The ‘Authored’ Journey in Researching Lived Experience

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Abstract
This paper will explore the research process within the context, pre-text and sub-text of investigating lived experience and acknowledges the pervasive influence of the lifeworld of the author on this process. Building on the Habermasian understanding of lifeworld, as centred on reaching a shared understanding that envelops the communicative practices of everyday life, the paper makes explicit the danger in placing the methodology and methods as themselves beyond question. The challenge is made to understandings where lived experience is regarded as a pure unmediated and authentic knowledgeability and the research account the true and direct speech of the autonomous, self-present individual. Rather, it is suggested that lived experience and the tools of reflection must be constantly problematised recognising their mediation into reality through language, text, discourse, discursive practices and power relations. This problematisation is thus evident in the tension in the personalising of research and the role of reflexivity and a critical consciousness in demystifying implicit, political and ideological contexts. To grapple with the research act as reflexive is to recognise that in our action is our knowing and thus the historical, social, political, and cultural worlds in which our actions and texts are embedded saturate the methodology and methods.

Within the social sciences the research process oftentimes begins its journey in the hopes and dreams of its author. These hopes saturate how the research journey may eventuate, but also influence the choice of methodology. In this paper, the place of the lifeworld of the author is where their hopes and dreams may rest and thus this paper explores the place of the lifeworld within the research process. To quote Galtung (1967):

- There is no such thing as a general, universal methodology ... To work with any methodology, hence, is a political act ... the choice of a methodology is implicitly the choice of an ideology, including the mystifying, monotheistic ideology that there is but one methodology—the universal one. To the extent that we are conscious the choice is for us to make, not to be made for us, and to the extent that we are free for us to enact. (p. 40)

Lifeworld refers to an internal subjective viewpoint and an action orientation of the individual within society, which provides a context from which to act. Lifeworld, as a complex world of practices, customs and ideas saturates every cavern of this research process and each participant in this process brings different lifeworlds that stand in conversation with each other grappling with mutual understanding, and constantly colliding. “As totalities, they follow the pull of their claims to universality and work out their differences until their horizons of understanding ‘fuse’ with one another” (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 358). Lifeworld, to the extent that we are conscious of it, promises the possibility of keeping things in intuitive reach and the “replacement of a subject-centred conception of rationality by a communicative one grounded in interactions between human subjects” (Outhwaite, 1996, p. 15). In discussing this promise, Habermas proposed that the lifeworld, as centred on reaching a shared understanding, envelops the communicative practices of everyday life where “cognitive interpretations, moral expectations, expressions, and valuations have to interpenetrate and form a rational interconnectedness via the transfer of validity that is possible in the performative attitude” (Habermas, 1987a, p. 327).

In exploring this interconnectedness, in a context that acknowledges that lifeworld is pervasive in communicative everyday practice, this paper recognises the taken-for-granted nature and unquestioned familiarity of lifeworld and the possibility of bringing such
knowledge to the fore. In considering this possibility, Habermas (1987a), in likening lifeworld to background knowledge, notes:

... that which stands beyond all doubt seems as if it could never become problematic; as what is simply unproblematic, a lifeworld can at most fall apart. It is only under the pressure of approaching problems that relevant components of such background knowledge are torn out of their unquestioned familiarity and brought to consciousness as something in need of being ascertained. (p. 401)

Habermas, in recognition of the “complex traditions” and “solidaric relations” that encompass and enclose background knowledge, suggests that whilst such a transformation occurs in a “piecemeal manner”, the importance of bringing to consciousness is beyond question. It is here that this paper unites the concept of aporia, lifeworld and critique as integral to research explorations. Whilst the uncovering of the lifeworld could be linked only to reflexivity, this paper searches for evidence of this in everyday practice. Furthermore, it delineates, in both the problem and methodology, that reflexivity is only part of a larger journey, of aporetical moments that tear us from our unquestioned familiarity. Reflexivity is a problem to be explored in the research journey but can also be understood, as Usher and Edwards (1994) describe it, as a “resource” that emphasises that we are not dislocated and separated from the world constructed through research but a part of this world.

