A Tale That Fiction Would Envy: Naturalistic inquiry methods in the Visual Arts

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Abstract

This paper reports on the range of ethnographic research methods that are currently being applied in the author's investigation of a number of artists who teach in tertiary institutions. The study examines the relation between the artistic practice and the teaching practice of the artist/academic respondents to the study. In particular this paper cites a form of semantic analysis that seeks triangulated endorsement for its claims through the use of a combination of unstructured and structured interviews, unobtrusive observation and documentary evidence.

In an article published in the Sydney Morning Herald in June, 2001, the journalist, Sebastian Smee posed the question, "Does life tailor itself to art? Ask an artist and you'll probably get an adamant "No". Life's too messy, too stubbornly inchoate. Ask a documentary-maker, however, and the answer might take you by surprise" (p.5). Smee goes on to review a documentary film, *Facing the Music,* made by Bob Connolly and the late Robyn Anderson, about which the writer Helen Garner commented; "A writer would have given her right arm to have made it up, but it is beyond the realm of ordinary invention" (p.5).

Smee asks the question, "How on earth did the makers know it (the story of the effect of funding cuts to the music department of Sydney University) would pan out so satisfactorily? How could they possibly have predicted that such an effective narrative would emerge from, of all things, a university humanities department? The answer, of course, is that they couldn't." (p.5). Smee writes that one of the film makers, Bob Connolly, asserts that whilst "gut instinct" about how a situation may "pan-out" is important, the crucial issue lies in adopting the right approach. He says, "It is the *situation* that matters more than anything... the environment rather than any specific event...If you've made the right choice about character and situation, then the narrative tends to take care of itself" (p.5).

Connolly and Anderson's approach to documentary film-making is called *uncontrolled verite' narrative.* This approach is characterised by a process that includes the collation and editing of hundreds of hours of film. Connolly states that it took he and Anderson three months to assemble the material - about 160 hours - and transcribe it all, and then a further 12 months to edit the material. Connolly says that when he and Anderson start a film they have no real intentions. "We can't really afford to have intentions in case we allow them to lead us... We try to film what is actually happening, not what we think ought to happen. He goes on; "If you

are driven by (an) issue, which so much documentary film making is, you run the risk of churning out a polemic, of using your characters as pawns to serve your point" (p.5).

In a similar way, the investigation of the visual arts as a practice and of visual artists as practitioners requires a "light hand" when it comes to the gathering and interpretation of data. The study currently under investigation, to which this paper refers, seeks to investigate the relation between the artistic practice and teaching practice of a number of artist academics. Naturalistic methods of inquiry have been used in this study because, as Guba states, these methods enable the representation of multiple realities which characterise human behaviour, and enable the researcher to strive for conformability, or agreement among a variety of information sources, rather than striving for inter-subjective agreement (1978 p.19). Thus confirmation of the meanings referred to by the respondents is carried out at the methodological and not at the dialectical level. In this sense naturalistic inquiry is consistent with postmodern and late semiotic critique which is mistrusting of phenomenological reduction, preferring to confine itself to the text.

In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz explains "what doing ethnography is", as a step towards grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge. Anthropological analysis, he says is not a matter of methods entirely, although these are important, but rather a definition of the kind of intellectual effort it entails (1975). Borrowing from Gilbert Ryle's notion of "thick description" to explain what he means, he says... "Using an 'I-am-a-camera', phenomenalistic observation of a cultural enterprise or setting alone will not work."(p.6). Geertz observes that even the most elemental sort of inquiry is "extraordinarily thick" by which he means dependent upon interpretation (p.9).

Geertz writes that what the researcher calls "the data" is really "...our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (p. 9). Assumptions about the neutrality of the data has led to the position where much anthropological research is seen to be more of an observational, and less of an interpretive activity than it really is. It is in the act of analysis, according to Geertz, that the "structures of significance" are sorted out - and determinations of their social ground and import can occur (p. 9).

Geertz describes what an ethnographer is faced with as a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, "many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit..." (p.10). He describes doing an ethnography as trying to read a manuscript - "foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations and tendentious commentaries...written (as) transient examples of shaped behaviour" (p.10).

Wittgenstein's attack on privacy theories of meaning, he argues is vital for anthropologists to take account of. He quotes Wittgenstein:

> We...say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another.....we do not understand the people (of a strange country and not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves). We cannot find our feet with them. (p.13).

