Board

HANDBOOK
of
ETHNOGRAPHY

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Researchers in an ever-increasing number of disciplinary and applied fields have been turning to ethnographic interviewing to help gather rich, detailed data directly from participants in the social worlds under study. Indeed, the substantial number of chapters in this volume devoted to different substantive and disciplinary-related areas attests to the wide variation in research contexts within which ethnographic interviewing takes place today. For example, beyond anthropology and sociology, the fields of medicine, education, psychology, communication, history, science studies and art have seen a dramatic increase in projects utilizing qualitative methods of various kinds, including ethnographic interviewing.

Ethnographic interviewing is one qualitative research technique that owes a major debt to cultural anthropology, where interviews have traditionally been conducted on-site during lengthy field studies. However, researchers from a variety of disciplines conduct on-site, participant/observational studies, although typically shorter than those carried out by anthropologists. In addition, researchers regularly devise non-participant research projects that center on a set of unstructured, in-depth interviews with key informants from a particular social milieu or with people from a variety of settings and backgrounds who have had certain kinds of experiences. The question arises whether these are all examples of ethnographic interviewing. Given that there is a great deal of overlapping terminology in the areas of qualitative research and ethnography (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Reinharz, 1992: 18, fn. 3; 4; 6, fn. 5; Silverman, 1993: 23–9), the definition of ethnographic interviewing here will include those projects in which researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds.

Thus, both the time factor – duration and frequency of contact – and the quality of the emerging relationship help distinguish ethnographic interviewing from other types of interview projects by empowering interviewees to shape, according to their world-views, the questions being asked and possibly even the focus of the research study. Also central to traditional ethnographic research is the focus on cultural meanings (Wolcott, 1982). As Spradley notes in The Ethnographic Interview, 'The essential core of ethnography is this concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand' (1979: 5), and the researcher's job in the ethnographic interview, then, is to communicate genuinely, in both subtle and direct ways that 'I want to know what you know in the way that you know it ... Will you become my teacher and help me understand?' (p. 34; emphasis added). Life history interviewing fits comfortably within the ethnographic tradition, since it is usually conducted over time, within relationships characterized by high levels of rapport, and with particular focus on the meanings the interviewees place on their life experiences and circumstances, expressed in their own language (Becker, 1970; Spradley, 1979: 24). These key definitional characteristics allow ethnographic interviewing to be distinguished from survey interviewing, including interviews with open-ended questions, because there is no time to develop respectful, on-going relationships.

In the 1990s interest in ethnographic interviewing has grown, partly in response to the limitations of the quantitative research methodologies that, in the last half of the twentieth century, dominated such
fields as sociology, criminology, education and medicine. Researchers in increasing numbers have turned to ethnographic interviewing out of a growing recognition of the complexity of human experience, a desire to hear from people directly how they interpret their experiences, as well as an interest, at times, in having the results of their research efforts be relevant and useful to those studied. The ‘up close and personal’ characteristics of ethnographic interviewing make it appealing on all these grounds. Yet, ethnographic enquiry today, as the chapters in this volume clearly indicate, is contested terrain. Debates since the 1980s about epistemology in the social sciences and humanities in general, and feminist and post-positivist concerns about ethnography in particular, have raised a number of important questions that are clearly relevant to ethnographic interviewing. In particular, the debates have highlighted issues concerning the relationship between the researchers and their ‘subjects’, as well as considerations about what can be known in the interviewing process.

This chapter will describe the most recent literature on ethnographic interviewing, emphasizing how we can do ethnographic interviewing in a way that incorporates what we have learned about the impact of the interviewer/interviewee relationship on the co-construction of knowledge. Many researchers today find themselves doing ethnographic interviewing in a middle place in their disciplines, surrounded by debates about what can be known (for example, can scientific methods access the real world?) and challenged by issues raised by poststructuralist, feminist and multicultural scholars (Eisner and Peskin, 1990; Kvale, 1996). The debates bring to the fore incongruent positions and differing emphases about what is most important to consider in interviewing. And yet, as we will see in this chapter, among the many voices there is still agreement on these goals: when we carry out ethnographic interviewing, we should

1. listen well and respectfully, developing an ethical engagement with the participants at all stages of the project;
2. acquire a self awareness of our role in the co-construction of meaning during the interview process;
3. be cognizant of ways in which both the ongoing relationship and the broader social context affect the participants, the interview process, and the project outcomes; and
4. recognize that dialogue is discovery and only partial knowledge will ever be attained.

Even those voicing serious concerns about ethical and epistemological issues in contemporary interviewing do not reject the method altogether (Denzin, 1997: 265-87; Ellis, 1995: 94; Scheurich, 1995: 249). There is a broad-based commitment to continue to try to do it – and do it ethically, bringing no harm, and indeed, doing it, as Laurel Richardson (1992: 108) has said, ‘so that the people who teach me about their lives are honored and empowered, even if they and I see their worlds differently’.

CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWING

The theory and practice of ethnography have been scrutinized in the international debate during the 1980s over qualitative methods and methodology, alongside the broader debates over epistemology and the crisis of authority and representation in most humanities and social sciences (Alasuutari, 1995; Atkinson and Coffey, 1995; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Clough, 1998; Denzin, 1997; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b; McLaren, 1992; Stacey, 1988). The literature focusing specifically on the implications of these debates for ethnographic interviewing is considerably smaller than that devoted to the issues of writing up and representing the results of those research efforts (see Chapter 32). Still, in the past few years several major works have focused specifically on interviewing with an awareness of the postmodern and feminist critiques in anthropology and sociology (Briggs, 1986; Kvale, 1996; Maso and Wester, 1996; Michrina and Richards, 1996; Mishler, 1986; Reinharz, 1992; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). These researchers stress that interviewing involves a complex form of social interaction with interviewees, and that interview data are co-produced in these interactions. Furthermore, they recognize that what the interviewees in each study choose to share with the researchers reflects conditions in their relationship and the interview situation. Central to this process is how interviewees reconstruct events or aspects of social experience, as well as how interviewers make their own sense of what has been said.