This paper makes explicit the danger in placing the methodology and methods as themselves beyond question, where lived experience is regarded as “a pure unmediated and authentic knowledgeability” and the research account the “true and direct ‘speech’ of the autonomous, self-present individual” (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 148). Rather, lived experience and the tools of reflection must be constantly problematised recognising their mediation into reality through language, text, discourse, discursive practices and power relations. This problematisation is thus evident in the tension in the personalising of research and the role of reflexivity and a critical consciousness in demystifying implicit, political and ideological contexts. As suggested by Habermas (1987b):

Now the increasing reflexivity of culture, the generalisation of values and norms, and the heightened individuation of socialised subjects, the enhancement of critical consciousness, autonomous will-formation, and individuation - that is, the strengthening of the moments of rationality once attributed to the practice of subjects - takes place under conditions of an ever more extensive and ever more finely woven net of linguistically generated intersubjectivity. Rationalisation of the lifeworld means differentiation and condensation at once - a thickening of the floating web of intersubjective threads that simultaneously holds together the ever more sharply differentiated components of culture, society, and person. The reproductive mode of the lifeworld does not change linearly in the direction indicated by the catchwords “reflexivity,” "abstract universalism," and "individuation.” Rather, the rationalised lifeworld secures the continuity of its contexts of meaning with the discontinuous tools of critique. (p. 346)

Whilst reflection, as self and self-critique as well as the Socratic basis of self-knowledge as knowing that one does not know, can be included in the research process, this paper invokes critique as inclusive of, but more than reflection. The recognition and privileging of the contexts surrounding the self in communicative moments is given space within the problem and method of critique.

These contexts are not only the subject of demystification but sources that embed the choice of methodology within larger structures. As Morrow (1994) suggests, to define a scientific approach within the social sciences, we must first consider: systematic key aspects of the theory itself, including its approach to the sciences; its conception of society and its vision for realising certain values; and its historical origins and contemporary placement in sociological theory.
To grapple with the research act as reflexive is to recognise that “in our action is our knowing” (Lather, 1991, p. xv) and thus the historical, social, political, and cultural worlds in which my actions and texts are embedded saturate the methodology and methods. This aspect of this research journey as a construct thus itself mirrors the analysis of the everyday lives described throughout and is thus to be placed under the same scrutiny as the conceptual focus of the analysis. In this way, the methodology itself serves as subject, object and method. This then becomes a welcome tension throughout where the source of the bias of reflection, the resource of reflection and the content and truth statements of reflection will be united in the research process. The problems to be explored and the methodology and methods of the exploration are cognate parts of the inquiry (Haig, 1996, p. 8). Thus, whilst the ‘reality’ of the research process is a personal construction, it will also be placed within a critical conceptual framework that situates, signifies and grounds this text within a general text. Whilst this research approaches the elusiveness of reflexivity allusively, it also binds together the subjective and objective (Usher and Edwards, 1994). Parker and Shotter (1990) suggest that we consider the use of:

... certain strategies and devices, as well as meanings... to construct a text which can be understood (by those who are party to such moves) in a way divorced from any reference to any local and immediate contexts. Textual communication can be relatively decontextualised. (p. 2)

The possibility of “decontextualising” is not naively constructed in this particular research process. It is, however, recognised as a complex process of reaching a shared understanding and objective placement within the subjective construction of the meanings offered. Thus, this research will describe a number of local and immediate contexts and thus declare them as shared and constructed in a way to be understood. It has and will continue to declare its validity in the textuality of the text and the continual interrogation of this textuality. This interrogation begins with a framework suggested by Usher and Edwards (1994) that considers, that which is with the text (con-text), that which is before the text (pre-text), and that which is beneath the text (sub-text). This framework can be used to assist in the critical scrutiny of methodology and method so vital within this paper.