Geertz states that "finding our feet" is what ethnographic research conceives as personal experience. The aim of anthropology, he says, is:

> ...the enlargement of the universe of human discourse,...and is an aim to which a semiotic concept of culture is particularly

well adapted. Culture is a context; something within which social events, behaviours and processes can be intelligibly - thickly - described (p.14).

Geertz feels that the problem of verification, of how you can tell a better account (of a phenomenon, as setting) from a worse one, is only a hollow threat, since the determining question of an ethnography should be whether it, "sorts winks from twitches, and real winks from mimicked ones...."(p.16). Ethnography, he says, is thick description and ethnographers are those doing the describing.

Nelson Goodman argues that descriptions denoting the qualitative character of human actions and events, such as works of art, are symptomatically dense in their symbolic structure, and are marked by representations that exemplify the things to which they refer (1976). Geertz's "interpretation", Ryles' notion of "thick description", and Goodman's concept of "exemplification" or "density" fit neatly with the educational researcher Guba's argument for using naturalistic inquiry as an appropriate method when undertaking "value laden" research (1978).

Guba would claim, however that the data obtained through observations, however thick, still require some form of validation (1978). He refers to Wenzel, a primate anthropologist who describes naturalistic research (a branch of ethnography) as any form of research that aims at discovery and verification. Wenzel describes the naturalistic inquirer as someone who zooms in and out with a lens - "zooming in to infinite detail, and out to infinite scope" (Willems and Raush 1969, p.81).

Guba believes that a study can be claimed as a naturalistic inquiry as a function of where it falls along two dimensions of manipulation by the investigator:

- the manipulation of stimuli, and

- the manipulation of response modes (p.5).

Guba emphasises the importance of the "verification" of data, as a way for the researcher to ensure that she/he functions primarily as a facilitate whose role it is to uncover emergent data and not to put a gloss on it.

When Geertz talks of the importance of verification in the context of "thick description", he suggests that the very "thickness" or richness and complexity of the description is in itself a suitable and sufficient form of verification. Guba, however, argues that the naturalistic inquirer needs to discover (uncover) the meaning of what she/he has observed. She/he can do this by preparing certain categories that will account for the noted response. These categories lead her/him further into a verification mode; then, on subsequent observations she/he is more likely to select situations (to observe) which elicit the response categories of noted interest. The investigator is then able to "cycle" through a series of observations that are, alternately, directed at discovery, and then verification.

For the purposes of the research project that this paper is reporting on, Spradley's method of undertaking a domain analysis has been applied as a way of proposing what Guba calls "response categories" in relation to the data (1979). Spradley calls the emergent categories "cover-terms", and he suggests that these will enable particular emergent responses evident in the data to be accounted for in an authentic way. Cover terms have also been used in this study as the basis for the formulation of a further set of structured questions, which are applied to verify or account for the emergent data. The cover terms themselves have become, for the purposes of this study, an organising device. They enable the emergent

data to be subjected to a rigorous test for authenticity, and facilitate the uncovering of implicit meanings.

Geertz argues that the problem a researcher encounters when he/she attempts to adapt an interpretive approach to a phenomenon is that they tend to resist conceptual articulation and thus can escape systematic modes of assessment. He says that because the interpretation is "imprisoned in its own detail" it is presented as self-validating (p.24). However, it is suggested that in this study the use of cover-terms as the organiser for the triangulation of emergent data, has made it possible to retain the "thick description" identified by Ryle, and endorsed by Geertz.

Renato Rosaldo calls this approach "processual analysis" (1993, p.131). He refers to the historian Louis Mink, who uses the term "synoptic judgement", meaning the distinctive ability to see things together as in a narrative. The strength of narrative analysis lies in its ability to clarify questions of "human agency" which have a special significance in anthropological studies with their emphasis on the explication of the feelings and intentions of social actors. Rosaldo claims that together with "historical understandings", questions of "human agency" can bring complex understandings of ever-changing, multifaceted social realities to an ethnography (p.131).

He compares two ethnographic reports of the hunting process followed by two different African tribes. The first, a description of the Bushmen, Rosaldo describes as accurate, but incomplete, because it follows the classic norm of reporting only what is observed. The second, of the Ilongot, combines case studies with indigenous narratives, and consequently reveals aspects of hunting hidden by classic norms of reporting (p.128).

