

other dimensions. The dialogic or performative analysis interrogates how talk among speakers is interactively (i.e., dialogically) produced and performed as narrative; the investigator is actively present in the text. Finally, the visual narrative approach links words and images in a visual narrative analysis in which investigators interpret found images (in archives and other collections) and craft a narrative where the researcher is part of the image-making process. In all four analytic approaches, study is grounded in the particular: how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and/or visual images to communicate meaning, that is, to make particular points to an audience.

Attention to sequences of action distinguishes narrative methods from other qualitative approaches. Narrative analysts interrogate intention and language—how and why events are storied, not simply the content to which language refers. Narrative analysts ask the following questions: For whom was the story constructed and for what purpose? How is it composed? What cultural resources does it draw on or take for granted? What storehouse of cultural plots does it call up? What does the story accomplish? Are there gaps and inconsistencies that might suggest preferred, alternative, or counternarratives? There are many ways to narrate an experience: How a speaker, writer, or visual artist chooses to do it is significant, suggesting lines of inquiry that would be missed without focused attention or close reading. Some investigators in the social sciences attend to language, form, and social context (including audience) more than others do.

Elliot Mishler contrasts category-centered approaches in social research, which strip individuals of agency and consciousness, with case-based approaches that can restore agency in research and theory; individuals are respected as subjects with histories and intentions. The study of cases can generate categories or, to put it differently, theoretical generalization; the histories of the physical and social sciences are full of examples where theoretical propositions were derived from close study of individual instances. Narrative analysis joins this long tradition of case-centered inquiry, interrogating stories developed in interviews and fieldwork and in archival documents and visual media.

Catherine Kohler Riessman

See also Interpretive Research; Narrative Inquiry; Storytelling; Visual Narrative Inquiry

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NARRATIVE GENRE ANALYSIS

Narrative has been studied extensively in the social sciences as a privileged communication mode by means of which social actors make sense of their self and the world around them. This focus has implicated a longstanding inquiry into personal experience (i.e., autobiographical) narratives of nonshared past events (i.e., either in the form of life stories or of key-events stories) that are normally elicited in research interviews. In the light of this history, the questions and methods of narrative genre analyses have been shaped by the use of such a type of narrative as a point of entry into tellers' identities. For instance, the emphasis has been on what a well-formed structure or a rupture of structure in a telling may mean with regard to the teller's sense of self.

Overall, the dominant view of the narrative genre's main characteristics can be summed up as follows: a coherent and well-structured telling with a beginning, middle, and an end that grants the teller strong telling rights. This telling is about a series of temporally ordered events that build up to a complicating action that is normally resolved. The teller employs a variety of linguistic and other semiotic means to show the significance (i.e., tellability) of the events and the emotional impact they have had on him or her.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Narrative inquiry is first and foremost a way of understanding experience. It is also a research methodology. It is, then, both a view of the phenomena of people's experiences and a methodology for narratively inquiring into experience and thus allows for the intimate study of individuals' experiences over time and in context. Beginning with a narrative view of experience, researchers attend to place, temporality, and sociality, from within a methodological three-dimensional narrative inquiry space that allows for inquiry into both researchers' and participants' storied life experiences. Within this space, each story told and lived is situated and understood within larger cultural, social, and institutional narratives. Narrative inquiry is marked by its emphasis on relational engagement between researcher and research participants. Narrative inquiry, across various disciplines and multiple professional fields, aims at understanding and making meaning of experience through conversations, dialogue, and participation in the ongoing lives of research participants. Each discipline and field of study brings slightly different ways of understanding and different contexts to the narrative study of experience that deepen the methodology of narrative inquiry.

The introduction of narrative inquiry as a research methodology has reshaped the field of qualitative research, especially with its close attention to experience as a narrative phenomenon and its emphasis on relational engagement that places relational ethics at the heart of inquiry. This entry reviews the process of narrative inquiry and its philosophical foundations, describes the creation of field and research texts, and explores ethical issues that are raised with this methodology.