Recognition of the co-construction of the interview, and its reconstruction in the interpretation phase, shifts the basic assumptions that for many years defined the interview process. These assumptions are embodied in Kvale’s (1996: 3-5) two alternative metaphors of the research interviewer: one as a miner, and another as a traveler. In the miner metaphor (which contains traditional research assumptions about how to gather objective data), the interviewer goes to the vicinity of the ‘buried treasure’ of new information in a specific social world, seeks out good sources (‘She was a walking, talking gold mine’), and carefully gathers up the data – facts waiting to be called out and discovered by the interviewer’s efforts. The miner metaphor can also be extended to the taking of the accumulated treasure home, as Kvale describes:
The precious facts and meanings are purified by transcribing them from the oral to the written mode. The knowledge nuggets remain constant through the transformations of appearances on the conveyor belt from the oral stage to the written storage. By analysis, the objective facts and the essential meanings are drawn out by various techniques and molded into their definitive form. Finally, the value of the end product, in degree of parity, is determined by correlating it with an objective, external, real world or to a realm of subjective, inner, aesthetic experiences. (1996: 1-4)

The ideal is to distill interviews into 24-carat gold. In contrast, the traveler metaphor sees the interviewer as on a journey from which he or she will return with stories to tell, having engaged in conversations with those encountered along the way. Kvale (1996: 4) notes that the original Latin meaning of conversation is 'wandering together with'. The route may be planned ahead of time, but will lead to unexpected twists and turns as interviewers-travelers follow their particular interests and adjust their paths according to what those met along the way choose to share. As is true with any traveler today, what one receives in new knowledge and experiences is influenced by just how one manages to connect to the people one meets along the way and how long one stays to talk, learn and build a relationship with them. Both the traveler and those met are changed by those relationships involving meaningful dialogue (DeVault, 1996; Heyl, 1987; Narayan, 1991; Romm, 1991; Warren, 1984: 47).

As researchers approach the interviewing process, they bring with them a 'vocabulary of method' that shapes how they proceed (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997). This vocabulary has roots in the researcher's own discipline and in the sub-disciplines that make up research approaches - predictions and prescriptions for conducting research in specific ways. Some of these approaches facilitate 'mining' and some encourage 'traveling'. Gubrium and Holstein's (1997: 5) promise is that the social science researchers use language that 'organizes the empirical contours of what is under investigation'. Such organization includes whether they will 'mine' or 'travel'.

LITERATURE ON STAGES IN THE INTERVIEW PROJECT

Developing Challenges to a Positivist Framework

Facing the literature on ethnographic interviewing in sociology reveals the historical roots of current ideas in a series of developments that increasingly challenged the position of interviewer as an autonomous 'miner'. The Chicago School of the 1920s and 1930s is generally seen as the birthplace of ethnographic interviewing in sociology. Robert Park's experience as a journalist and his familiarity with anthropological methods played a role in his demand that his graduate students go out into the city and 'get the seat of your pants dirty in real research' (Bulmer, 1984: 97). Park, who had been especially affected by the teachings of William James, writes in an autobiographical essay about a particular lecture by James titled 'On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings'.

The 'blindness' of which James spoke is the blindness of each of us is likely to have for the meaning of other people's lives. At any rate, what sociologists most need to know is what goes on behind the backs of men, what it is that makes life for each of us either dull or thrilling. For 'if you lose the joy you lose all'. But the thing that gives zest to life is what James says, 'a personal secret', which has, in every single case, to be discovered. Otherwise we do not know the world in which we actually live. (Park, 1950: viii; cited in Bulmer, 1984: 93)

The Chicago School sociologists in the 1920s developed informal interviewing and observation techniques that were very different from the large-scale, standardized surveys being conducted by political scientists of the time (Bulmer, 1984: 102, 104). They emphasized the need to 'speak the same language' as those one wanted to understand, and Nels Anderson, Paul Cresssey and Frederic Thrasher had each at some points taken on covert researcher roles in the settings they were studying. They and Ernest Burgess, especially, developed the life history method as a way of getting 'objective data' on interviewee's own interpretation of their circumstances and key events. Bulmer (1984: 108) sees the lasting effects of the field research methods of the Chicago School in the use of documentary sources of all kinds, in the establishment of participant observation as a standard sociological research method, and in an openness to using diverse research methods. Although the Chicago School sociologists were comfortable using a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, Hammersley (1989: 99-112) notes that after the arrival of William F. Ogburn in the late 1920s, the department began a shift toward quantitative methods and a positivist paradigm, as did most sociology departments in the nation.

Although the Chicago School tradition has sustained criticism from scholars representing a wide variety of perspectives, it has had a significant impact on generations of sociologists and other scholars interested in carrying out field research projects. Indeed, Joseph Gusfield (1995: xi) notes that his cohort at the University of Chicago in the 1950s, which included Howard Becker and Erving Goffman, shared some 'basic perspectives' about doing sociology, and that, 'While diversely stated and applied, these perspectives had much in
Beginning in the 1970s, a set of texts appeared and cultural meanings of participants in their social worlds. Researchers today have a rich literature available to help them consider how to proceed and contrast sharply with a foundational framework. The postmodern and feminist challenges to traditional fieldwork techniques opened up room for new styles of ethnographic interview. It has offered guidance on the multitude of methods emphasized the constructivist nature of interviewing but influences 'what it is one observes' (Johnson, 1975: 10-12).

