A Participatory Inquiry Paradigm

John Heron
International Centre for Co-operative Inquiry, Italy

Peter Reason
University of Bath

This article starts with a critique of Guba and Lincoln's outline of competing paradigms for research, in particular arguing that the constructivist position fails to account for experiential knowing. The arguments for a participatory worldview are articulated based on a subjective-objective ontology; an extended epistemology of experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical ways of knowing; a methodology based on cooperative relations between coresearchers; and an axiology that affirms the primary value of practical knowing in the service of human flourishing.

INTRODUCTION

The notion of a paradigm or worldview as an overarching framework that organizes our whole approach to being in the world has become commonplace since Kuhn published *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. In contrast to the view that a paradigm is, by its very nature, beyond definition and the grasp of the human mind, we believe that the mind, by its very nature, is more extensive than any worldview on which it takes its current cognitive stance. Hence, it is possible and essential to expand our awareness to articulate any fundamental way in which we frame our world, for differences of epistemology, methodology, and political perspective are usually based on paradigmatic assumptions. Although paradigms can be sketched out in simple cognitive terms, their nature is far richer. As Ogilvy (1986) pointed out, they are about "models, myths, moods and metaphors" (p. 48).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) made a very useful contribution to articulating and differentiating competing paradigms of inquiry. They identified and

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described positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism as the major paradigms that frame research. In this article, we argue that the constructivist paradigm, as they articulate it, is unclear about the relationship between constructed realities and the original givenness of the cosmos, and that a worldview based on participation and participative realities is more helpful and satisfying. We start from and extend the Guba and Lincoln framework to articulate a participatory paradigm.

We argue that a fundamental quality of the participative worldview, which it shares with Guba and Lincoln's constructivism, is that it is self-reflexive. The participative mind—which Heron (1996) also termed the postconceptual mind—articulates reality within a paradigm, articulates the paradigm itself, and can in principle reach out to the wider context of that paradigm to reframe it. A basic problem of positivist mind is that it cannot acknowledge the framing paradigm it has created. It confuses the given cosmos with the worldview it has generated to shape the given. It cannot see that the ground, on which it stands to frame its world, is its own creation. It thus tends toward immodesty, intolerance, and the oppression of scientism. The most extreme rejection of positivism is that form of postmortem poststructuralism, derived from the deconstruction of Derrida (1976, 1981), which holds that there are no transcendental grounds for truth outside the text. Its basic problem is that it dismisses any ground as valid simply because there is another ground or context beyond it. It confuses relative truth with nihilistic skepticism; it thinks that because no ground is final, no ground has any claim to truth. It thus tends toward a restless anarchy of raw, purposeless power.

The case for a participative worldview has underpinned our work on cooperative inquiry and other participative forms of action research over the past 20 years and more. We have articulated this perspective as an epistemological and political principle more recently (Heron, 1996; Reason & Heron, 1995). In parallel with this, other writers have developed arguments that include a participative perspective (Berman, 1981; Tarnas, 1991; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993), whereas Skolimowski (1994) developed the perspective he terms the participatory mind. A particularly elegant elucidation of participatory perception and language and its implications for ecological thinking can be found in Abram (1996).

Although our articulation in this article of a participatory worldview is necessarily expressed in propositional language, we wish to at least point toward the sense of resolution and meaning, of joy and beauty, the image of participation brings to us personally. The image shows us how to move away from the mechanical abstraction of the Cartesian worldview, and from the relativism that appears first as its counterpoint, to an experience of participatory reality. The participatory worldview allows us as human persons to know that we are part of the whole rather than separated as mind over and against matter, or placed here in the relatively separate creation of a transcendent god. It allows us to join with fellow humans in collaborative forms of

inquiry. It places us back in relation with the living world—and we note that to be *in relation* means that we live with the rest of creation as *relatives*, with all the rights and obligations that implies (Storm, 1972, 1994).

Our warrant, therefore, for the choice and assertion of a participatory worldview is fundamentally experiential. Our work with cooperative inquiry, in mindfulness practices and ceremony, and our attempts at aware everyday living all convince us that experiential encounter with the presence of the world is the ground of our being and knowing. This encounter is prior to language and art—although it can be symbolized in language and art. Our experience is that our meeting with the elemental properties of the living world, or the I-thou encounter with a living tree or person, *cannot* be confused with our symbolic constructs. In terms we use later in the article, while propositional and presentational knowledge are grounded on and symbolize experiential knowledge, experiential knowledge cannot be reduced to either of them. This, we argue, is not a dissociated metaphysical statement; rather, it is an expression of a radical empiricism that can be tested through experiential inquiry, and we invite others, both skeptical and sympathetic, to inquire with us as to the validity of our perspective.

