

## Qualitative Inquiry in the History of Psychology

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Despite the importance and ubiquity of qualitative inquiry, a comprehensive account of its history in psychology has not been written. Phases and landmark moments of qualitative inquiry are evident in variations that range from informal, implicit, and unacknowledged practices to philosophically informed and scientifically sophisticated methodologies with norms and carefully specified procedures. After the founding of psychology in 1879, qualitative inquiries were conducted by Wilhelm Wundt, Sigmund Freud, and William James, who assumed their scientific status. During the 20th century, with a rising emphasis on hypothesis testing by means of quantification, psychologists continued to use qualitative practices but did not include them in general accounts of scientific research methods. Although Gordon Allport (1942) called for bold innovation and an increasingly rigorous accountability, a delay in the systematic development of qualitative methodology took place even as practices continued to yield fruitful research in work such as Flanagan (1954); Maslow (1954, 1959), and Kohlberg (1963). Only between the late 1960s and 1990 did phenomenologists, grounded theorists, discourse analysts, narrative researchers, and others articulate and assert the general scientific value, methodologies, and applicable tools of qualitative inquiry in psychology. Between the 1990s and the present, a revolutionary institutionalization of qualitative methods has taken place in publications, educational curricula, and professional organizations. Examples of ground breaking, well-known psychological research using qualitative methods have begun to be examined by research methodologists. The historical study of qualitative methods offers a treasure trove for the growing comprehension of qualitative methods and their integration with quantitative inquiry.

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Qualitative inquiry has been practiced from long before the establishment of psychology as an independent science and predates the current organization of knowledge into the various sciences, humanities, arts, and professions. An interdisciplinary cross-fertilization of qualitative methods continues to flourish today.

A rough sketch of a history of qualitative inquiry in psychology might differentiate phases from the founding of psychology to the present. This sketch, the aim of this article, highlights landmark events as an invitation to appreciate and identify some crucial contributions rather than to bring any closure to what is historically important. Some examples of psy-

chology conducted before the term “qualitative research” entered our vocabulary are presented in order to illustrate the potential of historical exploration of the hidden treasures of this field for contributing to research methods of the future.

It is misleading to speak of “the” history of qualitative inquiry in light of the diversity and complexity of the field, which is virtually coextensive with psychology itself. The genealogy of qualitative research is not well represented by a tree with roots denoting precursors, a single trunk depicting a great inventor/pioneer, and many large and smaller branches extending in directions signifying the progress of followers to their most recently budding contributions. Rather, qualitative methods in psychology are better represented as an expansive forest with many trees of various ages and distances from each other, some growing symbiotically, some competing for sunlight and others ascending in

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isolation as they rise from subterranean root systems that intermingle in an invisible community from common and different kinds of nourishing soil.

Qualitative inquiry is ubiquitous because of its fundamental necessity and place in the enterprise of science and indeed knowledge of any sort. The logic and practice of empirical science requires evidence, and the determination of its relevance and validity requires qualitative knowledge and judgment. The equation of science with hypothesis testing has led to an emphasis on measurement issues and statistical reasoning, with little attention to inductive, interpretive, and other rational means of defining constructs, even though qualitative inquiry is a crucial and indispensable part of all scientific research (see Osbeck, this volume). Qualitative inquiry and knowledge can range from being highly implicit and taken for granted, even free-wheeling and unsystematic, to being rigorously established and accounted for with philosophical support and specially designed, critically evaluated research procedures. The present examination focuses primarily on the self-conscious and deliberate scientific practice of qualitative research.

### **A Broad Historical Sketch**

As with any scientific practice, the determination of problems, the constitution of data, the procedures of analysis, and the formation of conceptualizations are practiced by pioneers before they are formulated as means of inquiry, including norms and methodology that are codified, specified, and communicated in the education of new generations of scientists. Deliberate qualitative inquiry in psychology began and proceeded in the work of diverse practitioners long before it became a topic of scholarship in its own right. Giorgi (2009) traced the practice of descriptive research in nonclinical areas in the work of Wilhelm Wundt, Alfred Binet, the Würzburg school, John Watson, the Gestalt school, Wilhelm Stern, Jean Piaget, and Frederic Bartlett. He introduced a virtually unknown manual on qualitative experimentation by E.B. Titchener and reviewed five holistic approaches to psychological research at the time of the Weimar Republic, none of which survived World War II in Europe: Gestalt psychology, Wilhelm Stern's personalistic psychology, Felix