Narrative in Qualitative Research

Over the past 2 decades, researchers have taken a narrative turn to understanding experience. Although there is a history of narrative work within the traditions of narratology, in the 1990s researchers began to specifically develop a research methodology called narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry and narrative research, terms used almost interchangeably in the current research literature, signify a research methodology. However, within the broad field of qualitative research, there are many analytic methods or forms of

Underlying the above view is a tradition of essentializing and homogenizing narrative as one archetypal genre. The move to the exploration of narrative variability has thus been slower than in other genre analyses. The scrutiny of the different types of stories people tell in a variety of ordinary and institutional contexts can mostly be found within socially minded linguistic studies. These studies have demonstrated that the kinds of stories told and the ways they are told depend both on the local context (e.g., who tells a story to whom and why) and on the larger social and cultural contexts. This context-specificity involves the types and degrees of co-construction between teller and audience, the kinds of events narrated, how (much) a story is embedded into its surrounding discursive context, the emphasis placed on presenting the events as factual and authentic, and so on. Genre analysis has also shown that variations from the narrative prototype of personal past events are frequent outside the narrative interview. For instance, stories of shared (or known) events and of future or hypothetical events abound in conversational contexts. Thus, the importance of including these and other types of stories in narrative genre analysis not just as atypical but as stories in their own right that serve specific purposes in specific contexts is becoming increasingly recognized.

On a final note, narrative genre analysis has moved away from an earlier emphasis on prototypical text features to an exploration of narrative genres as social practices: as routine and socioculturally ways of acting in ways that link with and produce social life.

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See also Autobiography; Context and Contextuality; Narrative Analysis; Narrative Interview; Textual Analysis

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narrative analysis. Some forms of narrative analysis are used as methods within other qualitative research methodologies.

In studying and understanding experience narratively, researchers recognize the centrality of relationships, the relationships among participants and researchers, and the relationships of experiences studied through and over time and in unique places and multilayered contexts. Amidst these relationships, participants relate and live through stories that speak of and to their experiences of living. The process of narrative inquiry is composed of engaging with participants in the field, creating field texts, and writing both interim and final research texts. Throughout this process, ethical considerations require that researchers remain attentive to ethical tensions, obligations, and responsibilities in their relationships with participants.

Philosophical Underpinnings

John Dewey's theory of experience is most often cited as the philosophical underpinning of narrative inquiry. Dewey's two criteria of experience, interaction and continuity enacted in situations, provide the grounding for attending to experience through the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with dimensions of temporality, place, and sociality. Jerome Bruner's ideas about paradigmatic and narrative knowing in psychology, David Carr's ideas about the narrative structure and coherence of lives in philosophy, Mary Catherine Bateson's ideas about continuity and improvisation as a response to the uncertainties in life contexts in anthropology, and Robert Coles's ideas about narrative in life and teaching practice in medicine also provide a philosophical base for narrative inquiry. As narrative inquirers seek to inquire into experience, they must begin their inquiries with narrative self-studies into their own experiences. Narrative inquiries, thus, have both autobiographical narrative groundings as well as more theoretical groundings. The autobiographical narrative inquiries are the starting points for initially shaping and deepening the research puzzle.

Process of Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiries begin with inquiring into researchers' own stories of experience. Because narrative inquiry is an ongoing reflexive and reflective methodology, narrative inquirers need to inquire continually into their experiences before, during, and after each inquiry.

Within the methodology of narrative inquiry, there are particular methods that are employed. There are two starting points for narrative inquiry: listening to individuals tell their stories and living alongside participants as they live their stories. The most frequently used starting point is with telling of stories, and the methods most commonly used are interviews and conversations or interviews as conversations. Some narrative inquirers also use artifacts to trigger the telling of stories. In the second starting point, narrative inquirers begin with living alongside participants using visual media and/or participant observation. For narrative inquirers who begin with living stories, telling stories using methods such as conversations, oral histories, and interviews also plays a part. Whether the beginning point is living or telling stories, inquirers need to attend to the ways individual narratives of experience are embedded in social, cultural, and institutional narratives. Each inquiry reflects the ambiguities, complexities, difficulties, and uncertainties encountered by the inquirer as she or he lives in the field and writes field texts and interim and final research texts.

In the Field

Prior to engaging with research participants, narrative inquirers need to undertake a reflective inquiry process into their narrative understandings in relation to the particular research phenomenon with its attendant research puzzle. These narrative reflections are central to the research process and become part of the research texts. Entering the field begins with negotiation of relationships and the research puzzles to be explored. Negotiations of purpose, transitions, intentions, and texts are an ongoing process throughout the inquiry. Narrative inquirers also negotiate ways they can be helpful to the participant(s) both during and after the research.