Finally, recognizing that both gathering data and conducting analyses are dependent on the researchers and influenced by their characteristics and personal values, Johnson notes that researchers are urged to make their personal values 'explicit' in their work. But Johnson (1975: 23) goes further, posing as equally important the impact of the researcher's 'commitment to theories and methodologies', including their membership in their discipline and community of like-minded scholars. These issues and insights in the 1970s resonated with points in the major debates of the next two decades on research on the social sciences and humanities.

In the meantime, anthropology was anticipating its own 'coming crisis', epitomized by Edward Said's Orientalism (1979), a broad attack on writing genres developed in the West for depicting non-Western societies, and calls to 'reinvent' anthropology (Hymes, 1969), since the knowledge produced and disseminated through ethnographic monographs was linked to colonial systems of oppression. George Marcus and Michael Fischer (1986) trace the wave of critiques, and responses to them, in cultural anthropology. Challenges to classic fieldwork approaches focused especially on the

**Conducting Interviews**

The effects of a 'thingified' or 'thingified' (Geertz, 1973) are especially pronounced in the work of Clifford Geertz (1988), who weathered a 'tacit political meanings' embedded in social science knowledge.

1. the tacit political meanings embedded in social science knowledge.
2. the documented conclusions from social psychology that 'what an individual perceives or regards as fact is highly variable' and is contingent on the social context; and
3. that language not only is the medium of reporting but influences 'what it is one observes' (Johnson, 1975: 10-12).

The literature on the methodology of ethnographic interviewing published over the past three decades shows a consistent pattern of challenging a positivist framework. The 'classic' sociological approach to ethnographic research while keeping these new challenges in mind. By the 1980s and early 1990s, books on field methods emphasized the constructivist nature of fieldwork (Bailey, 1996; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Maso and Webster, 1996; Roberts, 1981; Weiss, 1993; Wolewitz, 1995). And most recently, books that focus directly on interviewing address ways to conceptualize and carry out new styles of ethnographic interview projects following the linguistic, postmodern turn (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Kvale, 1996; Michriner and Richards, 1996; Mishler, 1986; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Silverman, 1993).

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issue of a 'scientific' basis for social research and added a whole set of new questions, such as those catalogued by Clifford Geertz:

Questions about discreteness - questions about continuity and change, objectivity and proof, determinism and relativism, uniqueness and generalization, description and explanation, consensus and conflict, otherness and commensurability, and the sheer possibility of anyone, insider or outsider, grasping so vast a thing as an entire way of life and finding the words to describe it. (Geertz, 1995: 42-3)

Ruth Behar (1996: 162) notes that the discipline has weathered a range of daunting crises: 'complicity with conquest, with colonialism, with functionalism, with realist forms of representation, with racism, with male domination'. Behar feels that in weathering such storms, the discipline has become more inclusive and knows itself better, but she worries about the current pressures to reconnect anthropology to 'science'. Behar (1996: 162-4) traces this latter pressure to those who claim that all the disparate voices in modern anthropology - postmodern, multicultural, feminist - leave the discipline fragmented and vulnerable in today's academy. However, I feel that even if fragmented, cultural anthropologists' debates and reflections on their discipline have helped the rest of us consider the issues at stake in doing ethnographic research. And with each new well-written ethnography, we can appreciate what the struggles and reflections mean in action (for examples, Brown, 1991; Jackson, 1989; Lévi-Strauss, 1996; Leonard, 1991, 1998; Myerhoff, 1994; Smith and Watson, 1992; Williams, 1988).

Conducting Ethnographic Interview Projects after 'The Turn'

The effects of the rise of the different voices Behar mentions - those voices representing postmodern, feminist and multicultural positions in the 1980s and early 1990s - gradually became known as 'the turn'. Denzin and Lincoln (1994b) trace the stages of its historical development. This section focuses on those writings since 'the turn' that present ethnographic interviewing as method while taking these challenges into account, providing concrete suggestions to researchers on ways to conduct interview projects in this era. Steinar Kvale's Interview (1996) centers on the idea that interviews are first and foremost interaction, a conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. The knowledge that is produced out of this conversation is a product of that interaction, the exchange and production of 'views'. His book is designed to be helpful to researchers in a variety of disciplines, and he presents an in-depth analysis of the stages of an interview project, addressing ethical issues that can arise at each stage. Kvale sets out seven stages of an interview investigation:

1. thematizing;
2. designing;
3. interviewing;
4. transcribing;
5. analyzing;
6. verifying;
7. reporting.

The 'thematizing' stage involves the researcher in thinking through the goals and primary questions of the study in ways that can help guide the many subsequent decisions that must be made (Kvale, 1996: 94-8). It involves actively planning for the interview project by identifying and obtaining (from literature searches and even preliminary fieldwork), a 'preknowledge' of the subject matter of interest, clarifying the purpose of the project, and acquiring skills in different types of interviewing and analysis approaches and deciding which to apply.