The Context of the Journey: an Autobiographical Fragment

Whilst the “con-text” or the situatedness of the researcher/reader can be considered broadly as part of the belongings that accompany them on the journey there are some specific concerns that relate to the embodiedness, and embededdness of the problem, methodology and methods. The author is located and constructed within a particular social, cultural and historical context and this will be visible in the text and language used to narrate this research process. This world is further inscribed when author and participant meet and self and others and the role of everyday lives and communication meet in grappling with lifeworld. In working within this context, there is a danger where self and context are often dislocated and author privileged in challenging others’ worldviews, discursive practices, ignorant of power relations.

In considering the situatedness of the research methodology, is to consider how it is embedded in historical moments, which are etched into what is now privileged. This paper hopes that lifeworld and lived experience can be privileged in a research methodology that sits comfortably and at times uncomfortably with:

- continual questioning—this is born of historical moments that valued only a linear process where I, as researcher, determined the grand question and hypotheses to be investigated, designed the study, described and allowed for the limitations of the sample population and context, gathered the appropriate data with the appropriate techniques and instruments, and reported the findings and recommendations for future research. In these moments not only were the participants marginalised but also the many questions ‘along the way’; the many aporias that emerged were silenced. The reflexive moment which was denied is now to be nurtured;
• description—this is embedded in historical moments that construct description as only a resource for solutions. In this world, description is the place to define the context, to consider the dependent and independent variables and to determine commonality in the sample population. It is part of the research journey but never the destination. Description is not only a resource but a source and subject;

• unpredictability—this is born of historical moments that dislocate the everyday lives of participants from the research process in the hope of predictability and grand statements and solutions for all. Unpredictability is to be resisted in this world, as the danger to predictability, and yet in this research process unpredictability can create spaces for the imaginative;

• valuing—the everyday lives and lived experience of the participants; to consider the richness and uniqueness of lived experience is not just the consideration of individual differences, but it is to embrace difference. It is to contest historical moments that have placed the everyday within a subjective chasm that should be covered with objectivity and the pre-eminence of the researcher’s world. This world dislocates theory and practice and elevates theory above practice. This paper seeks a research journey, however, unites theory and practice and places them in a continual conversation within the context of everyday lives;

• immanence—this is born of historical moments that place research as the producer of truth and performativity. In this world, knowledge construction is neutral and washed clean of the impurity of subjectivity and yet the research methodology espoused in this paper argues that to comprehend something we must, to begin with, perceive it in its immanent connections with other things and examine the conditions under which it exists and becomes. The research methodology itself is a social practice and the rules that govern it are “(explicitly) immanent to it” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 54);

• validity claims that find their origins within and outside of technical ways of knowing—this is to grapple with historical moments that have privileged positivistic origins and divided questions of genesis and validity. This paper espouses the intersubjective construction of validity in the everyday communications of participants and within this narrative (Lather, 1991). Claims of validity will be raised reciprocally but also housed within a hope of shared understanding. The focus is not so much on rightness (although this may be a result) but on the understanding “of a diffuse, fragile, continuously revised and only momentarily successful communication in which participants rely on problematic and unclarified presuppositions and feel their way from one occasional commonality to the next” (Habermas, 1984, pp. 100–101). This hope of understanding is also integrally linked to action, in the hope of transformation. Thus this research methodology also values the concept of “catalytic validity” proposed by Lather, whereby research helps those it studies to understand the world, and its construction and shaping so they may transform it.

The Pre-Text of the Journey

These historical, social and cultural moments are not however limited to the “con-text” of the problem and methodology but, as Usher and Edwards (1994) suggest also reflect the “pre-text” and that which is before the text. It is within the “pre-text” that we consider language and signification, binary oppositions, writing and textual strategies, and the culture and interpretive traditions that go before the text of the problem and methodology.