Henry Giroux claims that within contemporary feminist and post-modern discourse there has occurred a recognition of the:

> ... situated nature of knowledge, the partiality of all knowledge claims, the intermediacy of history, and the shifting, multiple and often contradictory nature of identity... in addition, there is the important issue of how identity itself is constituted and what the enabling conditions might be for human agency (1993, p.26).

He writes that the "politics of location" have pointed to how social identities occupy contradictory and shifting locations. Although Giroux is primarily writing of pedagogy, the principles to which he refers are applicable to any representation of the border zones in which the lived experiences of individuals within and outside of groups are found, in a range of cultural and political settings. Giroux writes of understanding culture as a:

> ...shifting sphere of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences and voices intermingle amid diverse relations of power and privilege (p.32).

In this study, the triangulation of data obtained through the application of naturalistic inquiry methods has, as Guba writes, "... allowed an investigation of phenomena within and in relation to their naturally occurring contexts...."(p 3). The stories which the artist/respondents tell are not taken on face value alone, but are contextualised within what Spradley calls a "relational theory of meaning" (p.96).

Rosaldo claims that by listening to the well-formed stories which huntsmen tell it is revealed that they, in fact, seek out experiences that can be told as stories - stories that shape, rather than simply reflect human conduct. He refers to Jerome Bruner's (1992) argument that stories shape action because they embody compelling motives, strong feelings, vague aspirations, clear intentions, or well-defined goals. Bruner goes on to explain that these "narratives", are acted out, "make" events, and "make" history. They contribute to the reality of their participants (Rosaldo, p.129).

Giroux argues that the process of education has become so instrumentalized that we have forgotten that the referent out of which we operate is a white, upper-middle-class logic that not only modulizes but actually silences subordinate voices. He writes:

> ...If you believe that schooling is about somebody's story, somebody's history, somebody's set of memories, a particular set of memories, a particular set of experiences, then it is clear that just one logic will not suffice (p.14).

Echoing Bowles and Gintis' notion of "voice", Giroux argues that principles can be illustrated with a "sense of voice, with somebody's story", and that these stories can become the basis for analysing a whole range of considerations that are often hidden within the stories (p. 16). He says, "...experience never simply speaks for itself. The language that we bring to it determines its meaning" (p. 17). There is the need for educators and cultural workers to become "border crossers", engaged in an effort to create alternative social spheres. Rosaldo and Guba articulate this need in a similar way, through their insistence on the importance of the researcher allowing the story to be told.

For the purposes of this study, with its focus on artist/academics, Rosaldo's argument for the use of "narrative analysis" is compelling. It reinforces Guba's emphasis upon the importance of the "elite" or unstructured interview as a strategy to be used whenever the researcher wishes to uncover the emergent narrative of the respondents "lived experience". This study applies a "domain analysis" to the responses of the artists in order to establish cover terms and included terms and to enable the connotative meaning of the 'indigenous' narratives to emerge. When triangulated with the other ethnographic methods used in this study, these narratives provide a valuable framework for the purposes of disclosing the agency or 'motivated reality' of the respondents. These are consistent with the methods suggested by Rosaldo in relation to the uncovering of hidden meanings, in a way similar to the *uncontrolled veritie' narrative* approach to documentary film making adopted by Connolly and Anderson, discussed earlier in this paper.

In addition, Spradley's method of semantic analysis enables the researcher to seek validity through verification, thus helping to meet Guba's requirement for "host verification" (1979). Geertz would simply claim that the very richness, or "thickness" of the ethnographic description, as promulgated by Ryle counters the need for verification. However, for the purposes of this study, it is felt that the combination of a "thick description" of the reality of the respondents, combined with the triangulation of emergent data obtained through the other methods outlined could provide a rich and verified narrative of the practice of art as 'lived' by the respondents.

According to ethnographies written in the "classic mode", the detached observer epitomises neutrality and impartiality. Classical ethnographies argue that it is only through keeping a distance that the researcher can objectively focus on social reality. Rosaldo calls this classical notion the "myth of detachment" (p.168). Rosaldo believes that the researcher should explore his/her subject from a number of points of view, rather than being locked into any particular one, enabling the subject to put together as a complex narrative of lived

experience. He says that social analysts can rarely, if ever, become detached observers, arguing against Max Weber's "narrow" approach to "value-free" inquiry (p.173).