This form of radical empiricism is not to be confused with behaviorism, which has never been empirical enough, because it preconceives and delimits experience in terms of its positivist paradigm. On the contrary, our empiricism is the radical sort long since commended by phenomenologists; a pristine acquaintance with phenomena unadulterated by preconceptions (Spiegelberg, 1960). It is unrestricted experience of the "lived-through world," which Merleau-Ponty insisted is misrepresented and distorted by the limiting canons of the "objective thought" of positivist science and "dogmatic common sense" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991). We think it important to reclaim the notion of empiricism from positivist abuse and restore it to more fruitful use in terms of this kind of liberated experience (Heron, 1996). The empirical is based on experience, and it ceases to be empirical when experience is constrained by a restricting definition.

THE NATURE OF INQUIRY PARADIGMS

Guba and Lincoln argued that inquiry paradigms may be viewed as sets of basic beliefs about the nature of reality and how it may be known; and that these beliefs are thrown into relief by three fundamental and interrelated questions. There is the ontological question, "What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there than can be known about it?"; the epistemological question, "What is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known"; and the methodological question, "How can the inquirer . . . go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known about?"

Guba and Lincoln began by identifying the responses proponents of the four different paradigms would make to the three questions identified above. These response are given in Figure 1, the first five columns of which are taken directly from Guba and Lincoln. The final Participatory column is our addition. We also added a fourth row, Axiology, which is omitted from the Guba and Lincoln account, and which we think is an essential defining characteristic of an inquiry paradigm, alongside ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The axiological question asks what is intrinsically valuable in human life, in particular what sort of knowledge, if any, is intrinsically valuable. This is discussed in a later section.

We will not go into the details of Guba and Lincoln's analysis; rather, we will concentrate on identifying our problems with the constructivist worldview that they espouse and articulating a participative worldview.

We understand from Guba and Lincoln (1989) that the real is a mental construct of individuals, and such constructs "do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them" (p. 143). Thus, there can be many such constructed realities; and they may be conflicting and incompatible. Constructions are not more or less "true"; rather, they are more or less sophisticated and informed. As Heron (1996) argued:

> There is an immediate difficulty with the idea that reality is a construction within an individual mind. It raises the problem of solipsism, which is an ironic problem for a science of the Other. For if reality is nothing but an internal mental construct, no warrant can be given for supposing that the other people being studied actually exist, let alone for supposing that the researcher's view of them adequately represents their own view of their situation. However, Guba and Lincoln are ambiguous in their account of constructivism. They also say that the mental constructions are related to "tangible entities", which would thus appear to have some reality independent of the constructions (Schwandt, 1994: 134). So their explicit idealist stance seems to rest on an implicit realism, and leaves the paradigm in a state of wobble. (p. 10)

Constructivist views tend to be deficient in any acknowledgment of experiential knowing; that is, knowing by acquaintance, by meeting, and by felt participation in the presence of what is there. Von Glasersfeld thought we cannot in any way know a "real" world, and cannot even imagine it, because we cannot conceive of anything existing without the notions of space and time, which are our own constructs (von Glasersfeld, 1991, p. 17). This is the Kantian view that space and time are a priori forms that the mind imposes on reality, nothing to do with reality itself. But Kant only laid hold of the mind as making the world through conceptual constructs. He did not grasp that the mind is also meeting given reality through participating in its being, and that the mind makes its world by meeting the given. Thus, we take the view that the mind's conceptual articulation of the world is grounded in its experiential participation in what is present, in what there is. This statement is open to misunderstanding without further elaboration.

The constructivist and participatory paradigms are in agreement that it is not possible in linguistic, conceptual terms to give any final or absolute account of what there is.

Propositional knowing can only give mediated—subjective and intersubjective—relativistic accounts. The participatory paradigm goes further and asserts that we cannot have any final or absolute experiential knowing of what there is; in the relation of knowing by acquaintance, the experiential knower shapes perceptually what is there. And this is still so when the perceiving mind is relatively free of conceptual labels imposed on its imaging of reality.

However, the point about experiential knowing is that the very process of perceiving is also a meeting, a transaction, with what there is. When I hold your hand, my tactual imaging both subjectively shapes you and objectively meets you. To encounter being or a being is both to image it in my way and to know that it is there. To experience anything is to participate in it, and to participate is both to mold and to encounter; hence, experiential reality is always subjective-objective. There is an analog here with Rahner's modern theology of revelation, in which he spoke paradoxically of "mediated-immediacy": we experience divine presence always in mediated form (Dulles, 1992).

Experiential knowing is subjective-objective and so relative to the knower. It is also relative to the given cosmos, but with greater immediacy, lesser mediation, than propositional knowing. Experiential knowing is thus a ground, albeit not an absolute ground, for the symbolic frameworks of conceptual, propositional knowing. Constructivists Guba and Lincoln acknowledge, as the citation above states, that conceptual constructs are related to "tangible entities" and thus appear to accept tangible or experiential knowing. They do not, however, articulate the nature of experiential knowing and do not regard it as providing any kind of warrant for the valid use of conceptual constructs; hence our statement earlier that constructivist views tend to be deficient in any acknowledgment of it.