Krüger's *Ganzheitspsychologie* (integral or holistic psychology), David Katz's phenomenological school, and Edward Spanger's *Verstehenpsychologie* (psychology of understanding; Giorgi, 2009). More than 60 years of such practice transpired after psychology became an autonomous scientific discipline in 1879, before there was a call by Gordon Allport in 1942 to account for their procedures and norms for psychology as a whole. Even after this call, almost 30 years passed before concerted efforts were undertaken to formulate general qualitative methodologies for psychology. These achievements began in the 1970s and 1980s with the help of sophisticated philosophies of science. The word "qualitative," as a descriptor of psychological research, entered scientific parlance in the 1980s and began to appear in professional journals with regularity only since the 1990s (Rennie, Watson, & Monteiro, 2002). Finally, in the last two decades, these methods and methodologies have begun to be widely disseminated in journals and books, to be the basis for the formation of scientific organizations, to enter educational curricula, and thereby to gain prominence in the field of psychology. Even now, however, there appear to be as many questions as answers. Most psychologists lack knowledge in this area because the recent institutionalization has barely begun and has not yet been integrated into the educational curriculum, scientific practices, and achievements of most psychologists, who remain uninformed of the advances of qualitative psychology over the last 40 years. The present time appears to be a crucial one for increasing the inclusion and integration of qualitative inquiry in the field of psychology.

### **The Practice of Qualitative Inquiry With Implicit or Unacknowledged Methods**

Qualitative inquiry can certainly be traced back to ancient times in the work of Aristotle. In recent history, the qualitative tradition of naturalism was developed and applied in psychology by Darwin (1871, 1872), in his classic comparative investigations of emotions and moral sense. The tradition of case history, as a means of establishing general knowledge, had long been employed in medicine when Freud used it in his research on psychopathology (Breuer & Freud, 1895). Clinical and applied

areas of psychology have made extensive and soundly rational, methodical use of description and many forms of qualitative inquiry, both in clinical, educational, and industrial-organizational practices and in the research serving professional activities. Much of this work has gone under the radar of scholarship on methods of inquiry in academic psychology. Historical and methodological investigation of qualitative work in psychological practice and applied research is necessary for a comprehensive treatment of qualitative inquiry in psychology. Although the official founding of psychology in 1879 is marked by the first psychological laboratory, Wundt's experimental work was only a part of the psychology he conceived and practiced. Recent historians (Danziger, 1983, 2001a, & 2001b) inform us that Wundt viewed his 10 volume *Völkerpsychologie* (1900–1920, 1916) translated as “social psychology,” “folk psychology,” or “cultural psychology”—involving qualitative research on language, expressive movement, imagination, art, mythology, religion, and morality—as equally important to laboratory research in the science of psychology. Psychologists of no less stature than Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, Carl Jung, William James, E.B. Titchener, Max Wertheimer and the Gestalt school, Alfred Binet, Kurt Lewin, John Watson, Wilhelm Stern, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Frederic Bartlett, Karen Horney, John Dollard, Abraham Maslow, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, Leon Festinger, Stanley Schacter, Philip Zimbardo, and David Rosenhan have also contributed ground breaking and seminal research in psychology without their qualitative methods receiving much attention even to date. It is significant that the two psychologists who were awarded Nobel Prizes (in Economics), Herbert Simon and Daniel Kahneman, both won their distinction by carrying out inquiries on thinking and problem solving by developing mathematical models based on verbal description and a qualitative analysis of everyday problem solving (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Kahneman, 2003).

Past qualitative research in psychology is a veritable gold mine not only for historians, who have yet to even document and trace qualitative psychology comprehensively in the context of quantitative psychology and independently in its own right. This task has been begun, for instance in social psychology by Marecek, Fine,

and Kidder (1997) and in descriptive psychology in Europe and the United States by Giorgi (2009). Qualitative methodologists may gain much insight into best practices, both procedures and norms, by searching research reports for descriptions of how this often masterful research with extremely important results was conducted, as Wertz et al. (2011) did in their investigation of Freud's early psychopathology, James's inquiry into religious experience, Kohlberg's research on the development of moral reasoning, and Maslow's study on self-actualization. Such historical work often requires examining material that was not published, was offered in parenthetical commentaries, or was included in publications ambivalently or apologetically because of the low appraisal of its scientific value. For instance, Kohlberg's original dissertation on moral reasoning, completed in 1958 and published only in 1994, contains references that were omitted from his well known publications (e.g., Kohlberg, 1963), to such important sociological influences as Max Weber's method of ideal type analysis and the invaluable mentorship at the University of Chicago of Anselm Strauss, who was later a coinventor of the influential qualitative research method of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this work Kohlberg offered a profound and informative, meticulous description of his own data collection and analytic procedures that has much to teach contemporary qualitative and mixed methods researchers and methodologists. For instance, he reported that the various collected descriptions of moral reasoning were not of equal value in the analysis, that the most extreme and passionate accounts in particular enabled him to grasp the basic forms of reasoning. Once analyzed and conceptualized in these unusual cases, the structures of moral reasoning could be clearly identified in the more ordinary, average cases where they were often unclear and intertwined. It is even possible to discern, from the findings of qualitative research, the procedures that were used but not at all reported explicitly by investigators. In this way, one of the most perplexing moments of qualitative research—the data analysis, has been articulated from inquiries into the phenomenological, existential, humanistic, and psychoanalytic research traditions (Wertz, 1983a, 1983b, 1987a, 1987b, 1993, 2001). An explication of the analytic operations implicit in