Guba argues that formulations about objective truth always depend heavily on a host of axiomatic propositions anyway, none of which can ever be really be put to the test (1978). He says that persons seeking to "know" have evolved the idea of "method", and have defined "truth" as the result of an appropriate inquiry methodology (p.2). He presents naturalistic inquiry as an appropriate method of evaluation whenever a researcher wishes to ensure that data emergent from a study is as "unpolluted" as possible. By "triangulating" a range of naturalistic inquiry methods, studying a phenomenon along a number of independent methodological vectors with 'truth' explained as the points at which the content in each vector converge, the researcher is able to report on truly emergent data. Natural data is only obtained by the immersion of the inquirer in the culture or cultural phenomenon being studied. Paradigm -level problems of truth and objectivity are lessened, he says, by conducting inquiry into complex human activity within natural settings, using more qualitative data methods, grounding theory in the inquiry itself rather than specifying causal explanations a priori, and by recognising the proper place of discovery processes (1990, p.371).

Guba argues that if the investigator immerses her/himself in the investigation with as open a mind as possible, impressions can emerge from the context, rather than these being projected by the inquirer (1978, p.13). As impressions emerge, according to Guba, the researcher tests their validity using a variety of means; the central method being "triangulation", where one source is checked against another. Data is recycled and re triangulated, until convergence occurs. Guba characterises naturalistic inquiry as an expansionist mode of investigation, where a holistic view is sought, which will permit the researcher to describe and understand phenomena as wholes, or at least in ways which reflect their situated complexity (p.14).

Both Guba and Rosaldo argue that questions of "human agency" are subtended by complex questions of human behaviour, which are opaque in the appearance of their enactment. Rosaldo therefore disagrees with Geertz's adherence to a "Weberian disinterest" when doing fieldwork. In his critique of Geertz's essay *Thinking as a Moral Act - Dimensions of Anthropological Fieldwork in the New States*, Rosaldo interprets Geertz's recounting of his feelings of "feebleness", experienced when his relationship with a respondent is ruined because of "mutual cultural misunderstandings", as the inevitable result of the researcher attempting to do fieldwork with Weberian disinterest in a setting that involves the researcher "...following a demanding vocational ethic that brings together feeling, thought and ethics" (p.173).

Rosaldo writes that researchers who follow this practice believe that cultural anthropology is "a calling", and that, as a consequence "...in the end [it] uncharacteristically reveals more about the dynamics of power than the workings of culture."(p.173). When a researcher, such as Geertz, attempts to undertake research from a Weberian perspective, the emergent data is suppressed because of difficulties encountered in attempting to do "reflexive narrative analysis that attempt simultaneously to encompass transitional processes, the dynamics of power, and the workings of a culture."(p.175). The "social analyst", or researcher must have "multiple identities (which) at once underscore the potential for writing an analytical with an ethical project and render obsolete the view of the utterly detached observer who looks down from on high."(p.194). He further argues that the researcher benefits if they are "...connected to a community, not isolated and detached."(p.194). Rather than "working downward from abstract principles, social critics (should) work outward from in-depth knowledge of a specific form of life" (p.194). The term "participant-observation" reflects even as it shapes the field workers double persona he says (p.180). Through ".... dismantling

objectivism (one can) create a space for ethical concerns in a territory once regarded as value-free."(p.181).

Guba proposes that naturalistic inquiry be directed by a phenomenological standard, rather than the positivistic standard favoured by the Weberian ethic, where the important reality to be described is what the people under observation imagine it to be. He borrows from Cronbach who suggests that correlational research accepts the natural range of variables instead of getting to the shaping conditions which represent a hypothesis (1978, p.124). The actors own frame of reference shapes an understanding of his/her behaviour.

In this study, the fact that the investigator is a professional member of the field under investigation has many positive benefits, principally related to a familiarity with the folk culture, including a shared folk language which was "lived" and "applied" by both respondents. Even though Weber, Geertz, Spradley and to some extent Guba, argue for the principle of the "detached observer" approach to investigation, Rosaldo's argument for the benefits gained if the researcher is "connected to a community not isolated and detached" is compelling (p.194). The very "human-ness" of the lived experience of the respondents is subtle, ephemeral, and certainly idiosyncratic, and demands, therefore subtle approaches to investigation. Guba concludes that when a researcher uses naturalistic methods, she/he almost functions as a "member of the audience" rather than as a stage manager (p.14).