Thus, Gergen (1986) reduced reality to an intersubjective social construction generated by collective language use and other social practices. Such social constructions have no independently identifiable real-world referents (p. 143). Both von Glasersfeld and Gergen are so busy rejecting the idea of an independent, objective world as the absolute ground of conceptual knowledge claims that they overlook the idea of an experiential subjective-objective world as the relative ground of such claims.

THE PARTICIPATORY WORLDVIEW

It is this idea of subjective-objective reality that launches our response to Guba and Lincoln's three questions from the perspective of the participative worldview.

Ontology: Subjective-Objective

There is a given cosmos, a primordial reality, in which the mind actively participates. Mind and the given cosmos are engaged in a cocreative dance, so that what emerges as reality is the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way mind engages with it. Mind actively participates in the cosmos, and it is through this active participation that we meet what is Other: "Worlds and people are what we meet, but the meeting is shaped by our own terms of reference" (Heron, 1996, p. 11). The skeptic may ask how we can know we meet anything or anyone if the meeting is always given our own shape. The answer is that when we open ourselves to meeting the given we are arrested by the presence of Other; or to put it another way, the Other declares itself to us so that we resonate with its presence in the world.

Abram (1996) made a similar point and showed that it not only includes Husserl's point that the field of appearances is "seen to be inhabited by *multiple* subjectivities . . . by other experiencing subjects as well as by oneself" (p. 37; emphasis in original); it also embraces the view of Merleau-Ponty (1962), who took Husserl's argument a stage further, showing how perception itself is participatory so that

> in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon's light, It is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomena and communicating with it. Hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, moonlight and sunlight, present themselves in our recollection not pre-eminently as sensory contents but as certain kinds of symbioses, certain ways the outside has of invading us and certain ways we have of meeting the invasion. (p. 317)

According to Abram (1996), this means that there is "underneath our literate abstractions, a deeply participatory relation to things and to the earth, a felt reciprocity" (p. 124).

This encounter is transactional, interactive; to touch, see, or hear something or someone does not tell us either about our self all on its own or about a being out there all on its own. It tells us about a being in a state of interrelation and copresence with us. Our subjectivity feels the participation of what is there and is illuminated by it. Knowing a world is in this felt relation at the interactive interface between a subject and what is encountered. In the relation of meeting, my subjectivity becomes a perspectival window filled with a world that also transcends it. This ontology is thus subjective-objective:

> It is subjective because it is only known through the form the mind gives it; and it is objective because the mind interpenetrates the given cosmos which it shapes. (Heron, 1996, p. 11)

Or, as Skolimowski (1994) put it,

> Things become what our consciousness makes of them through the active participation of our mind. (pp. 27-28)
> The cosmos or the universe is a primordial ontological datum, while the "world" is an epistemological construct, a form of our understanding. (p. 100)

Bateson made the point that between the extremes of solipsism, in which "I make it all up," and a purely external reality, in which I cease to exist, there is

> a region where you are partly blown by the winds of reality and partly an artist creating a composite out of inner and outer events. (cited in Brockman, 1977, p. 245)

From all this it follows that what can be known about the given cosmos is that it is always known as a subjectively articulated world, whose objectivity is relative to how it is shaped by the knower. But this is not all; its objectivity is also relative to how it is intersubjectively shaped. For there is the important if obvious point that knowers can only be knowers when known by other knowers. Knowing presupposes mutual participative awareness. It presupposes participation, through meeting and dialogue, in a culture of shared art and shared language, shared values, norms, and beliefs. And, deeper still, agreement about the rules of language, about how to use it, presupposes a tacit mutual experiential knowing and understanding between people that is the primary ground of all explicit forms of knowing. So any subjective-objective reality articulated by any one person is done so within an intersubjective field, a context of both linguistic-cultural and experiential shared meanings.

Epistemology: Critical Subjectivity and Four Ways of Knowing

A participative worldview, with its notion of reality as subjective-objective, involves an extended epistemology. A knower participates in the known, articulates a world, in at least four interdependent ways: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical. These four forms of knowing constitute the manifold of our subjectivity, within which, it seems, we have enormous latitude both in acknowledging its components and in using them in association with, or dissociation from, each other. This epistemology presents us as knowers with an interesting developmental challenge. We call this challenge critical subjectivity. It involves an awareness of the four ways of knowing, of how they are currently interacting, and of ways of changing the relations between them so that they articulate a reality that is unclouded by a restrictive and ill-disciplined subjectivity.