Each of the aspects described above relate specifically to “pre-text” and the problem and methodology of this research endeavour. In making our way back through history it is hoped that we can critique the narrative realism that could be imbued in this text. This text is not a neutral medium but a social and cultural activity located in time. Whilst the focus of a research text is often as an account of or about something that already exists or has existed, it is imperative also to note the productive potential of such a text. It is to note the effects of textuality and the role of texts in signifying, producing and disseminating binary oppositions.
It is also to note that the definitions of reflection, inherent in accounts of text as narrative realism, can privilege acting as "habitualised" and effectively hide the "workings and effects of power through texts" (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 151). Rather, this paper, in exploring the research problem and methodology and inextricably linking these, privileges reflexivity that considers the "way in which our methodologies, dualisms, frameworks and categories, all of the basic intellectual tools of research, are implicated with power" and how they are historically, socially, culturally and politically located (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 151).

The construction of dualisms is particularly relevant as we explore the research process and there are a number that relate specifically to the pre-text of the methodology of the research. Primarily, these relate to subjectivism and objectivism, and empiricism and rationalism and the hope is to value both the richness and fragments of each of these concepts as complementary. Rather than constructing these as binaries, which is often how they are understood, the hope is to move behind, around and beyond these dualities. This is evident in the debate between critical social science and positivistic social science, particularly as it relates to subjectivism and objectivism. Critical social science claims that positivist social science fails to acknowledge adequately the social forces that act "behind the backs of participants" and that, whilst it does identify external determining factors, this identification is very narrow and problematic in its attempt to reduce them to causal variables (Morrow, 1994, pp. 59–60). Thus, within positivistic social science, the subjective component of action is marginalised if not silenced. Alternatively the neglect of methodological questions within critical social science has also been criticised by positivists. The worldview that creates a space for only objectivity or subjectivity automatically privileges a standoff between purely interpretive and positivistic approaches and provides an inadequate framework and formulation of the problematic of the logic of social inquiry. Morrow (1994) suggests that this stand-off between interpretive and positivistic approaches divides the world dualistically into macro and micro relations and dissects structure and agency. Similarly, the stand-off between positivism and postmodernist relativism polarises empiricism and subjectivism. Outhwaite (1987) notes the tendency within social theory to associate action with freedom and structure with constraint. Furthermore, he suggests that this opposition is one of the most pervasive in the tradition of social theory. In suggesting a way forward, Morrow (1994) aims to unite "postpositivist methodological pragmatism and pluralism" with a "critical realist ontology" in the hope of mutually implicating the macro and micro, and structure and agency, within a critical-dialectical understanding of empiricism, subjectivism and objectivism (pp. 59–60).

Morrow (1994) supports both the critical and dialectical understanding of methodology as providing spaces for those discontented with polarised accounts of social reality, acknowledging a "slippery" and imprecise world. Whilst empirical research has, in the past, often been associated with quantitative variable analysis, it is also recognised that this association has restricted the meaning of the word empirical. In a clear attempt to widen this definition, the word empiricist, as distinct from empirical, is associated with positivistic understandings. An empiricist approach is linked to epistemological empiricism while empirical research is widened to embrace sense-experience in interpreting the world and deriving knowledge. In this way, positivistic and post-positivistic research can both be empirical. However, the divide that haunts the definition of empirical as related only to experience, and practice that excludes theory, is not embraced in this paper. To argue that we can dislocate epistemology from the problem and, in particular, the methodology of the research process, is yet again to privilege the supposed 'neutrality' that this paper disputes. Rather, a critical approach is the beginning point of the "pre-text" of the research process. Morrow concludes that the benefits of a methodology that is critical is that it asks metatheoretical questions, focuses on the relations of power that shape social reality, and redefines, in part, the relations between epistemology and ontology. Of particular interest in Morrow's paper is the discussion of the debate between critical realism and critical theory and the possibility that "epistemological and methodological pragmatism does not
necessarily require ontological scepticism—the suggestion that we cannot confidently posit realities independent of our consciousness” (Morrow, 1994, p.77). Alternatively in a move beyond the empiricist and subjectivist divide Morrow supports the convergence or “ecumenical” thesis developed by Outhwaite (1987). In considering scientific realism, hermeneutics, and critical theory Outhwaite sought to find the “compatible” within these theories. To Outhwaite, these perspectives are not only united in their critique of positivism but in the conception of contemporary social science. It is here that Outhwaite would argue such a meeting is possible.