the qualitative knowledge generated by these traditions appears to delineate fundamental attitudes, procedures, and normative principles of descriptive psychological reflection that are practiced across many diverse if not all qualitative analyses (Wertz et al., 2011).

The performance of qualitative research prior to and without guidance by a formally specified set of procedures and methodology are particularly instructive in three such works that have remained outside the view of contemporary qualitative research: Freud's (1900) work in interpreting dreams; Jahoda, Lazarsfeld, and Zeisel's (1933) psychology of an unemployed community in Marienthal; and John Flanagan's (1954) development of the Critical Incident Technique. Explication of the methods used and principles guiding these fruitful works will be detailed by the present author in forthcoming publication.

### **The Call for Qualitative Methodology**

In 1940, the Social Science Research Council, charged with improving the quality of research in the social sciences, enlisted the Committee on Appraisal of Research, chaired by Edmund Day, to appraise research on psychological and social life focusing on "the subjective factor" by using "personal documents" as source materials. The Committee asked Gordon Allport to investigate the use in psychology of "any self revealing record that intentionally or unintentionally yields information about the structure, dynamics, or functioning of the author's mental life" (Allport, 1942, p. xii). Allport's survey and evaluation, published in a 1942 monograph, addressed such questions as the nature of first person materials (e.g., autobiographies, questionnaires, verbatim recordings such as interviews, diaries/journals, letters, and expressive/artistic productions); the history of the employment of such documents; attempts to establish the reliability and validity of procedures; how investigators accounted for their methods; the kind(s) of analyses used; the employment of induction, illustration and hypotheses; how inferences were generalized; and the biases and frames of reference of investigators. Allport estimated that although 200 to 300 psychological authors had employed personal documents, no more than a dozen had given thought to the method they had employed, and

there were very few critical studies of these methods.

Allport's main finding was that although personal documents were employed with great skill, brilliance, and results in psychology, there had been very little concern with such methodological issues as sampling, observer reliability, validity, and objectivity. Allport cited such giants as Goethe, Helmholtz, Ebbinghaus, Galton, James, Hall, Freud, and others in a growing trend to use personal documents despite the predominance of behaviorism, which purportedly forbid their use in psychology. Allport reviewed the "motely array" of critical studies that were conducted since 1920 and because the yield was so limited, he could only affirm their general aim of "extracting greater gain from personal documents and enhancing their scientific status" (Allport, 1942, p. 36).

Allport documented the important uses of these methods, including teaching, social policy, therapy, idiographic scientific knowledge, interdisciplinary research, scientific discovery, inductively based generalization, theoretical illustration, and a basis for questionnaires and measurement. He argued that although the use of personal documents had been commonly criticized for its deficiencies according to the prevailing standards of nomothetic science, the use of personal documents provides general scientific knowledge with an indispensable basis and great potential for validity. To that end, he critically examined problems and possible solutions concerning the various forms of documents; contexts and procedures of collection and sampling; internal consistency and evidence; problems of control, variability, and validity of interpretation; and the relationship to theory. He asserted that the study of personal documents is indispensable to knowledge of subjective personal life and provides scientific psychology with a touchstone of reality by means of a genuine scientific method. Allport concluded his review with three strong and, as it turned out, prophetic recommendations. First, psychologists should continue to employ these methods with bold and radical experimentation, and it would be injurious to psychological science to discourage the use of new kinds of documents, techniques of writing, ways of organizing data, and procedures of validation, prediction, and interpretation. He insisted that innovative practice should precede, and would

eventually yield, rules. Second, Allport recommended the critical and careful evaluation of these methods that would address issues of sampling, reliability, and validity of interpretation in an increasing effort to establish safeguards. Third and finally, he asserted that strong countermeasures be taken against scientists who condemn the use of personal documents with the requirement that they be employed only as a preliminary way of generating hypotheses to be tested statistically, that is, only in the service of quantitative psychology. Allport insisted that although personal documents can be used advantageously in generating measuring instruments and hypotheses for quantitative tests, such uses form only a small part of the value of these methods, which are important and may be valid scientifically in their own right.