The acceptance of the investigator as a member of the culture of the art world by the respondents, and as a member of the world of art education enabled her, as Rosaldo has suggested, to work from an "in-depth knowledge of a specific form of life" (p.194). It is worth noting, however, that both Guba and Rosaldo stress the importance for the investigator to be aware that individuals often belong to multiple, overlapping communities. Guba explains how the "reality manifold" has many layers, which are constantly changing in terms of time, people, episodes, settings and circumstances (1978, p.15). Rosaldo adds that researchers themselves must possess similar "multiple identities" (p.194).

This reflexive awareness is emphasised in Guba's concept of the "expansionist stance" within naturalistic inquiry, which requires the researcher to seek a holistic view that will permit the describing and understanding of phenomena as wholes, or at least in ways that reflect their complicity (p.13). Triangulation of data obtained from the implementation of each of the methods used for this study required the deployment of a combination of both "reductionist" and "expansionist" strategies. The collection of data is classified as operating within an expansionist, or discovery mode, and the analysis of data (employing a semantic analysis), is classified as operating within a reductionist or verification mode of inquiry. The mode or "stance" adopted by the researcher is paralleled by her/his adaptation to the varying reality manifolds which form the basis for identification with the context, enabling the researcher on the one hand to be part of the community which draws upon privileged knowledge and on the other hand to step back and gain perspective. The design of a naturalistic inquiry such as this can only be given in advance in an incomplete way, since, to do otherwise would place constraints on either antecedent conditions, or outputs, or both. The design of this research 'emerged' as the investigation proceeded, and was therefore unpredictable and variable. Thus methodological rigour replaced the rigour that is normally reserved for experimental controls in positivistic forms of inquiry.

Both Rosaldo and Guba argue that it is naive for a researcher to claim, as Geertz and others have, that an inquiry should be as "value free" as possible. Guba states that the values of the inquirer are very much a part of the inquiry, and, as such, must be stated "up-front" (p.16). However, the inquirer must recognise that there are nearly always multiple value positions, and that these can form a dynamic element of the study itself. Rosaldo talks of "relational knowledge" as a result of the "double vision" obtained through the movement

between narrator and protagonist. Through dismantling objectivism one can "create a space for ethical concerns in a territory once regarded as value-free" (p.78).

The social analyst (researcher) is a "positioned subject", not a blank slate; one's own values are implicit in the analysis of the values of others (p.207). Rosaldo believes that human cultures are neither necessarily coherent nor always homogeneous, and that our everyday lives are cris-crossed by "border zones, pockets and eruptions of all kinds" (p.207). He denies that there exists a transparency about our cultural selves, and that the researcher should look to what he calls the "borderlands" between the many "zones" in which we live as rich sites which require investigation (p.208). For this reason alone, the application of a range of inquiry methods to uncover the complexity of human behaviour is appropriate and, one could argue, even highly desirable. Giroux confirms the importance of speaking to (and of) people in a language that "dignifies their history and experience" (1993). Respectfulness is of crucial importance to the naturalistic inquirer, since sensitivity to the account of the emergent beliefs, values, and attitudes of the respondents is crucial to the authenticity of the narrative.

In naturalistic inquiry, truth is not accrued from the breadth of the sample of respondents to the study; it is accrued from the rigorous interweaving of its methods. Rather than averaging out one hypothetical belief over a vast sample, this study sets out to triangulate a complex of beliefs evident in two individuals. What emerges is derived from the textual record from each respondent in the form of an attitudinal history.