Experiential knowing means direct encounter, face-to-face meeting: feeling and imaging the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process,

or thing. It is knowing through participative, empathic resonance with a being, so that as knower I feel both attuned with it and distinct from it. It is also the creative shaping of a world through the transaction of imaging it, perceptually and in other ways. Experiential knowing thus articulates reality through inner resonance with what there is and through perceptually enacting (Varela et al., 1993) its forms of appearing.

Presentational knowing emerges from and is grounded in experiential knowing. It is evident in an intuitive grasp of the significance of our resonance with and imaging of our world as this grasp is symbolized in graphic, plastic, musical, vocal, and verbal art forms. It clothes our experiential knowing of the world in the metaphors of aesthetic creation, in expressive spatiotemporal forms of imagery. These forms symbolize both our felt attunement with the world and the primary meaning embedded in our enactment of its appearing.

Propositional knowing is knowing in conceptual terms that something is the case; knowledge by description of some energy, entity, person, place, process, or thing. It is expressed in statements and theories that come with the mastery of concepts and classes that language bestows. Propositions themselves are carried by presentational forms—the sounds or visual shapes of the spoken or written word—and are ultimately grounded in our experiential articulation of a world.

Practical knowing is knowing how to do something, demonstrated in a skill or competence. We would argue that practical knowledge is in an important sense primary (Heron, 1996). It presupposes a conceptual grasp of principles and standards of practice, presentational elegance, and experiential grounding in the situation within which the action occurs. It fulfills the three prior forms of knowing, brings them to fruition in purposive deeds, and consummates them with its autonomous celebration of excellent accomplishment.

As Macmurray (1957) pointed out, although you can divorce thought from action, you cannot divorce action in the world from thought. And we believe that what we learn about our world will be richer and deeper if this descriptive knowledge is incidental to a primary intention to develop practical skills to change the world. This is the action paradox:

> We learn more profoundly about our worlds when we are more interested in enhancing them with excellence of action than in learning about them. (Heron, 1996, p. 114)

Torbert (1991, p. 221) underlined the preeminence of practical knowing with his view that what we need is an action inquiry useful to the actor and the point of action rather than a reflective science about action. His account of action inquiry is that a person is conscious in the midst of action, seeing and correcting, on-line, incongruities among the goal of the action and wider purposes within which it is nested, the strategic means, the immediate

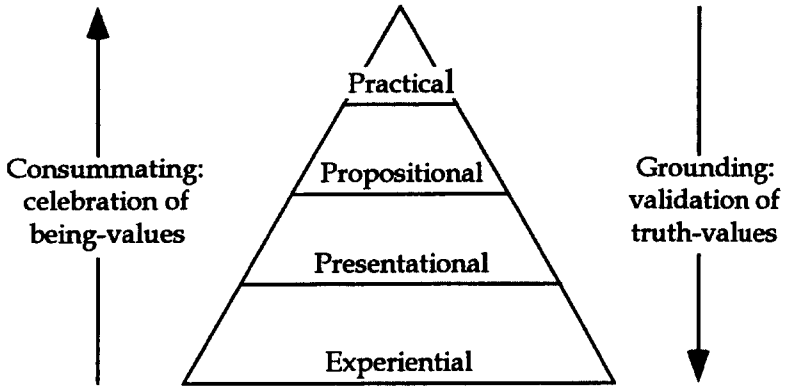

Figure 1

behavior, and outcomes in the world. This, he holds, is a holistic and inclusive inquiry paradigm.

It is equally important that action not only consummates the prior forms of knowing but is grounded in them. It is in this congruence of the four aspects of the extended epistemology that lie claims to validity (this relationship is shown in Figure 1).

Critical subjectivity means that we attend both to the grounding relations between the forms of knowing and to their consummating relations. Thus, it is a close relative of Torbert's (1991) "consciousness in the midst of action" (p. 221). Critical subjectivity is a state of consciousness different from either the naive subjectivity of "primary process" awareness or the attempted objectivity of egoic "secondary process" awareness. It means that we do not suppress our primary subjective experience but accept that it is our experiential articulation of being in a world, and as such is the ground of all our knowing. At the same time, we accept that, naively exercised, it is open to all the distortions of those defensive processes by which people collude to limit their understanding. So we attend to it with a critical consciousness, seeking to bring it into aware relation with the other three ways of knowing so that they clarify and refine and elevate it at the same time as being more adequately grounded in it.

In addition, because we accept that our knowing is from a perspective and that we are aware of that perspective—of its authentic value and of its restricting bias—we articulate this awareness in our communications. Critical subjectivity involves a self-reflexive attention to the ground on which one is standing. This is echoed in what Torbert (1987) called "a refraining mind" that "continually overcomes itself, divesting itself of its own presuppositions"

(p. 211). It is related to what Bateson (1972) described as Learning III, in which the mind can choose its premises of understanding and action, can detach itself from all frameworks to peer into and reflect on their presuppositions. It is Kegan's (1994) transparadigmatic fourth-order consciousness and Gebser's (1985) integral-aperspectival mind which grasps that no perspective is final, is transparent to the context of its own operation, is open to the context of that context, and so on. It also relates to those moderate postmortem poststructuralists who do not deny truth and meaning as such, but hold that all truth and meaning are relative to a context, and that context is boundless, infinitely extendable (Culler, 1982).