In The Active Interview, Holstein and Gubrium (1995) also take as their major premise that the researcher and the interviewee are active creators in all phases of the interview process. Indeed, Holstein and Gubrium assert that a careful transcription from an audio or video tape of the interview will allow the researcher to observe and document how meaning got produced during the conversation. To introduce their approach, Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 14) resurrect the remarkably prescient position taken by Ethel de Sola Pool in 1957:

'The social milieu in which communication takes place [during interviews] modifies not only what a person dares to say but even what he thinks he chooses to say. And these variations in expression cannot be viewed as mere deviations from some underlying "true" opinion, for there is no neutral, non-social, uninfluenced situation to provide that baseline. (Pool, 1957: 102)

Pool (1957: 193) goes on to assert that the interview situation 'activates' opinion, such that "every interview [besides being an information-gathering occasion] is an interpersonal drama with a developing plot'. Holstein and Gubrium pursue the implication of having both an active interviewer and an active respondent constructing meaning, or creating a plot, throughout the interview process. For example, respondents can turn to different stocks of knowledge in answering a single question. Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 33-4) cite tall-tale phrases respondents use that signal shifts in roles and frames of reference: 'speaking as a mother now', 'thinking like a woman', 'wearing my professional hat', 'now that you ask', and 'if it were in her shoes'. If respondents shift around and give what may appear to be contradictory answers, it could be unerring to a conventional interviewer. But the 'active interviewer' is interested in tracing how the interviewee develops a response, so that the shifts, with their attendant markers - including hesitations and expressions indicating a struggle to formulate a coherent answer - are keys to different identi
and meanings constructed from these different positions. Which responses are valid? Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 34) posit 'alternative validities' based on recognition of the different roles and the 'narrative resources' they provide for the respondent.

Even though this approach is built on flexibility throughout the interview process, the pursuit of both subjective information about specific aspects of individuals’ lives as well as data on how meaning gets made, calls for certain research strategies. Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 77) emphasize the importance of acquiring background knowledge relevant to the research topic, as well as knowledge of the ‘material, cultural, and interpretive circumstances to which respondents might orient’.

Decisions about sampling should include consideration of whose voices will get heard, as well as recognition that respondents selected because of specific positions or roles may complicate the sampling plan later when they spontaneously ‘switch voices’ and speak from different positions (1995: 25–7, 74–5). The ‘active interview’ data can be analyzed not only for what was said (substantive information) and how it was said (construction of meaning), but also for showing the ways the what and how are interrelated and ‘what circumstances condition the meaning-making process’ (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 79).

Feminist researchers are pursuing their studies in a wide range of substantive areas, utilizing varied methodological approaches (Fonow and Cook, 1991; Gluck and Patat, 1991; Harding, 1987; Nielsen, 1990; Olesen, 1994; Reinharz, 1992; Warren, 1988).

However, feminists have found ethnography and ethnographic interviewing particularly attractive because they allow for gathering data experientially, in context, and in relationships characterized by empathy and egalitarianism (Stacey, 1988; 21).

Indeed, Shulamit Reinharz (1992: 18) opens her review of feminist interview research with Hilary Graham’s conclusion that ‘The use of semi-structured interviews has become the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondents in the construction of data about their lives.’ Feminist researchers appreciate ethnographic interviewing for the chance to hear people’s ideas, memories and interpretations in their own words, to hear differences among people and the meanings they construct, and to forge connection over time to the interviewees.

Today’s feminist scholars view ethnographic interviewing as a ‘conversation’, and as such, many of them focus on the talk going on in interviews and how it is shaped by both parties. Marianne Paget (1983) has characterized this conversation as involving both the researcher and the interviewee in a ‘search’ process whereby they locate a collaborative basis for developing the question-response sequences and the co-construction of meaning.

Thus, in those cases of feminist research that involve women interviewing women, the participants can use a tradition of engaging in ‘woman talk’ (DeVault, 1990: 101) to facilitate this search for partnership in the interview.

Though there are wide variations in interviewing style among feminist researchers (Reinharz, 1992), a theme runs through the literature of the need for careful listening to the actual talk of the interview. Marjorie DeVault (1990) proposes specific recommendations for interviewing women, noting that language is so influential by male categories that when women talk, the right words are not easily available that fit their experience. For example, the categories of ‘work’ and ‘leisure’ fail to describe well the host of household and family-related tasks in which many women are involved for hours of their day. DeVault urges the researcher to avoid importing too many categories from outside women’s experience, including those from social science, in order to be open to respondents’ ways of describing their lifeworlds. If the available vocabulary does not quite fit, the interviewee has to translate, to work at describing her experiences. When researchers listen carefully to the actual talk, they can hear these moments of translation, which can sensitize the analysis to these aspects of women’s lives where language is found wanting.

**Emotions During Interviewing**

Judith Stacey (1988) has raised a concern about feminist interviewing that is related to the possibility of building an equal relationship with the interviewee. Though drawn to ethnographic methods as a feminist, she found some of her experiences troubling and wondered if the close relationships in the field can mask other forms of exploitation because of the inherent inequality connected to the researcher's freedom to exit that social world. Stacey’s view was influenced by her experience in the field: one informant confided in her secrets involving others in the community, leaving Stacey feeling ‘inauthentic’ in her dealings with those others. This ‘up close and personal’ style of interviewing can indeed produce discomfort and
cultural dilemmas. When one moves away from the separations imposed by the 'scientific' approach (stay distant and thereby 'neutral'), then all the messiness of everyday life can intrude. In this approach, emotions become an important part of fieldwork (Kleinman and Copn, 1993; Krieger, 1991), and especially intimate field relationships or interview topics can leave the researcher, as well as the informants, feeling vulnerable (Ellingston, 1998; Ellis et al., 1997; Krieger, 1983). In describing the emotions raised by Barbara Katz Rothman (1986), whose research involved interviewing women who had undergone an abortion, Carol Warren notes:

Emotions are evolved in the fieldworker while listening to the respondent's accounts of their own lives. Fieldwork, like any interaction of everyday life, evokes the whole range of feelings associated with everyday life. But transference or identification—in fieldwork as in everyday life—is evoked mainly through talking with others, in conversation, or (as with Katz Rothman's research) interviews. (1988: 47)

Ethnographic interviewers are increasing their efforts to understand such dynamics. Interviewees can feel affirmed and empowered from being genuinely listened to (Opie, 1992), and they can choose how 'deep' to go in answering questions (Heyl, 1997). Michelle Fine urges researchers to develop an awareness of the interpersonal politics of the interview encounter—how the 'self' and 'other' of both parties to the dialogue are created and defined through the talk. For researchers to become more aware of this complex process, Fine suggests interviewers try ways of 'working the hyphen' in this self-other connection:

Working the hyphen means creating occasions for researchers and informants to discuss what's, and is not, 'happening between', within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose story is being-shadowed, why, for whom, and with what consequences. (1994: 72)

Levels of Empowerment in Interviewing

Several themes in the recent literature on ethnographic interviewing focus on goals that are consonant with those of feminist researchers. Of particular interest in this literature are the concepts of empowerment and reflexivity. The next two sections address the issues involved in empowering respondents and developing reflexivity as interviewers.