### **The Delayed Development of Qualitative Methodologies**

Qualitative research continued in psychology unabated, but Allport's monograph did not result in a widespread recognition of the value of these methods for more than a generation. In the next decade and well into the 1960s, qualitative research was practiced and even developed, but the vast majority of researchers who continued to use these methods did so without accounting systematically for the procedures or asserting their scientific value. As mentioned above, one noteworthy example of the innovative and fruitful studies is Kohlberg's, 1958 dissertation. The details of his method were not reported in his subsequent publications and became available only when the actual dissertation was published in 1994, when qualitative research was becoming a common concern of psychologists (Kohlberg, 1994). Only recently has this work begun to receive methodological attention (Wertz et al., 2011). Another good example of the continuing innovation and development of qualitative inquiry is Maslow's studies of the self-actualized personality (Maslow, 1954, 1968), which Maslow initially hesitated to publish because he viewed the study as a purely personal inquiry rather than as bone fide scientific research. When he eventually came to view the findings as important enough to submit the study for publication, the manuscript was rejected by leading psychological journal editors. A persistent Maslow delivered that very meth-

odologically interesting study of self-actualization as his presidential address to APA in 1958 and bitterly refused to submit his work again for publication in psychology's top tier journals. He viewed qualitative procedures as having sufficient value to continue and extend them in his fine investigation of "peak experiences" (Maslow, 1959), for which he gathered and inductively analyzed participants' descriptions of their best experiences. He continued to disseminate his research on self-actualization and peak experiences in books, which have been quite influential in psychology without attention and credit to their research method.

The case of Maslow is interesting because, unlike Wundt (1900–1920), Freud (1900), James (1902), and the pre-World War II European psychologists cited by Giorgi (2009), who assumed the scientificity of their research, qualitative researchers during the behavioristic period were ambivalent, silent, and apologetic about their practices in view of the difficulties of publishing such research even when their findings and theories contributed and became important in the field of psychology as a whole, and even after Allport recommended including and expanding qualitative methods in the disciplinary toolbox and featuring them in works on research methodology.

One perhaps sole exception to this failure between 1940 and the late 1960s to assertively articulate the scientific value of qualitative methods was the innovative work of the much-esteemed psychologist John Flanagan (1954). To our knowledge, Flanagan's (1954) Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was the first qualitative research method formulated by means of specific procedures concerning research purpose, design, data collection, analysis, and report that was published for general use in a peer reviewed psychology journal. The CIT had significant impact, especially in applied areas, even though it has surprisingly remained ignored by quantitative and qualitative methodologists alike and therefore has received little if any coverage in texts on research methodology.

Flanagan, who studied quantitative methods with Thorndike and Kelley and was concerned throughout his distinguished career with the comprehensive establishment of validity, became President of the American Psychological Association's Division 5—Measurement, Evaluation and Statistics in 1958. The CIT, both a qualita-



tive method par excellence and a basis for measurement, grew out of the Aviation Psychology Program of the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) in World War II. Flanagan's task in the USAAF was to develop procedures for the selection and classification of aircrews. He brought together more than 150 psychologists and 1,400 research assistants in the largest psychological study of any kind undertaken to date. Five psychologists who worked under Flanagan later became presidents of the American Psychological Association (APA; Clemends, Crawford, & McKeachie, 1996). Flanagan initially studied failure in learning to fly by collecting reports of 1,000 pilot candidates who were eliminated from flight training schools in 1941. However, results were limited because instructors had provided only brief, stereotyped, and clichéd reasons for their failure—empty phrases like “insufficient progress,” “unsuitable temperament,” or “poor judgment” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 328). Flanagan overcame this problem by soliciting and inductively analyzing over 1,000 instructors' observations of “critical incidents” in which trainees were successful and unsuccessful in learning to fly. Descriptions of critical incidents were later collected and analyzed to research failure in bombing missions in 1943–1944 and to research combat leadership in 1944. In the latter study, several thousand soldiers described incidents in which an officer's action was “especially helpful” or “inadequate” in accomplishing a mission. Flanagan and his team employed their analytic procedures to establish objective and factual knowledge of effective combat leadership, the “critical requirements for leadership.” This new method, which was far superior to brief questionnaires, involved systematically collecting contextually sensitive reports of effective and ineffective behaviors.