The constructivism of Guba and Lincoln (1989) holds that standards for determining what is relatively true reside in community consensus. What the participatory paradigm adds to this is the view that any conceptual context is itself set within a wider and deeper experiential context. Propositional truth is not only relative to the linguistic and conceptual context of the community in which it is uttered. It is also relative to the substrate of shared experiential primary meaning, which is the contextual ground for the use of language and conceptual exchange within the community (Heron, 1996).

Thus, critical subjectivity extends to critical intersubjectivity. Because our personal knowing is always set within a context of both linguist-cultural and experiential shared meaning, having a critical consciousness about our knowing necessarily includes shared experience, dialogue, feedback, and exchange with others, and this leads us to the methodology of cooperative inquiry.

Methodology: Collaborative Forms of Action Inquiry

Inquiry methodology within a participative worldview needs to be one that draws on this extended epistemology in such a way that critical subjectivity is enhanced by critical intersubjectivity; hence, a collaborative form of inquiry, in which all involved engage together in democratic dialogue as coresearchers and as cosubjects (Heron, 1996; Reason & Heron, 1995). In our articulation of this, which we call cooperative inquiry, people collaborate to define the questions they wish to explore and the methodology for that exploration (propositional knowing). Together or separately they apply this methodology in the world of their practice (practical knowing), which leads to new forms of encounter with their world (experiential knowing); and they find ways to represent this experience in significant patterns (presentational knowing), which feeds into a revised propositional understanding of the originating questions. Thus, coresearchers engage together in cycling several times through the four forms of knowing to enrich their congruence; that is, to refine the way they elevate and consummate each other, and to deepen the complementary way they are grounded in each other.

Research cycling is itself a fundamental discipline that leads toward critical subjectivity and a primary way of enhancing the validity of inquirers' claims to articulate a subjective-objective reality. There is also a range of further procedures that develop this effect. These include managing divergence and convergence within and between cycles, balancing reflection and action, challenging uncritical subjectivity and intersubjectivity, managing unaware projections and displaced anxiety, attending to the dynamic interplay of chaos and order, and securing authentic collaboration (for a full discussion of these, together with a set of radical skills of being and doing required during the action phases of the inquiry, see Heron, 1996).

Although cooperative inquiry has formed the basis of our theorizing and practice, we see it as closely related to other forms of participative inquiry such as action science (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Schon, 1983), action inquiry (Torbert, 1991), participatory action research (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991), some forms of feminist inquiry (Mies, 1993; Olesen, 1994), emancipatory action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1987), fourth-generation evaluation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), intervention research (Fryer & Feather, 1994), action research as democratic dialogue (Toulmin & Gustavsen) 1996), and others. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991) reported that some 35 varieties of participative action inquiry have been identified worldwide.

Cooperative inquiry rests on two participatory principles: epistemic participation and political participation. The first means that any propositional knowledge that is the outcome of the research is grounded by the researchers in their own experiential knowledge. The second means that research subjects have a basic human right to participate fully in designing the research that intends to gather knowledge about them. It follows from the first principle that the researchers are also the subjects; and from the second principle that the subjects are also the researchers. The coresearchers are also the cosubjects. The research is done by people with each other, not by researchers on other people or about them.

In mainline qualitative research, done within the aegis of constructivism, neither of these two principles applies. Such research, using multiple methodologies, is about other people studied in their own social setting and understood in terms of the meanings those people themselves bring to their situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). The researchers are not also subjects. They ground their propositional findings not on their own experiential knowing but on that of other people, the researched subjects, as reflected in the subjects' dialogue with the researchers. The researchers' own experiential knowing as occasional participant observers within the subjects' culture tend to be secondary and subordinate. Moreover, this kind of analysis is not one constructivist researchers would use, since constructivism does not have any identified epistemological role in its inquiry paradigm for experiential knowing. The principle of epistemic participation is not acknowledged.