Elliot Mishler (1986) presents a strong rationale for interviewers to empower respondents—a rationale he developed out of his critique of traditional interview techniques. His critique shows that far from being a 'neutral' research procedure, structured interviewing decontextualizes the respondents by separating the individuals and their responses from the context of their daily lives. The structured interview protocol interfaces with the respondents' ability to develop detailed, coherent narratives and to trace with the interviewer how they have made sense of events and experiences. To obtain such responses, the interviewer needs to share power over the interview process with the interviewee (Mishler, 1986: 122-32). Mishler identifies three types of relationships between the interviewers and interviewees: informants and reporters, research collaborators, and learners/actors and advocates. Each successive set increases the empowering component in the interview relationship.

Informants and Reporters

When an interviewer acts as a reporter, his or her goal is to report on 'members' understandings', but this approach is far from the 'traveler' metaphor discussed earlier. At this first level of empowerment, the researcher's awareness of how the interview itself shapes the outcome shifts the research toward the 'traveller' metaphor. The reporter empowers the respondent (now elevated to an 'informant') by listening carefully and respectfully, allowing the informants to 'name' the world in their own terms, rather than reacting to terminology or categories introduced by the researcher. Another empowering shift from traditional practice can occur at this level by reporting the informants' real names in the text, if that is what they would like, having considered potential future repercussions for them or others who could be identified by association with the named informants (Mishler, 1986: 123-5); see Myerhoff, 1994: 36 on the desire of the elderly Jews in her study to have their real names used in the book so that there would be some permanent documentation of their life stories).

Other researchers have pointed out that the admonition to listen carefully and respectfully applies not only to what the researcher does during the interview but also to the 'listening' that is done later when the researcher reviews and analyses tapes and transcripts. DeVault (1990), Holstein and Gubrium (1995), Opie (1992) and Poland and Pederson (1998) urge making close transcription of tapes and transcripts, re-playing of the tapes, listening to respondents' hesitations, contradictions, topics about which little is said, and shifts in verbal positioning (taking different points of view), all of which help to highlight the complexities in what the respondents are saying. This 'listening' after the interview also helps heighten the researcher's awareness of the way the interview text was co-produced. By focusing on the immediate context of the interview,
including just how the interviewer asked a question or responded to the informant's last utterance, the interviewer can better understand why the informant answered in a particular way. In what can be viewed as a linguistic approach to interview analysis, these researchers are urging more explicit study and appreciation of the ways in which actual talk in the interview proceeds.

Paying attention to when talk does not proceed can also be part of respectful listening. Poland and Pederson (1998: 306) note that traditionally ethnographic interviews are taught to "keep informants talking" (Spradley, 1979: 80); however, silences may be indicators of complex reactions to the questions and self-censorship. Researchers need to respect respondents' right to remain silent and to appreciate that, for some respondents, the research interview may not be an appropriate place to "tell all".

Poland and Pederson (1998: 307) also urge researchers to attend to a broader context than that of the interview itself; they refer to the "many silences of misunderstanding embedded in qualitative research that is not grounded in an appreciating of the "objective" material/cultural conditions in which social and personal meanings are shaped and reproduced ... ". They reference Bourdieu's (1996: 22-3) call for qualitative researchers to have not just "a well intentioned state of mind" but extensive knowledge of the social conditions within which people live. These recommendations for interviewers to be cognizant of both interaction and context of the interview — for interpreting talk, silences, and even underlying social and cultural structures — acknowledge that researchers have considerable control over the "reporting" and the outcome, while still striving to empower the respondents through respectful listening.

Research Collaborators

Mishler's (1986) second level of empowering shifts the interviewer/interviewee relationship to one of collaborative research. This shift can be managed in a number of ways. Mishler notes, for example, that Laslett and Rapoport (1975: 974) urge researchers to tell respondents how the data will be used. In collaborative research the interviewee is included in discussions up front about what information is being sought and what approaches to the topics might be most fruitful to the endeavor for both participants. Similarly, Smaling (1996) feels that the shift to research collaborators is dependent on developing trust and the basis for genuine dialogue. With the shift to collaboration, the interviewer acknowledges that the interviewee influences the content and order of questions and topics covered. The interviewee participates in interpreting and re-interpreting questions and responses, clarifying what their responses meant, and even re-framing the research questions (Lather, 1986; Smaling, 1996). The collaboration can result in rich narrative data, since the interviewer has multiple opportunities to expand at length on topics and angles of relevance to him or her.

At the same time, however, researchers can sometimes find themselves wondering how the expanded responses all relate to the research project. Indeed Mazeland and ten Have (1996: 108-13) have concluded that there are always "essential tensions" in the research interview, due to three separate orientations at work throughout the interview; interviewees are attending first to their lifeworld, secondly to the interview situation itself, and thirdly to the research question. Using conversation analysis to examine transcripts of (semi-) open interviews, Mazeland and ten Have found that interviewers and interviewees engage in negotiations over the relative precedence of the lifeworld orientation versus the research orientation:

Interviewers in open interviews seem to take an ambivalent stance in these negotiations, on the one hand calling for a free and natural telling, while on the other, often displaying a preference for a summarized answer, that can be easily processed in terms of the research project (1996: 88).