Flanagan originally spelled out the procedures of the CIT in a military document in 1946 and then in his seminal 1954 publication, where he sketched the steps of a CIT study: (a) formulating aim of research; (b) designing the study and participant instructions; (c) data collection; (d) analysis—summary and description; and (e) interpretation and reporting. The CIT is a very flexible set of principles that can be modified for various research problems and situations. Its most distinctive feature is the collection and inductive analysis of detailed descriptions of concrete situations in which

humans acted effectively and ineffectively. Observers give descriptions from observations and/or memory. These descriptions can be obtained from individuals or groups and can be spoken, written, or given in an interview with the researcher. Data analysis involves the inductive identification of general elements of various incidents. Flanagan discussed the frame of reference, categories, structural organization, naming of meanings, generalization, interpretation, and reporting. Although the CIT can be used in applied psychology, in development of measuring instruments, selection and classification criteria, job descriptions, training, and psychotherapy and counseling, it can be also used in determining general psychological principles of motivation, leadership, attitudes, and personality. In all these areas, the CIT offers qualitative methods in real life situations that bring empirical rigor and a validity that is superior to even experts' suppositions.

In 1946, Flanagan founded the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in connection with the University of Pittsburgh, where he held a professorship. His goal was to contribute to science and to “the fuller development and utilization of mankind's capacities and potential” (Clemends, Crawford, & McKeachie, 1996). All major airlines used the AIR in their selection and training. Flanagan and colleagues applied the CIT to problems in a variety of practice areas, including medical training, business, education, social work, and clinical psychology as well as in researching basic psychological principles of motivation, leadership, attitudes, and personality. The main virtue of this method is the establishment of well-defined psychological knowledge that surpasses opinions, hunches, estimates, and assumptions by methodically utilizing empirical accounts of actual situations. This method yields general, ecologically valid knowledge by means of emergent conceptualization of empirically collected, concrete descriptions of successful and unsuccessful actions in the real world.

One of the most noteworthy and important though not well known applications of the CIT in psychology was in the development of the ethical principles and standards for psychologists. In order to formulate the first ethical principles for psychologists in 1948, approximately 7,500 members of the APA were instructed to describe a situation that they knew first-hand, in

which a psychologist made a decision having ethical implications and to indicate the ethical issues involved. The review of more than 1,000 such incidents submitted by APA members led to drafts of an ethics code submitted to the membership for critique and revision (Adkins, 1952). The critical incident method has been employed in successive revisions and in the completion of the current APA Ethics Code (American Psychological Association Ethics Committee, 2002). Critical incidents continue to be collected on APA's Web site through the present for the continuing development of the code.

The CIT has been used in industrial-organizational psychology and in other applied areas such as education and health care. Despite its potential in valid construct definition and theory construction, the method does not seem to have been utilized in such basic research areas as learning and cognition, which have enjoyed primary status in defining the gold standard of research methods. The CIT does not appear to have found its way into textbooks on research methods or into education and training in psychology, probably due to the longstanding and still pervasive bias that scientific research is quantitative. Qualitative psychologists may have overlooked the CIT because it was not a part of their educational curriculum and was published decades before qualitative methods were being broadly systematized and institutionalized.

### **The Articulation and Assertion of Qualitative Scientific Practices and Methodologies**

In the late 1960s through the 1980s, psychologists who had been trained in quantitative methods, also armed with knowledge of the philosophy of science, began to assert the need for qualitative methods in order to address fundamental disciplinary goals (Gergen, 1973; Giorgi, 1970; Polkinghorne, 1983). These psychologists worked without reference to Allport's monograph and lagged behind sociologists, whose long established qualitative research tradition regained scientific status in the 1967 landmark publication by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, a volume that became a central guide for psychological researchers from

the 1980s to the present (Wertz et al., 2011). Amedeo Giorgi, who developed a readily usable set of qualitative methods and sophisticated methodology, led the American movement of phenomenological psychology at Duquesne University starting in the late 1960s. This method generated hundreds of empirical psychological investigations of the full spectrum of psychological topics. Psychological researchers were also influenced by the development of the analysis of language, which is crucial for qualitative analysis. Discourse analysis was developed in the work of Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996), who offered philosophical and scientific rationales for qualitative research methods in the area of language and new analytic tools for empirical research. Narrative inquiry in psychology was advanced, with specific reference to the epistemological and methodological value for empirical work in scientific psychology by Sarbin (1986), Polkinghorne (1988), Bruner (1986, 1990), and many others. This upsurge of qualitative methodologies, which took place at a time when the history and philosophy of science was also highlighting the limitations of positivism and broadening the understanding of science within phenomenological, critical, poststructuralist, and constructionist frameworks, provided refined justifications for the inclusion of qualitative methods along with an extensive toolbox of strategies to carry out this work in empirical psychological research. Even though these methodological achievements were not welcomed by the establishment of scientific psychology and engendered fierce debates about the comparative value of qualitative and quantitative methods in some quarters while being entirely ignored in others, these works opened the way for increasing utilization and eventually an explosive institutionalization of qualitative methods over the past two decades.