This study was sensitive to the need to uncover the emergent, subtle characteristics and qualities of belief held by the respondents while heeding Rosaldo's view that the reasons for what people say and do is not self-evident. Spradley proposes a sequence of research tasks he calls the Developmental Research Sequence. This sequence has been broadly adapted in this study as a research method, which complies with Guba's definition of naturalistic inquiry by accepting the dual role of the investigator, both as deconstructing critic and unprejudiced facilitator (1979). In particular, Spradley's method of "domain analysis" has been adopted both because of the way in which it allows the "folk" domain of each of the respondents to emerge 'naturalistically' and also for the way that it recognises the presence of complex subtexts within the reports of the respondents. The "included" and "cover terms" emerge from the words and phrases, which make up the verbatim transcript of an unstructured interview through of the process of domain analysis. The domain analysis is confined to the words of the artist, which are interpreted only in the context in which they occur. However, the 'context' extends to the descriptions and documents, which report on the artist within that context. These documents serve a dual role in the analytical process. First they develop the extensions of the cover terms as nominal kinds, and second, they verify the cover terms through triangulation. Guba also points out that as kinds issues and concerns do not exist in nature but in the minds of people, and are unique to each situation (1978, p.52).

Similarly, when Guba writes of the application of a range of methods to be used when undertaking a naturalistic inquiry, he reiterates the importance of the multiple realities which characterise human behaviour, and suggests that the researcher should strive for conformability, or agreement among a variety of information sources, rather than striving for inter-subjective agreement (1978 p.19). Thus confirmation of the meanings referred to by the respondents is carried out at the methodological and not at the dialectical level. In this sense naturalistic inquiry is consistent with postmodern and late semiotic critique which is mistrusting of phenomenological reduction, preferring to confine itself to the text. In his early writings Guba reveals a philosophical ambivalence which leaves him with a tendency to misrepresent textual/documentary analysis as phenomenological reduction. His apparent naivety in this misrepresentation is not so evident in his later writing (1978-1985-1994).

Guba now prefers the term "constructivism" since he believes this term describes more precisely the interest of the inquirer to understand the world through interpretation (1994). Schwandt refers to "constructivism", and "interpretivism" as terms that regularly appear in the lexicon of social science methodologists and philosophers (1994). He writes that these terms can best be regarded as sensitising concepts that can lead the inquirer towards an understanding of the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it. He explains:

> ...this... is variously spoken of as an abiding concern for the life world, for the emic point of view, for understanding meaning, for grasping the actor's definition of a situation, for *Verstehen*.... particular actors, in particular places, at particular times, fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction involving history, language and action. (p.118).

The "danger of ideological patronage" in ethnography

Hal Foster has drawn attention to a current phenomenon in the fine arts in which, he argues, the "subject of association" between artists and their subject matter is paradigmatic of the ethnographic relationship between researcher and respondent (1996, p.173). Foster characterises the relationship between ethnographer and respondents as one in which the former "struggles" on behalf of the latter in a way that assumes some cultural 'otherness' in the attitude of the researcher to the respondents. The struggle is represented as a cause taken up on behalf of the 'other', the respondent, by the researcher, as if the social and economic conditions of the culture being disclosed somehow besets the respondent as if it were an oppressive constraint from which s/he needs to be freed. Each natural setting is, by nature of ethno methodology, seen as the curious world of circumstance that differentiates and constrains the respondent as an 'other', (culturally) different from the researcher who usually comes from the dominant culture, and which assumes the respondent's cultural world to be problematic.

The assumption of "struggle" in ethno methodology leads to three forms of mythical interpretation. First is that political vanguards "locate" artistic vanguards, or in the case of ethnographic research, that insights into the object of study "locates" or will necessarily lend significance to the research being undertaken. Second:

> ...is the assumption that this site is always *elsewhere*, in the field of the other -... in the ethnographer paradigm, with the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial subaltern, or subcultural - and that this elsewhere, this outside, is the Archimedean point from which the dominant culture will be transformed or at least *subverted.* (p.173).

Third is the presupposition that if the ethnographer/researcher is not themselves perceived as culturally 'other' s/he can never know what is needed to influence the "struggle", that is to gain sufficient representational distance. Whereas on the other hand, if the ethnographer is a member of the cultural other s/he has "automatic" access to the cultural terms of the struggle and runs into problems relating to creating sufficient representational difference and credibility. The dilemma is acute for ethno-methodology since, taken together, these three problems of interpretation may amount to ideological patronage (p.173). In ethnography it is commonly asked of the researcher to: "assume the roles of native and informant as well as ethnographer...." but, Foster warns, identity is not the same as identification. The "...apparent simplicities of the first should not be substituted for the actual complications of

the second."(p.174). The issue highlights the dilemma of knowledge and relativism in the interpretation of human culture.

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