Mazeland and ten Have found that interviewees in fact lobbied for ways to present their story; they actively engaged the interviewers in the 'essential tension' over the question: 'Is this about me, or about your research?' If pursuing consciously collaborative interviewing, interviewers can be aware of these essential tensions and promote negotiations that are respectful of interviewees' desire to control the telling of their stories.

Another dimension of collaboration in interviewing is including the participants in the interpretation process. This may begin with follow-up questions or interviews wherein the researcher presents his or her initial interpretations and asks for clarification. This approach may extend to sharing with the interviewee copies of interview transcripts or drafts of research papers and reports. Interestingly, this aspect of collaboration builds on the long-standing procedure known as 'member validation' (Bloor, 1988; Emerson, 1981; Emerson and Polner, 1988; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 195-8; Heyl, 1979: 1-9, 181-9; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Schmitt, 1990). In checking for misinterpretations that could stem from different communication norms, Charles Briggs (1986: 101) has consulted his interviewees but found that it was also helpful to talk with others in the community about his data and interpretations because interviewees themselves are less likely to point out the ways in which the researcher has violated the norms of the speech situation or misconstrued the meaning of an utterance than are persons who did not participate in the initial interview'. Certainly, the researcher would involve sharing the consideration of the

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involve the initial interviewees in any decision to share their interview transcripts with others and consider carefully any ethical and social ramifications of such sharing.

Moshe Shokeid (1997) details his experience in ‘member validation’ and collaboration while studying a gay synagogue in New York City. He had asked one member of the synagogue (no longer actively involved) to read his manuscripts and help check his interpretations. This led to numerous debates and detailed, intense negotiations up to the final moments before publication. He notes that the collaboration took on a life of its own and was more than he had bargained for at some points, but in the end it was something he was glad to have accomplished. Shokeid felt that the discussions about his interpretations with this key project participant, as well as other synagogue members, and later with a feminist editor at his publishing house, improved the final book manuscript. His experience did, however, raise questions about the researcher’s authority to determine the final product (Noebaum, 1998; see also Chapter 32 in this volume). Researchers who use the collaborative model will be called upon to give up some control and to respect those whom they have involved in their research projects.

Learner/Actors and Advocates

Eliot Mishler (1986: 129) proposes a third level of empowerment that shifts the relationship between the interviewee and interviewer still further to that of ‘learner/actors and advocates’. At this level, the researcher as advocate promotes the interests of those connected to their projects (Erikson, 1976; Mies, 1983). This shift allows the interviewees numerous opportunities to benefit directly from their involvement in the research through learning more about their circumstances, including possible alternatives to their situation, and then acting on this new awareness ‘Participatory action research’, as well as emancipatory research in feminist and critical ethnography are several forms of research where the researcher’s efforts are focused on empowering individuals involved in their projects (Carsepeck, 1996; Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994; Ladier, 1991; Reson, 1994; Roman, 1993; Thomas, 1993; Whyte et al., 1989).

Reflexivity in Ethnographic Interviewing

We turn now to the on-going debate in the recent literature on ethnography about what it means to practice ‘reflexivity’ as a researcher in order to understand and allow for the interconnections and mutual influence between the researcher and those being ‘researched’. In earlier sections of this chapter we encountered recommendations for researchers to develop sophisticated levels of awareness as part of the interview process. Two such examples are Michelle Fine’s (1994) call for interviewers to ‘work the hyphen’ (develop awareness of the complex interplay of self and other during interviews) and Bourdieu’s (1996) call for researchers to use knowledge of the material context of the respondents to understand their stories, and help empower them to transform their circumstances. Today’s discussion of reflexivity finds an interesting echo in Alvin Gouldner’s 1970 imagings for a new ‘praxis’ of sociology – a genuine change in how we carry out research and how we view ourselves. This shift to a ‘reflexive sociology’ has a radical component because sociologists would be consciously seeking to transform themselves and the world outside themselves. In terms that anticipate Woolgar’s (1986: 21–2) definition of ‘radical constitutive reflexivity’, Gouldner proclaims,

We would increasingly recognize the depth of our kinship with those whom we study. They would no longer be viewable as alien others or as mere objects for our superior technique and insight; they would, instead, be seen as fellow sociologists, each struggling with his varying degree of skill, energy, and talent to understand social reality. (Gouldner, 1970: 490)

Current discussion of reflexivity since the ‘interpretive turn’ in the social sciences covers a variety of topics. For example, as a research strategy in fieldwork and interviewing endeavors, reflexive practice is proposed as a way to bridge differences between researcher and respondents (Wasserfall, 1997), to help researchers to avoid making unexamined assumptions (Karp and Kendall, 1982), to promote the reconstruction of theories (Burawoy, 1998), and to create a protected space within which the respondents can tell their life stories as well as increase the interviewers’ understanding of those stories (Bourdieu, 1996). More broadly, the debates about reflexivity have centered primarily on issues of representation, authority and voice (Hertz, 1997; Woolgar, 1986b). Thus, these varied goals emphasize that reflexivity applies not only to the phases of active interaction during interviewing, but also to the phases of interpretation, writing and publication.