Amedeo Giorgi, who was trained in psychophysics and quantitative research methods, saw the need in psychology for rigorous qualitative methods in the 1960s. He turned to the 20th century, multidisciplinary tradition of phenomenology, a quintessential qualitative approach and research method that was self-consciously developed in the tradition of rigorous Western science. Guided by philosophers Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (who was succeeded by Piaget

in the chair of child psychology at the Sorbonne), Giorgi began employing phenomenological assumptions and integrating qualitative procedures in traditional psychological experiments in order to gain more comprehensive knowledge of the psychology of learning (Giorgi, 1967). Then, on the basis of his general articulation of psychology as a *human science* (Giorgi, 1970), he and his students as well as colleagues also extended and applied phenomenological methods to psychological topics outside the laboratory (Giorgi, 1975). At Duquesne University, Giorgi led the Department of Psychology faculty and doctoral students in innovations and the development and application of phenomenological research methods across previously established and new psychological subject matter, published in the four-volume series of *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology* (Giorgi et al., 1971, 1975, 1979, 1983) and in the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* (A. Giorgi, W. F. Fischer, & R. Von Eckartsberg, Founding Eds.), which Giorgi founded. This journal was the leading venue for qualitative research in the field of psychology. Giorgi spelled out procedures for empirical phenomenological research in all phases of inquiry, and these were employed by diverse researchers worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Giorgi has continued to play a key role in the development and philosophical as well as scientific legitimization of qualitative methods in psychology with his publications on phenomenological methods (Giorgi, 1985, 2009). Additional attempts to formulate phenomenological methods for psychology have since been offered by Clark Moustakas (1994), Max Van Manen (1990), and Jonathan Smith (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), whose Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis has been extensively utilized by British psychologists.

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss's (1967) ground-breaking work, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, played a role in sociology that was similar to Giorgi's in psychology. In this influential text, they addressed and countered the prevailing view that qualitative research was not sufficiently objective, systematic, and generalizable to be considered scientific. At the time, they did not foresee that grounded theory would be adopted by multiple disciplines and professions (Wertz et al., 2011). This work and later publications by both Glaser and Strauss offered powerful rationale for the

logic and scientificity of qualitative research and clearly spelled out strategies and step by step procedures whereby such research could be rigorously practiced for the sake of general theory development and the explanation of social and social psychological processes.<sup>2</sup> Grounded theory has continued to be developed and applied across the full spectrum of social science disciplines and interdisciplinary professions. It has been one of the most commonly used qualitative research methods in psychology through the 1980s to the present (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008; Charmaz, 2000).

During the 1980s, in conjunction with the "linguistic turn" in philosophy and other social science disciplines, numerous psychologists brought increasing sophistication to the methods and methodologies of qualitative inquiry through the development of multiple strands of language analysis. Philosophical contributions were provided by such leading language scholars as Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Austin, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, whose work informed theoretical critiques of traditional psychological concepts such as cognition, self, and emotion in the works of Kenneth Gergen, John Shotter, and Rom Harré. Their assertion of the central place of language in psychological life and in science led to the recognition, justification, innovation, and development of qualitative research meth-

<sup>1</sup> Largely due to the leadership of Giorgi and his Duquesne colleagues, Rennie, Watson, and Montero (2002) found 126 hits for the term "phenomenological" research in psychology journals in the 1970s, whereas they found no hits for "qualitative research," "grounded theory," "discourse analysis," or any other terms currently associated with these methods in psychology journals (and a combined total of nine hits in journals of other social sciences).

<sup>2</sup> Both Glaser and Strauss have had significant connections with psychology. Glaser studied under Paul Lazarsfeld, a statistician who had led an effort in the Institute for Economic Psychology in the 1930s, including the Marienthal study, to integrate methods of "immersion" and "interpretation" with statistical methods in the study of psychological problems. Strauss was a student of Blumer, who conducted the first wave research on the use of personal documents commissioned by the Social Science Research Council and whose work guided Allport's second wave study. Straus, who was influenced at the University of Chicago by the functionalist/pragmatist tradition of John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, is credited in the acknowledgement section of Lawrence Kohlberg's dissertation at the University of Chicago for his invaluable guidance in the analysis of raw interview data.