As the negotiations begin, narrative inquirers are attentive to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space and attend to experience temporally, socially, and spatially. Once in the field, researchers recognize that narrative inquiry is a way of living in the field and as such, the research becomes part of life. Given the complexity and depth of the research, researchers' lives become entwined with participants' lives.

Field Texts

Depending on the starting point of the inquiry (living or telling), different methods are used to compose field

texts. Field texts, commonly called data, are composed from conversations, interviews, and participant observations, as well as from artifacts. Artifacts that may become part of the field texts include artwork, photographs, memory box items, documents, plans, policies, annals, and chronologies. Field texts are co-compositions, reflective of researchers and participants, and need to be understood as telling and showing those aspects of experience that the relationship allows. Field texts are composed with attention to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Temporality comes into play in two ways: the first is that field texts are composed over multiple interactions with participants; the second, through participants' reflections on and of earlier life experiences. Sociality directs attention inward toward the participants' thoughts, emotions, and moral responses and outward to events and actions. Place directs attention to places where lives were lived as well as to the places where inquiry events occur.

Field texts are embedded within research relationships and reflect multiple nested stories. Field texts are shaped into interim research texts, which are shared and negotiated with participants prior to being composed into final research texts. Research texts are composed from field texts and interim research texts.

Narrative inquirers are well served by participating within a response community. Within a response community, works in progress (interim research texts) can be shared and discussed. Response communities are critical elements within the inquiry, as they help inquirers recognize how they shape both the experiences of their participants and their research puzzles. These communities consist of people the researcher values and trusts to provide responsive and responsible dialogue about the unfolding inquiry. Response communities, marked by diversity, can enrich the research, particularly if they are composed of interdisciplinary, intergenerational, cross-cultural, and academic and nonacademic members. Given the iterative nature of narrative inquiries, there is continuous interplay among field texts, interim research texts, and final research texts.

Research Texts

During the composition of research texts, narrative inquirers are attentive to both participants and possible public audiences. Research texts are shared with participants, who remain the most influential voice in the move to final research texts. Research texts need to reflect the narrative quality of the experiences of

both participants and researcher and the ways these stories of experiences are embedded within social, cultural, and institutional narratives.

Research texts are negotiated between researcher and participants. Researchers, however, also owe responsibility to the scholarly community and must compose research texts that answer the questions of "so what?" or "who cares?" These questions speak to the social significance of each narrative inquiry. Research texts can take multiple forms, including textual, visual, and audible forms.

In narrative inquiry it is imperative to address the question of how larger social, institutional, and cultural narratives inform our understanding and shape the researchers' and participants' stories by which they live. Paying attention to these contextual narratives enables researchers to further deepen the complexity of the living and telling of stories.

Ultimately, research texts develop out of the repeated asking of questions concerning the significance of the research. Research texts also attend to the personal and practical significance of the research, paying attention to the growth for researchers and participants that can occur in the (re)living and (re)telling of the experience.

Ethics

Because narrative inquiry is a relational research methodology, ethical issues are central throughout the inquiry. Ethical requirements move beyond institutional requirements of privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent. Attending to the way participation in a narrative inquiry shapes each participant's life, the negotiations of entry, exit, and representations of experience are central ethical concerns. Issues of informed consent bring forth questions of who has the right to give consent, how one maintains informed consent throughout the inquiry, and how participants consent to final research texts that reveal personal experiences and place those experiences within a larger context. Researchers require thoughtful sensitivity and wide-awakeness as they compose research texts, particularly when they work with marginalized and/or vulnerable populations, such as with children and in cross-cultural settings.

Narrative inquirers have to balance issues of voice, signature, and audience. Within each inquiry, researchers attempt to represent the multiplicity of voices and signatures, which are reflected in the

importance of diverse textual structures and accounts. Narrative inquiries are always filled with rich temporally unfolding narrative accounts, as they represent the lived and told experiences of participants and researchers. Yet, as narrative inquirers come to know in relational ways, the inquiries also become an intervention, which requires the researcher to remain attentive to ethical issues long after leaving the field and composing final research texts.

