence (and also meaning) to reflexivity. Conventionally, they suggest, reflexivity involves recognizing – and scrutinizing the implications of – 'the multiple, contradictory and socially constructed interactive and reflexive positionings' that are accorded to 'practitioners, researchers, academics and participants along the axes of race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation and religion' (Chapter 32: 577).

Adding the politics of location, they argue, 'moves the reflexive account beyond a scrutiny of individual subjectivity' which, they point out, can so often descend into a rather self-indulgent discursive form of self-flagellation. Their reconceptualization of reflexivity insists that researchers stop, in effect, treating it as a performance of ritualistic penance – the 'self-confessions of a circumscribed prologue' – and take seriously the always-ever-present 'intricacies of the micropolitics of research interactions that criss-cross insider-outsider

boundaries in dynamic and complex ways' (Chapter 32: 577).

We sense a barely veiled distaste here, in the view that reflexivity's requirement for self-critique can all too often, in practice, provide an opportunity for enacting a continued sense of smug superiority – of being politically 'right on' – or, what Gayatri Spivak calls 'the banality of leftist intellectuals lists of self-knowing' that renders them invisible (Spivak, 1988: 70). Reflexivity must, Macleod and Bhatia argue, also encompass an acknowledgement of the power inherent in the role of researcher and the Otherness it intrinsically entails – an acknowledgement of the 'politics of representation'. Quoting Lal, they propose that:

the authorial Self confronts and inscribes the Other as a 'captive' object: an object that we capture via new technologies of inscription – such as tapes, surveys, interviews, word processing, videos and so forth.

Lal (1999: 117)

The Other then becomes represented by the researcher(s) first in their data interpretation and then in the research outputs (research reports, journal articles, theses and the 'grey' literature of charities and government agencies and non-governmental organizations) they produce. While Hanlin and her community psychologist colleagues view the representation of the researched-upon communities as positive – a means to champion their causes – Macleod and Bhatia and their postcolonial psychologist colleagues take a much more critical (cynical, even) stance. Writing about Spivak's (1988) essay on why a young Bengali widow did not speak, Macleod and Bhatia (Chapter 32: 579; our emphases) note:

The terms of representation, the channels of communication and the language that she can use to express her agency is either decided by the colonizer or the ones who come to rescue her oppressed subjectivity.

They go on to cite Spivak's (1988) take on this – that 'the desire to represent the Other in authentic terms is a utopian politics, rooted in the epistemic violence of imperialism'

(Chapter 32: 579). The oppression invoked by representing the other cannot be rectified through simple ‘owning up’; more is needed than that.

Thus a postcolonial take on psychology argues that a social justice agenda cannot just be bolted on to psychology as some desirable ‘added extra’. It has to fundamentally change what we mean by psychology, what we do as research and, most crucially, how we enact the relationship between the researcher and the researched. This does not, they argue, imply a need to get better at representing the researched. Rather what is needed are ways of ‘creating points of departure rather than arriving at a set of understandings’ (Chapter 32: 579).

Points of departure they call for include new research aims – research to identify and challenge the distortions of colonial and imperial imperatives (such as linguistic imperialism); research on the impacts of colonialism itself – for instance, on ‘identity formation of postcolonial diasporas, borderlands and transnational migrant communities’ and research that produces ‘knowledge with an explicitly liberatory intention’ (Chapter 32: 581).

New research sites must be chosen – in liminal spaces (literally and/or conceptually), places where racialized, classed and gendered differences are illusioned and disillusioned; resolved, absolved and dissolved – ‘where continuities and discontinuities join hands’ (Chapter 32: 581), where the taken-for-granted can be perturbed and disturbed.

Macleod and Bhatia concede that the text-based origins of postcolonialism in literary and cultural studies lend this approach to qualitative methods in psychology, especially its utility for exploring everyday, lived-in lives and for fostering collaboration and its sensitivity to the issues thrown up by the researcher/researched power differential. Nonetheless they propose a search for new investigative practices that go further.

We think the approaches developed by qualitative psychologists through memory work (Chapter 8) and visual methodologies (Chapter 17) may well be promising. In both

approaches groups of researchers form research collectives in which they are conduct research upon their own experiences and meanings, using techniques akin to consciousness-raising and/or are performative. Such approaches can truly enable psychological research to explore new places in new ways that are less inherently colonizing.

Clearly psychologists need to do something more than just ‘stay at home’ and do research with their friends. It was Catriona Macleod herself who, rather late in the day, persuaded us we needed to include a chapter on postcolonial psychology. We are very glad we did – it has certainly given us food for thought about where psychology might ‘boldly go’ next.

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