ods in discourse and language analyses. Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell, who led the development of discourse analysis, were trained in quantitative psychology in the 1970s (Wertz et al., 2011). Potter drew on ideas outside psychology in philosophy, literary theory, and the sociology of science, and Wetherell was influenced by such European scholars as Henri Tajfel, Howard Giles, and John Turner. In the psychology department of St Andrews University in Scotland, where researchers specializing in neuroscience and animal behavior were receptive to detailed descriptive work, Potter and Wetherell drew on Austin's speech act theory, Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, and de Saussure's semiotics in writing their most influential 1987 text, *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behavior*. They developed and supported the analysis of researchers' and participants' conversational discourse and social texts as objects of inquiry in their own right in order to answer questions concerning their construction and function. Like Giorgi and Glaser and Strauss, they offered specific tools and procedures for the generation of empirically based general knowledge about the patterns and variations of language. Their work has contributed to rethinking psychological concepts and providing methods of data collection and analysis in discursive research. Potter has continued to apply these methods, for instance to the study of cognition and social interaction, at Loughborough University, and Wetherell has done so in a dialogue with psychoanalysis and in the psychology of identity with a focus on ethnicity, racism, and gender at the Open University. Others psychologists have carried discourse analytic methods forward developing interdisciplinary relations with sociology, literary theory, anthropology, and philosophy (Wertz et al., 2011).

Narrative methods in psychology have deep and wide historical roots in the research of Freud, Piaget, Allport, Horney, and Erikson. The methods, methodologies, and scientific justifications of contemporary narrative research can be traced to the seminal programmatic work of Jerome Bruner, Theodore Sarbin, and Don Polkinghorne in the 1980s that also took advantage of developments in philosophy, science studies, and other disciplines. Narrative psychologists have drawn on a diverse spectrum of scholarship, including the hermeneutic tradition

of Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Gadamer in philosophy, the philosophical anthropologist Bakhtin, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, and such feminist scholars as Carol Gilligan. Gilligan's unapologetic empirical research in qualitative inquiry, with its emphasis on "voice," has contributed "the listening guide" to the contemporary toolbox of psychological researchers (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982). Life history, an indispensable family of methods with many uses in psychology, has received increasing sophistication by drawing on scholarship from history and literary theory. Jerome Bruner, who trained with Gordon Allport as a research assistant at Harvard in work on the 1942 monograph on personal documents, emphasized language and used narrative thought in his cognitive and educational psychology, articulating "the narrative paradigm" in response to the fragmentation of knowledge that he found increasingly in cognitive psychology (Bruner, 1986, 1990). Theodore Sarbin, in the 1986 *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*, argued that psychology would be better served by the underlying metaphor of "the story" than the prevailing one of "the machine," and he offered a series of essays in which psychologists developed techniques for researching the ways people narrate their lives. Don Polkinghorne followed his comprehensive study of the research methodological systems of the human sciences (Polkinghorne, 1983), which articulated the historical and philosophical ground of both quantitative and qualitative research, with his 1988 *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*, in which he drew on the work of phenomenological philosopher Paul Ricoeur to explicate the everyday practice, theory, and multiple scientific applications of narrative rationality, which understands the meaning of the whole. He offered not only tools for qualitative researchers but systematization of the relationship between qualitative and quantitative data and criteria for judging the quality of narrative research.

It is not entirely clear why these events came together in the 1970s and 1980s. Scholarly developments in the history and philosophy of science (e.g., Kuhn's 1962 influential work), themselves part of a larger changing Zeitgeist that had grown increasingly critical of scientism and receptive to pluralism, appear to have played a significant role. The "cognitive revo-

lution” had loosened the grip of behaviorism on psychology and had reintroduced verbal data. Perhaps even more important were the sociopolitical movements of the 1960s with their questioning and criticisms of received views and power structures along with their democratizing support of marginalized social groups within an emerging other-centered ethic (Wertz, 2011).

### **The Recent Institutionalization of Qualitative Inquiry**

The work of these systematizers of qualitative methods and methodologies implicitly answered Allport’s call for critical scientific accountability regarding qualitative research methods with the support of contemporary philosophy of science. Such pluralistic, often interdisciplinary work in psychology continued to develop, along with the bold experimentation in practice also called for by Allport, in the last decade of the 20th century and into the new century. To cite a few of many examples of methodological works that have built on and integrated the advances of the previous two decades, there were sophisticated developments in case study methods (Fishman, 1999), new methods to research such specific topics as human spirituality (Anderson, 2004), and the emergence of new research methods outside of Western culture in the growing field of “indigenous psychologies” (Allwood & Berry, 2006). This period has included an unforeseen spread, institutionalization and explosion of diversity that has been characterized as nothing short of a force (Ponterotto, 2002), a tectonic change (O’Neill, 2002), and a revolution (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) in psychology that continues today.