Rahel Wasserfall (1997) describes a ‘weak’ and a ‘strong’ reading of reflexivity in the literature. The ‘weak’ reading focuses on the researcher’s ‘continued self-awareness about the ongoing relationship between a researcher and informants’ (1997: 151). In this view, the researcher makes a steady effort to be cognizant of her own influences on the construction of knowledge by continuously ‘checking on the accomplishment of understanding’ (p. 151). This reading is similar to the form of reflexivity Woolgar (1986b: 22) calls ‘benign introspection’. Those taking this approach have urged investigators to be sensitive to the ways in which their
personal characteristics and biographies affect the interaction and production of knowledge during the research project (Reinharz, 1988; Stobst, 1981). The "strong" reading assumes researchers can proceed in ways that go beyond recognition of difference and influence in order to deconstruct their own authority (in favor of more egalitarian relationships between researcher and informants) and actively try to bridge class or power differentials. Wasserman is skeptical that researchers can enact the "strong" reading when the differences between the researcher and respondents involve strongly held, opposing value commitments. However, he feels that when differences are not great, both the weak and strong approaches to reflexivity can help maximize exploitation of informants and allow the researcher to "take responsibilities for the influences her study has on her informant's life" (1997: 162).

Karp and Kendall (1982: 250) emphasize what reflexivity requires of the ethnographic researcher - the challenge of "turning the anthropological lens back upon the self". The process of widening the research lens to include the researcher and her place in the research not only enlarges "the fieldworker's conceptual field", but reorganizes it. It poses challenges to the fieldworker's most fundamental beliefs about truth and objectivity (1982: 250). Karp and Kendall (1982: 260-2) note that one frequently only becomes truly reflexive following a moment of "shock" - when either the interviewer or interviewee respond in ways unexpected by the other - because only at that moment are assumptions on either side uncovered.

Similarly, Michael Burawoy (1998: 18) finds that moments of "shock" between what the researcher expects, based on previous work, and what he or she suddenly encounters during observing or interviewing, are important in forcing revisions in their on-going theorizing. Indeed, for Burawoy, theorizing is at the heart of the "reflective model of science", which he proposes can co-exist with the positivist model of science. Both models of science may be useful, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, and the choice between them may depend primarily on how we choose to orient to the world: "to stand aside or to intervene, to seek detachment or to enter into dialogue" (1998: 30). Burawoy's four principles of reflexive science include recognition that we

1. intervene in the lives of those we study;
2. analyse social interaction;
3. identify those local processes that are in mutual determination with external social forces; and
4. reconstruct theories based on what we have learned in dialogue with those involved in our research projects.

Burawoy proposes a reflexive interview method that follows these principles: the interaction during a reflexive interview is interventionist, dialogic, designed to uncover processes in situational specific circumstances, as well as in broader social contexts, and results in a reconstruction of a theory that fits what has emerged from the dialogue. The resulting theory is also part of dialogue with ideas in the researcher's profession. The published theories (or oral versions of them) will return to the lives of ordinary citizens, including the original study participants, who may adopt them, refute them, or extend them in unexpected ways, and send them, via the next visit by a researcher, back into "science". Burawoy (1998: 16, fn. 11) notes that "Anthony Giddens (1992) has made much of this interchange between academic and lay theory, arguing that sociology appears not to advance because its discoveries becomes conventional wisdom". Burawoy's (1998) reflexivity during interviewing and in his "extended case method" feed into the reflexivity of social theorizing.

Pierre Bourdieu (1996: 18) advocates a "reflective reflexivity", which is "based on a sociological "feel" or "eye", that enables one to perceive and monitor on the spot, as the interview is actually being carried out, the effects of the social structure within which it is taking place". The structure of the interview relationship is asymmetric in two ways: first, the investigator starts the game and sets the rules, and secondly, the interviewee likely enters the game with more social capital, including cognitive capital, than the respondent. Bourdieu combats this asymmetry through "active and methodical listening". Active listening consists of "total attention", which he notes is difficult for interviewers to maintain since we have so much practice in everyday life of categorizing people's stories and turning instantaneous thought into socio-technical processes. Methodical listening is based on the researcher's "knowledge of the objective conditions common to the entire relevant social category" for each respondent (1996: 19). Such listening requires an interviewer to have a "continuous" knowledge of her subject, acquired sometimes in the course of a whole life of research or of earlier interviews with the same respondent or with informants (1996: 23). Important here as well is the process that promotes collaboration with the respondents, such that they can "own" the questioning process themselves. In his latest research Bourdieu (1996: 20) encouraged members of his interview team to select their respondents from among people personally known to them, noting that "Social proximity is fundamental in effect provide two of the social conditions of "non-violent" communication". However, he notes that such a strategy can limit research possibilities if only people in like-positions can interview one another. Bourdieu concludes - similarly to Anselm Strauss (1969: 156-9) three decades earlier - that it is more difficult, but still possible, to conduct reflexive interviews with respondents different from oneself.

The sociologist interviewee's v a feeling that t knows how to especially, the tendency to can from them... sl their place. (B)

Clearly, the research process called on today are worthy ones efforts can con power relations situation and on whom we talk empowered to t another across relational owes resemble Denzi ethnographers, is skeptical of th traditional ethno primacy of colla ships when he based ethical sys feminist, commit Unlike the 'scient ethical model as shoes of the pet 272-3). This iss in another's pla addressed eloquent study of homel This perspective raises the age-t understand anot Many thoughtful now not what it understood a ba eyes of a Christi and so forth in be course, and so a sense, and to a logical extension another, that on which case, soci I do not mean - see and feel the v. I do mean, h try to do so. Try other lies at the h life itself. (1993: 378)
The sociologist may be able to imagine to those interviewees who are furthest removed from their socially a feeling that they may legitimately be themselves, if she knows how to show them, both by her tone and, most especially, the content of her questions that, without pretending to cancel the social distance which separates her from them ... she is capable of \textit{mentally putting herself in their place}. (Bourdieu, 1996: 22; emphasis in original)