Nor does the principle of political participation apply. Mainline qualitative research has not grasped the right of informants to participate in formulating the research design, so that they can manifest fully their values in the way knowledge about them is generated. The great majority of its projects are still unilaterally shaped by the researchers, however emergent that shape may be, however much informed consent is sought, and however much the researchers may be concerned to check their findings with informants' views. Recent texts for graduate students on qualitative research design, which claim constructivist lineage, make no provision of any kind for the inclusion of subjects or informants in design decisions; nor is the issue of such participation anywhere discussed (Creswell, 1994; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

It is important, however, to acknowledge that within the whole field of qualitative research, there are methodologies that involve subjects in design issues, and several of these have been mentioned above. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) have drawn our attention to the crisis of legitimation in qualitative research, which asks by what right researchers claim to speak for the people they have studied. Lincoln (1997) took this question further, asking "How do we go about sharing authority for a text with the people who have the authority to tell us about their lives and to make those lives make sense to us?" Once we acknowledge the need to collaborate, how do we negotiate how the findings will be used?

> If I'm going to collaborate with people and I'm really going to live up to that commitment, I can't just write a report all by myself. If we generate a report together, we decide together how it's going to be used. (Lincoln, 1997, p. 9)

It is also important, in discussing this overlap between cooperative inquiry and other forms of participative research, to distinguish between the democratization of content, which involves all informants in decisions about what the research is seeking to find out and achieve; and the democratization of method, which involves participants in decisions about what operational methods are being used, including those being used to democratize the content. The overlap is usually restricted to democratization of research content. It is rare to find any full-blown commitment to collaboration about research method, although Guba and Lincoln strongly commend it (see below). In practice, it may be reduced to no more than seeking fully informed consent of all informants to the researcher's preexistent or emerging operational plan, and to modifying the plan to obtain such consent.

Qualitative research *about* people is a halfway house between exclusive, controlling, quantitative, positivist research *on* people and fully participatory, cooperative research *with* people. The more it involves subjects in the full range of issues involved in research decision making, not only about content issues but also about operational methods, and the more fully researchers participate in the cultures they are studying, the more it shifts in the direction

of cooperative inquiry. Guba and Lincoln (1989), in their account of fourth-generation evaluation, pointed the way toward this shift, so far as political participation is concerned:

> Fourth generation evaluation mandates that the evaluator move from the role of controller to that of collaborator. The evaluator must share control, however much that appears to threaten the "technical adequacy" of the evaluation. That is, the evaluator must solicit and honour stakeholder inputs not only about the *substance* of constructions but also with respect to the *methodology* of the evaluation itself. (p. 260)

Finally, qualitative research is a *social* science about other people in their own social setting, whereas cooperative inquiry is a wide-ranging science about any aspect of the human condition that a group of coresearchers choose to explore through the instrumentality of their own experience. It certainly includes important social topics, such as revisioning social roles, professional practice, and organizational life. It also includes innumerable others, such as art as a mode of knowledge, intentional self-healing, participative knowledge of organic and inorganic forms, altered states of consciousness, and many more.

Axiology: What Is Intrinsically Worthwhile

Guba and Lincoln define the basic anatomy of an inquiry paradigm in terms of three fundamental kinds of questions: the ontological question about the nature reality, the epistemological question about the nature of knowing, and the methodological question about how to know and what sorts of injunctions to follow. The question of value is not included as part of the definition of an inquiry paradigm; it is considered to be only one of a range of selected practical issues on which each of their four inquiry paradigms will have a position. We think this is a serious omission, and gives a superficial account of the relation of values to an inquiry paradigm.

We take the view that there is a fourth fundamental question that is also necessary to fully define an inquiry paradigm: the axiological question about what is intrinsically worthwhile, what it is about the human condition that is valuable as an end in itself. The first three questions—the ontological, the epistemological, and the methodological—are all about matters to do with truth. What is really, truly, there? What is the nature of truthful knowledge of it? By what method can the truth be reached? The fourth and axiological question is about values of being, about what human states are to be valued simply by virtue of what they are. This is a necessary complement to balance and make whole the concern with truth exhibited by the first three questions. And the first value question to be raised is about the valuing of knowledge itself.

An essential feature of any inquiry paradigm is whether it regards knowing the truth in propositional form as an end in itself, and as the only end in itself. This was the position of Aristotle for whom intellectual excellence was the highest end of man (but not woman). If knowing propositional truths is the one and only intrinsically worthwhile state of affairs, then ultimately this legitimates all kinds of mayhem on the way to acquiring it. Hence the view of Bacon that nature must be tortured to wrest her secrets from her. Hence the modern propensity to educate the intellect in damaging dissociation from feeling, imagination, and action. Because universities are the home of inquiry paradigms and because they are largely Aristotelian institutions in their commitment to intellectual excellence, we need to know, as a defining feature of it, where each paradigm stands on this fundamental issue.

The participatory paradigm answers the axiological question in terms of human flourishing, conceived as an end in itself, where such flourishing is construed as an enabling balance within and between people of hierarchy, cooperation, and autonomy. In our view, social practices and institutions need to enhance human association by an appropriate integration of these three principles: deciding for others, with others, and for oneself (Heron, 1989, 1993). Hierarchy provides appropriate direction by those with greater vision, skill, and experience (Torbert, 1991); it is authentic when it seeks the developmental emergence of autonomy and cooperation. Collaboration roots the individual within a community of peers, offering basic support and the creative and corrective feedback of other views and possibilities (Randall & Southgate, 1980). Autonomy expresses the creative, self-creating, and self-transfiguring potential of the person (Heron, 1992).