In describing the pre-text of the problem and methods of the research process, the ongoing post-positivistic critique continues to be significant in bringing into question that which appears to stand beyond all doubt, as if it could never become problematic. It is the intention then of this paper, therefore, to explore a methodological approach that rejects the polarisation of objectivism and subjectivism, and subjectivism and empiricism, and seeks not only convergence of these but also the respect of difference. For whilst, as Polkinghorne (1983) suggests, there is no correct method to follow, it is also assumed in this paper that there may be strategies appropriate to particular questions and subject matters, depending on the nature of the object of inquiry. Every chosen problem and methodology, however, will be shackled with givens that surround language and signification, binary oppositions, and writing and textual strategies that are born of historical legacy. These not only saturate the pre-text of the research process, but the sub-text as well.

The Sub-Text of the Journey
The “sub-text”, as described by Usher and Edwards (1994) is that which is beneath the text, including professional paradigms and discourses and power-knowledge formations. Whilst it is difficult to delineate how all that has been mentioned thus far is not itself sub-text, this framework is helpful in considering the research traditions that also lay beneath the text of the problem and the methods of the research journey. Of immense relevance here is the culture and interpretive traditions that have gone before, particularly the work of Popper, Geertz, Dilthey, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Rorty, Wittgenstein, Dewey, Glaser and Strauss, Habermas and Foucault. Let us direct attention back to the traditions that accompany our text and so often direct our attention away from the ‘writerliness’ of the text, its constitutive effects and the textuality that becomes invisible. In considering that which goes beneath the research process, the historical moments that have influenced the problem and methodology reflect the journey of many who have also grappled with the critical emphasis in research traditions.

Popper, in his search for an alternative model to logical empiricism, radically revised social science research. Whilst his revision was far-reaching, there are two key concerns that are particularly relevant to this paper. There are: first, his concern for theoretical innovation and the constraints that verification placed upon this; and second the importance of a community of effective criticism as the “essence” of scientific method. In his challenge to verification and the proposition that no theory could be absolutely proven to be true, Popper (1968) developed the concept of “falsification”. To cater for the theory-laden character of facts, Popper asked whether a proposition could potentially be proven wrong and, in declaring the theory-laden character of facts and the historicity of science, he opened the door for the fallibility of empiricism to be regarded as the way to knowledge. The potential legacy of the need for strict cultural conventions and highly conventionalised criticism, “whereby the production, transformation, and therefore the criticisms, of proposed items of knowledge may be carried out collectively and with relatively unequivocal results”, can however still be understood as the “essential quality of science” (Wallace, 1975, pp. 13-14). The danger of this “sub-text” is recognised in this paper.

Other examples of key influences that grow from the culture and interpretive traditions that have gone before are the applied and qualitative turns in contemporary research theory and
the valuing of lived-experience as genuine research. The rich research heritage of hermeneutics and phenomenology largely advanced these changes, and these have been fuelled more recently by the debates between critical and postmodern approaches. Before we consider these major influences, however, it is timely to revisit Hager’s (1999) critique of Usher as limited in providing “a sufficient account of the variety and depth of our encounters with the world around us” (p. 67). The exploration of the problem and methods of this research has not been content to rest with Usher’s framework for “interrogating textuality and foregrounding reflexivity in the production (writing) and consumption (reading) of research texts” (Usher and Edwards, 1994, p. 153). It is not only the difficulty in dividing elements that form the con-text, pre-text and sub-text of a research endeavour; it is also the limitations of textual analysis as a framework that tries to photograph the many faces of the research process. This paper values the textual analysis and the ongoing critique of each of these areas but this exploration also notes the role of experience as dialogic and the influence of action in a world that does “take for granted a world of objects, including most importantly, other persons” (Hager, 1999, p. 66).