Clearly, the concept of reflexivity during the research process is a multifaceted one, and it is being called on today to do Yeatsman's duty. But the goals are worthy ones. Our success will be partial, yet our efforts can contribute to identifying processes and power relations at work (both inside the interview situation and outside in the lifeworlds of those with whom we talk), hearing stories respondents feel empowered to tell, and forging connections to one another across different life circumstances. These relational outcomes of ethnographic interviewing resemble Denzin's (1997: 271-87) goals for future ethnographers. Although Denzin (1997: 265-84) is skeptical of the power of reflexivity to transform traditional ethnographic practices, he underscores the primacy of collaborative and empowering relationships when he urges researchers to adopt a care-based ethical system (Ryan, 1995: 148) and follow feminist, commitment values in their research. Unlike the 'scientist-subject' model, the care-based ethical model asks the researcher 'to step into the shoes of the persons being studied' (Denzin, 1997: 272-3). This issue of whether we can put ourselves in another's place, as Bourdieu also proposes, is addressed eloquently by Elliot Liebow (1993) in his study of homeless women:

This perspective --- indeed, participant observation itself --- raises the age-old problem of whether anyone can understand another or put oneself in another's place. Many thoughtful people believe that a sane person cannot know what it is to be crazy, that a white man cannot understand a black man, a Jew cannot see through the eyes of a Christian, a man through the eyes of a woman, and so forth in both directions. In an important sense, of course, and to a degree, this is certainly true; in another sense, and to a degree, it is surely false, because the logical extension of such a view is that no one can know another, that only God knows the mind of God, in which case, social life would be impossible.

I do not mean that a man with a home and family can see and feel the world as homeless women see and feel it. I do mean, however, that it is reasonable and useful to try to do so. Trying to put oneself in the place of the other is at the heart of the social contract and of social life itself. (1993: xiv-xv)

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

This chapter focuses on a set of interrelated themes in the recent literature on ethnographic interviewing. It highlights the ways in which the interview situation itself constitutes a site of meaning construction that emerges out of the immediate interaction, but also out of the on-going relationship, between interviewer and interviewee. Indeed, the concern with the relationship emphasizes one of the defining characteristics of ethnographic interviewing over other types of interviewing -- the significant time invested in developing, through repeated contacts and multiple interviews over time, a genuine relationship involving mutual respect among the participants and mutual interest in the project out of which meaning evolves. Although this definition reflects my personal bias (and other researchers from a variety of disciplines may bring their favorite practices and theoretical predilections in ethnographic interviewing), the literature cited in this chapter emphasizes the need for awareness of ways in which the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee affects how the research topics and questions are approached, negotiated, and responded to -- indeed, how the co-construction of meaning takes place.

This literature review identifies increasing interest in linguistic analysis of interview talk, feminist and empowering methods of research, and development of reflexivity as a goal. Though not uncontested, these approaches provide some encouraging notes and resources to those researchers from a variety of disciplines interested in conducting ethnographic interview research 'after the turn'.

\textbf{NOTES}

1 From this position, interviewing projects based on one-shot interviews would also not constitute ethnographic interviewing.

2 Certainly this stance, with the researcher as novice and the interviewee as teacher, contrasts sharply with other kinds of interviews, such as depositions and interrogatory interviews, during which interviewers maintain both their positions of greater authority and their continued control over the interview process. Interestingly, interviews done as part of mental health counseling could meet some of the characteristics of ethnographic interviewing, with relationships of long duration, built on trust and mutual respect, and in-depth discussions of the meanings and interpretations of the client's life experiences, however, with therapeutic, rather than research, goals as central to the process (Kvale, 1986: 74-69).

3 While critically analysing four approaches to qualitative research, Guba and Holstein (1997: 11-4) probe how the approaches differ and how the 'method talk' of each approach guides, limits, and constrains the outcomes of the research. Interestingly, the authors also identify common threads that run through such diverse research languages as naturalism, ethnomethodology, essentialism and postmodernism; these include having a 'working
skepticism", a commitment to close scrutiny, a search for the "qualities" of social life, a focus on process, an appreciation for subjectivity, and a tolerance for complexity.

4 See Denzin (1992: 46-70) for a detailed discussion of the critiques and responses to them.

5 Though in cultural anthropology, fieldwork studies remain central to work in the discipline, anthropologists have been less likely to write "methods" texts for their novice fieldworkers (Narayan, 1993; Michalina and Richards, 1999). In her autobiography of her earlier years, Margaret Mead (1973: 140) noted, "I really did not know very much about fieldwork... There was, in fact, no how in our education. What we learned was what to look for."

6 For one related arena of debate, see Jacoby (1995) for an in-depth analysis of the conflicting viewpoints among post-colonial scholars.

7 Culturalist and Holstein further developed their active interpreting project in The Language of Qualitative Method (1997). Since their approach bridges epistemological positions associated with different sub-disciplines in sociology, it is open to feedback from several sources; see Contemporary Sociology's (1998) symposium of reviews by Douglas Maynard (from a conversation analytical/ ethnographic-approach), Nancy Naples (from a feminist perspective) and Robert Prus (from an interactionist perspective).

Briggs (1983, 1986) notes that the norms governing what and how one communicates in the informant's social world may well differ from the expectations the researcher brings to the interview, and he offers a range of strategies for identifying and analyzing problems that interviewers' questions can cause for the informant.

9 There are critics of such efforts to be reflexive. Clough (1998: 176) argues that "reflectivity in the form of being self-reflective is doomed: 'The idea of self-reflection in the self-conscious scientist has been exhausted in the growing awareness of the violence of making the other nothing but a reflective apparatus for the scientist' (1997: xxiv).

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Ethinographic Interviewing


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