The shadow face of authority is authoritarianism; that of collaboration, peer pressure, and conformity; that of autonomy narcissism, willfulness, and isolation. The challenge is to design institutions that manifest valid forms of these principles, and to finds ways in which they can be maintained in self-correcting and creative tension.

This kind of flourishing is practical knowing: knowing how to choose and act—hierarchically, cooperatively, autonomously—to enhance personal and social fulfillment and that of the eco-networks of which we are a part. Such human fulfillment is consummated in the very process of choosing and acting. So in the participatory paradigm, practical knowing is an end in itself, and intellectual knowing is of instrumental value in supporting practical excellence.

The axiological question can also be put in terms of the ultimate purpose of human inquiry, since any ultimate purpose is an end in itself, a state of affairs that is intrinsically valuable. In the participative worldview, the ontological account of reality as subjective-objective, as cocreated with the given cosmos, leads to the axiological question. For what purposes do we cocreate reality? The answer to this is put quite simply by Fals-Borda (1996): to change the world; or, as Skolimowski (1994) pointed out, *participation* implies *engage-*

ment, which implies *responsibility*. The participative worldview necessarily leads to an action orientation, not an impulsive action—which, as Bateson (1972) described it, cuts through the circuits of that natural world—but a reflective action, a praxis, grounded in our being in the world.

So within the participative worldview the primary purpose of human inquiry is practical: our inquiry is our action in the service of human flourishing. Our knowing of the world is consummated as our action in the world, and participatory research is thus essentially transformative. Although some inquiry projects may be primarily information and result in propositional knowing, transformational projects are primary (Heron, 1996).

Reason (1993, 1994b) suggested that a significant purpose of inquiry in our times is to heal the split that characterizes modern existence, and suggests that such healing practice will have a sacred dimension:

> To heal means to make whole: we can only understand our world as a whole if we are part of it; as soon as we attempt to stand outside, we divide and separate. In contrast, making whole necessarily implies participation: one characteristic of a participative worldview is that the individual person is restored to the circle of community and the human community to the context of the wider natural world. To make whole also means to make holy: another characteristic of a participatory worldview is that meaning and mystery are restored to human experience, so that the world is once again experienced as a sacred place. (Reason, 1994, p. 10)

This means expressing living knowledge in practical service to people's lives (Reason, 1996). This active participation in community, which makes holy, is also a political process (Bachrach & Botwinick, 1992; Bookchin, 1991). It honors the basic right of people to have a say in forms of decision making, in every social context, which affect their flourishing in any way. Most importantly, this includes the right to be involved in the knowledge creation processes that affect their lives.

If we compare all this with Guba and Lincoln's analysis of inquiry aims, we can see that the purposes of inquiry within the participative worldview are closer to those of critical theory, "the critique and transformation of social, political, economic, ethnic and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind" than the constructivist perspective, in which the aim of inquiry is "understanding and reconstruction." However, it is important to acknowledge that advocacy and activism are also key concepts of the constructivist view (1995, p. 113). Thus, Guba and Lincoln's (1989) authenticity criteria, such as catalytic and tactical authenticity, do frame propositional research findings in terms of their impact on transformative actions among the people being studied. However, there are basic epistemological and axiological differences. In terms of the nature of knowledge (Table 2), neither critical theory nor constructivism acknowledge practical knowing, whereas the participatory paradigm regards it as primary. Furthermore, within the participatory paradigm, practical knowing is of central intrinsic value, whereas both construc-

TABLE 1

Issue	*Positivism*	*Postpositivism*	*Critical Theory et al.*	*Constructivism*	*Participatory*
Ontology	Naive realism—"real" reality but apprehendable	Critical realism—"real" reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Historical realism—virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values crystallized over time	Relativism—local and specific constructed realities	Participative reality—subjective-objective reality, cocreated by mind and given cosmos
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true	Transactional/subjectivist; value mediated findings	Transactional/subjectivist; created findings;	Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; extended epistemology of experiential, propositional, and practical knowing; cocreated findings
Methodology	Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutic/dialectical	Political participation in collaborative action inquiry; primacy of the practical; use of language grounded in shared experiential context
Axiology	Propositional knowing about the world is an end in itself, is intrinsically valuable		Propositional, transactional knowing is instrumentally valuable as a means to social emancipation, which is an end in itself, is intrinsically valuable		Practical knowing how to flourish with a balance of autonomy, cooperation, and hierarchy in a culture is an end in itself, is intrinsically valuable

SOURCE: Guba and Lincoln (1994).