Publications, journals, conferences, professional organizations, textbooks, courses and educational opportunities, computer software programs for data management and analysis, guidelines for best practices, awards, and employment opportunities have multiplied and affected virtually all the subfields of psychology (Wertz et al., 2011). Like the ground-breaking methodological systematizations of the previous decades, as a response to the inhospitality of the psychological establishment, this institutionalization took place apart from mainstream American psychology. There was more receptivity to the establishment of qualitative psy-

chology in Europe, where psychologists were more familiar with the advances in philosophy that supported the newly systematized methodologies.

The Qualitative Methods in Psychology has become the largest section of the British Psychological Society (BPS) with over 1,000 members. APA Books published *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design*, edited by Camic, Rhodes, and Yardley in 2003. This text, visible and available to psychologists in all areas, contained chapters by and about many of the systematizers reviewed above. The integration of qualitative inquiry with the other methodological traditions of psychology has culminated in the last 2 years with the formation of a section on qualitative inquiry in APA’s Division 5 and the publication of the new APA journal, *Qualitative Psychology*. An historical account of these recent events in American psychology recently appeared in the BPS publication, *The Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section Bulletin* (Gergen, 2013).

One of the distinctive characteristics of the current phase of qualitative inquiry in psychology is that the debates pitting qualitative and quantitative methods against each other that took place during the systematization of the 1970s and 1980s is largely over. Psychologists have turned instead to the many affordances, virtues and strategies of integration in so-called “mixed methods” research designs (Creswell, Klassen, Piano Clark, & Clegg Smith, 2011).

Among the exciting and also challenging developments in qualitative inquiry over the last two decades is the creation and diversification of new modes of inquiry, which have drawn heavily on developments in other disciplines and forms of practice ranging from the literary and performing arts to liberation politics (Wertz, 2011). This explosion of methodological creativity and pluralism refuses the hegemony of any gold standard research method and of the methodological hierarchy that has reigned in psychology for almost 100 years. Quantitative methods are employed together with approaches featuring interviews, participant observation, visual media, interpretation, introspection, personal and cultural artifacts, archives, focus groups, and conversation. Multiple traditions of neo-positivism, neo-pragmatism, ethnography, case study, phenomenology,

grounded theory, biography, history, participatory, collaborative, action, clinical, performance, standpoint, prophetic, postmodern, and indigenous research are continuing to develop into new forms of inquiry. Traditional epistemic and social positions and practices of researchers are being questioned and transformed. Research participants are sometimes invited to collaborate on all phases of research and are even given the status of “coresearcher” in some cases, determining the research topic, the questions asked, research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Self-disclosure, consciousness-raising, and transformation of both the researched and researcher may be included in the research process in what sometimes amounts to a breakdown of the boundary between research (knowledge production) and practice (political action). This emerging pluralism, which not only carries forward but also interrupts established traditions of science, is both creative and subversive, for instance in crossing, violating, and breaking down disciplinary boundaries to the point where psychology bypasses its usual borders into politics, professions from health to journalism, humanities, and the arts (see Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2000, 2005, 2011).

### Conclusion

Although qualitative inquiry has been a part of psychology since its beginnings as an independent scientific discipline, the history of these research practices was not included in the educational curricula of psychology as it developed through the 20th century. Although such founding disciplinary pioneers as Wundt, Freud, and James used these methods and assumed their scientific value, they were not integrated in the scientific establishment, nor did they shape it. As psychology approached midcentury, largely dominated by the positivistic philosophy of behaviorism, the privileging of hypothetico-deductive science led to a loss of confidence and assertive development of these methods, although they continued to be practiced and to yield significant psychological knowledge. Within the larger arena of the social sciences, Gordon Allport rose up with visionary clarity and asserted the central value of these methods before midcentury, but with no immediate consequence. Flanagan’s publication of the Critical Incident Technique was an exception that

proved the rule in that it offered a principled, methodical, and scientifically compelling qualitative method that was put to extensive use without any discernible impact on the discipline’s research methodology. Only in the 1970s, on the basis of radical and critical philosophical reflections on science and the social liberation movements that deconstructed established political powers and epistemic assumptions in order to make room for diversity, various independent strands of qualitative methodology emerged and became available to new generations of psychologists who collectively constituted the qualitative movement. As this movement has become an increasingly institutionalized part of psychology, it has become even bolder and more creative on the one hand, disrupting and subverting long-established traditions of psychological science, and on the other hand, its position has become less polemic and more integrated with the field, as evident in the increasing interest in “mixed methods” and the joining together of qualitative and quantitative psychologists in mutually supportive and joint collaborative relations. This dynamic tension characterizes the present moment of qualitative inquiry in psychology. The examination of qualitative practices in the history of psychology, especially those of expansive investigators whose creative innovations achieved significant findings, promises to contribute to the dawning pluralism and integration of research methods in psychology.

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