In exploring lived experience, the problem and methods of the research process can call on many research traditions and whilst they may be named, do at various times recognise the slippery, imprecise character of research and thus hope to resist or at least recognise forces that will silence faces, places and dialogic moments on the research journey. Whilst the research traditions that have given birth to this moment in time continually feed and the participants on this journey, they also threaten it with starvation. With this caution and excitement we as researchers, narrate, construct and participate in this history.

Positioning the Journey: Participant Lived Contexts
Born and nurtured by anthropology, ethnography brings to the research journey a concern to explore the shared perceptions of everyday lives. In considering lived experience and seeking an understanding of lifeworld, the cultural, social, ideological and historical need to be privileged. The tension, however, is that the research process will not, however, privilege the “scenic focus” over the “lived-through” or “existential quality of personal experiences” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 178). Neither should it proclaim the binary discourse that separates the observer from the observed and rest in anthropological subterrain that “freezes and ossifies difference” (McLaren, 1995, p. 272). Geertz (1989) creates a space in cultural research for the saturation of ideologies and their appeal in the social world. Whilst they may be “repressed”, Geertz suggested that ideologies assist us in making sense of the world, locating us in a myriad of options and understandings. Geertz thus helps, to present a view of ideology that not only manipulates and exploits but also builds and supports and is a site of debate, critique and justification. Ideology is not only linked to critique but also vision. Furthermore, Geertz suggested in his later work that ethnography can become “self-serving…imperialistic, intrusive, disruptive” (Geertz, 1989, p. 25). In heeding his caution this paper reiterates the “discomfort of asymmetry” (Geertz, 1989, p. 72) that is inevitable because, as Mishler (1986) suggests, the researcher frames the problem and methods and has the final word in telling the story.

Conclusion
This paper endeavoured to explore the interconnectedness of the research process with the lived experience of author and ‘authored’. This exploration acknowledged lifeworld as pervasive in communicative everyday practice and privileged an understanding of the research process that recognises the taken-for-granted nature and unquestioned familiarity of lifeworld and the possibility of bringing such knowledge to the fore. In considering this possibility, the paper built on the Habermasian concept of lifeworld and the need to tear “background knowledge” out of the unquestioned familiarity to locate the research journey itself as part of the ongoing construction of the lived experience of all on the journey. It is here that the exploration sought to unite the concept of aporia, lifeworld and critique as integral to the research journey by moving beyond a call for reflexivity alone to search for
evidence of this ‘tearing apart’ in everyday practice; of aporetical moments that tear us from our unquestioned familiarity and act as a “resource” that emphasises that we are not dislocated and separated from the world constructed through research but a part of this world. Furthermore this paper sought to privilege the cultural, social, ideological and historical in considering lived experience through seeking an understanding of lifeworld within the fabric of the research process.

The paper sought to identify some of the tensions and reified dualities that hinder the research process through an exploration of the con-text, pre-text and sub-text of research accounts. This exploration hoped to move behind, around and beyond these dualities to value both the richness and fragments of each of these concepts as complementary, rather than constructing them as binaries, which is often how they are understood. This binary construction was noted in the debate between critical social science and positivistic social science, particularly as it related to subjectivism and objectivism noting that a worldview that creates a space for only objectivity or subjectivity automatically privileges a standoff between purely interpretive and positivistic approaches and provides an inadequate framework and formulation of the problematic of the logic of social inquiry. Thus this paper proposes a mutual implication of these dualities; the macro and micro, and structure and agency, within a critical-dialectical understanding of empiricism, subjectivism and objectivism.