TABLE 2

Issue	*Positivism*	*Postpositivism*	*Critical Theory et al.*	*Constructivism*	*Participatory*
Nature of knowledge	Verified hypotheses established as fact or laws	Nonfalsified hypotheses that are probably facts or laws	Structural/historical insights	Individual reconstructions coalescing around consensus	Extended epistemology: primacy of practical knowing; critical subjectivity; living knowledge
Knowledge accumulation	Accretion—"building blocks" adding to "edifice of knowledge"; generalizations and cause-effect linkages		Historical revisionism; generalization by similarity	More informed and sophisticated reconstructions; vicarious experience	In communities of inquiry embedded in communities of practice
Goodness or quality criteria	Conventional benchmarks of "rigor": internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity		Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance; action stimulus	Trustworthiness and authenticity and misapprehensions	Congruence of experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical knowings; leads to action to transform the world in the service of human flourishing
Voice	"Disinterested scientist" as informer of decision makers, policy makers, and change agents		"Transformative intellectual" as advocate and activist	"Passionate participant" as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction	Primary voice manifest through aware self-reflective action, secondary voices in illuminating theory, narrative, movement, song, dance, and other presentational forms
Training	Technical and quantitative; substantive theories	Technical, quantitative, and qualitative; substantive theories	Resocialization; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism and empowerment		Coresearchers are initiated into the inquiry process by facilitator/researcher and learn through active engagement in the process; facilitator/researcher requires emotional competence, democratic personality and skills
Accommodation	Commensurable		Incommensurable		
Hegemony	In control of publication, funding, promotion, and tenure		Seeking recognition and input		Emergent and at present essentially countercultural in Western societies

SOURCE: Guba and Lincoln (1994).

tivism and critical theory are concerned only with propositional knowing and its instrumental value in generating social emancipation (see Table 1). They do not acknowledge the intrinsic value of the researchers' own practical knowing, since this does not play any significant part in their inquiry paradigms.

Furthermore, the purpose of inquiry is not only the relief of oppression. As Skolimowski (1994) put it, we need to find again ways in which the human mind can be celebrated, we need to take the courage to imagine and reach for our fullest capabilities. It is argued that humanity is "nature rendered self-conscious" (Bookchin, 1991, p. 313), that human beings are a part of the cosmos capable of self-awareness and self-reflection (Swimme, 1984). We hold that humans consummate such self-awareness as creative agents, whose practical inquiry is a celebration of the flowering of humanity and of the cocreating cosmos, and as part of a sacred science is an expression of the beauty and joy of active existence.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PARTICIPATORY PARADIGM

Guba and Lincoln (1994) move on from identifying the basic beliefs of their four paradigms to explore the implications of each. We have both pruned and extended their analysis in Table 2.

We have taken out of the table the three issues of inquiry aim, values, and ethics, since these have, in our view, been more appropriately covered in our discussion of the axiological question above. We include a participatory view of all the remaining issues. This makes for a more complete comparison with Guba and Lincoln, but we will not discuss the points in detail. A thorough discussion of cooperative inquiry can be found in Heron (1996), and a review of participatory forms of inquiry can be found in Reason (1994a).

CONCLUSION

There is an urgent need to revision our view of ourselves as coinhabitants of the planet. As many of us have asserted, with greater or lesser degrees of concern, the current Western worldview has come to the end of its useful life, and, as well as some remarkable achievements in material well-being and human possibility, has left us with a legacy of human alienation and ecological devastation. Deconstructive postmodernism has supplied an invaluable critique of the grand narrative of modernism, but paradoxically can be seen as part of this narrative in its exclusive concern for "text" and its denial of the body. Constructivism is an incomplete and unsatisfactory response, for reasons we have discussed above.

The participatory worldview, with its emphasis on the person as an embodied experiencing subject among other subjects, its assertion of the

living creative cosmos we coinhabit, and its emphasis on the integration of action with knowing, is more satisfying. To return to Ogilvy's (1986) terms, it responds creatively to the emerging mood of our times, overturns the mechanical metaphor that underpins positivism, provides models for action inquiry, and above all offers humanity a more satisfying myth to live by.

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John Heron is an international consultant, researcher, and writer at the International Centre for Co-operative Inquiry in Tuscany, Italy. He founded the Human Potential Research Project at the University of Surrey, and was assistant director of the British Postgraduate Medical Federation at the University of London. His most recent books are Co-Operative Inquiry *(1996),* Group Facilitation *(1993),* Feeling and Personhood *(1992),* Helping the Client *(1990), and* The Facilitator's Handbook *(1989).*

Peter Reason is director of the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice at the University of Bath. His contributions to the development of participatory approaches to action research include Human Inquiry in Action *(Sage, 1988) and* Participation in Human Inquiry *(Sage, 1994).*