The paper also noted that the research process will privilege certain landscapes and voices and can rest in anthropological subterrain that ossifies difference. Thus various theorists were called upon in the hope to create a space in cultural research that acknowledge the saturation of ideologies as linked to critique, justification and vision. Thus this paper hoped to make explicit the danger in placing the methodology and methods as themselves beyond question, as providing THE account as translated by the privileged singular author/s through a clinical lens, and supposed neutral voice where lived experience is regarded as untainted unmediated and authentic knowledgeability and the research account the true and uninterrupted ‘speech’ of the autonomous, self-present individual. Rather, lived experience and the tools of reflection must be constantly problematised recognising their mediation into reality through language, text, discourse, discursive practices and power relations that privileges the role of reflexivity and a critical consciousness in demystifying implicit, political and ideological contexts. Thus, whilst reflection, as self and self-critique as well as the Socratic basis of self-knowledge as knowing that one does not know, can be included in the research process, this paper invoked critique as inclusive of, but more than reflection. The recognition and privileging of the contexts surrounding the self in communicative moments is given space within the problem and method of critique.

It is the intention then of this paper, therefore, to explore a methodological approach that rejects the polarisation of dualities cast upon a neutral landscape and seeks not only convergence of these but also the respect of difference. It is a call for the acknowledgement of lifeworld and critique as a way to challenge not only all involved in the research journey but to challenge the journey itself in the hope to tear us from our unquestioned familiarity and search out in the fabric of lived experience. It is to dislocate research from the sterility and simplicity that dualities can espouse. It is to seek out the spaces between, the yet to be stated; to make a new way for the voice of those who in the past have been authored, to present the complexity of the multiple stories and that which is immanent but may not yet be present or currently presentable.

References


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i Lifeworld is contrasted to system

ii Outhwaite attributes the concept of “fuse” here to Gadamer.

iii Derrida describes a general text, which goes beyond and subsumes specific texts.

iv Schön (1983) describes such a moment in teachers’ practice.

v Habermas’ later works explores the concept of validity claims which are produced or presupposed in speech and can be bargained “insofar as they are regulated by discursively grounded procedures” (Habermas in Outhwaite, 1996, p. 204)
vi Habermas (1984) suggests that this picture suggested by ethnomethodologists best reflects the communicative practice of everyday life.

vii Morrow (1994) describes this polarisation as a standoff between objectivism and subjectivism and seeks to ask ‘metatheoretical’ questions.

viii McLaren and Giarelli (1995) and Morrow (1994) clearly distinguish empiricist accounts and empirical research with McLaren describing “vulgar empiricist paradigms” and Morrow “empiricist” as linked to epistemology.

ix Romm (1991) adds to this problematic contrast between what is called “Marxist realism” and “Marxist nonrealism” (Habermas).

x Outhwaite also considered the work of Bhaskar in detail who states “No longer can thought be conceived as a mechanical function of given things, as in empiricism; nor can the activity of creative subjects continue to be seen as constituting a world of objects, as in idealism; nor is some combination of the two possible” (Bhaskar 1986, p. 51); and yet Outhwaite argues that such a meeting is possible.

xi For a more extensive discussion of this ‘pre-text’ and narrative realism see Usher and Edwards (1994, pp. 150–151).

xii Whilst the concept of theory-ladenness is popular in the social science it is not without controversy. Feyerabend (1987), as a student of Popper, rejects this concept on the grounds that it does not go far enough as there is nothing untheoretical to carry the theoretical load.

xiii Popper’s (1963) most general definition of scientific inquiry is a process of “conjectures and refutations”. In this definition science is seen as always historically changing with its validity dependent on the social characteristics of scientific communities and thus knowledge is recognised as fallible and always potentially in need of correction or revision.

xiv Van Manen (1990, p. 178) suggests that a “good” ethnographer can often be considered as interested in taxonomising or categorising cultural perceptions whilst sacrificing personal experiences.