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See also Collaborative Research; Narrative Analysis; Relational Ethics; Visual Narrative Inquiry; Voice

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NARRATIVE INQUIRY (JOURNAL)

Narrative Inquiry (NI) began publication in 1991 and was originally known as *Journal of Narrative and Life*

History (JNLH). The working definition of narratives is that they usually concern real or pretend memories, often largely in the past tense, though there are narratives given in the future or historical present tense. Narratives often contain a chronological sequence of events, but not always. Narratives are often spoken, but there are musical, pictorial, dramatic, and other performed narratives. At present, some focus on the analysis of narrative; others, on its use. All studies of narrative require interpretation—hermeneutic scholarship, necessitating the use of qualitative methods.

As of mid-2006, *NI* published 394 contributions, including 247 reports of original research, 120 responses to original research, 22 book reviews, and 5 editorials. Of the reports of original research, 76% used exclusively qualitative methods and 24% used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. No articles were exclusively quantitative. Of the articles that used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, over 80% dealt with developmental psychology and education, especially language acquisition involving children exclusively or children speaking with adults (e.g., parents, teachers, or policemen). Although there is no reason that qualitative methods cannot be used in conjunction with quantitative methods, the nature of narrative inquiry about individuals past adolescence does not seem to lend itself to the grouping variables essential for quantitative analysis.

The qualitative methods used in *NI* articles come from diverse academic traditions, including psychology, linguistics, education, English, language studies, sociology, anthropology, medicine, nursing, health studies, history, communication studies and disorders, journalism, geriatrics, and political science. The *JNLH* was conceived of as an interdisciplinary publishing venue. What is astonishing is that after over 15 years practitioners of such diverse disciplines still find common ground in the study of narrative.

Narratives from individuals of many cultures and walks of life are published in *NI*. Though most are from North Americans and/or from Europeans, South Americans, Asians, Africans, mid-Easterners, and others are also common. All socioeconomic groups are represented, though special attention is given to marginalized individuals—including Holocaust survivors, prostitutes, beggars, illegal immigrants, and mental patients. Qualitative methods are especially adept at facilitating one's understanding of individuals very different from oneself.

From the outset, *NI* published responses to others' scholarship, and such responses constitute 30% of

what is published. In this way, too, the scholarship of *NI* recruits qualitative methods for close listening and careful reading of others.

Allyssa McCabe

See also Marginalization

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NARRATIVE INTERVIEW

A narrative interview is an interview that is organized to facilitate the development of a text that can be interpreted through narrative analysis. Narrative analysis is guided by a theory of narrative, and these theories of narrative vary in the influence of the reader, the text, and the intent of the author on interpretation. For this reason, the content and structure of a narrative interview will depend both on the theory of narrative being used in the analysis and on the research question. That being said, there are some commonalities among all narratives that will facilitate interviews for use in narrative analysis.

Informants often relate experiences in narrative format; that is, they select and order events in ways that both reflect their own meanings and convey those meanings to others. The content and structure of the narrative contains implied meanings that are as important to understanding the narrative as the overt meanings—and perhaps more important. Narrative interviews provide informants with many opportunities to select and order events themselves rather than to put events into a preordained structure. For this reason, narrative interviews are often organized temporally, in the manner of a life story or as in life history research. Questions such as, "When did you first notice . . ." or "How did you begin . . ." allow respondents to set the perimeters of the temporal context they find relevant. Decisions about relevant and irrelevant content are made during the course of the interview, both by the informant and in collaboration with the researcher, but no information is a priori ruled out, for any event or interpretation can contribute to the meaning of a story.

Narrative interviews can use semi-structured or unstructured formats depending upon the research

question and the goal of the analysis. Questions should be sufficiently open-ended to encourage participants to explain themselves fully, but it is not necessary that every question elicit a story. Often narratives are constructed by the researcher from component parts offered by the informant across the interview or interviews. Questions that are closed (i.e., require a yes or no answer) or that offer a set of fixed choices (e.g., always, sometimes, never) do not facilitate the development of narratives. However, questions that begin, for example, "Tell me a story about . . ." may intimidate informants who do not normally think in those terms. Narrative interviews, thus, require artful design, with questions carefully ordered to build on previous questions. Narrative interviews are also facilitated by the use of neutral probes that elicit information about actions and explanations. Questions such as, "How did it happen that . . ." or "What did you do then?" elicit the thinking that underlies the connection of the events or experiences selected for the informant's story. Revealing those connections is the primary goal of the narrative interview.

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See also Life Stories; Narrative Analysis; Narrative Inquiry; Narrative Texts

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NARRATIVE TEXTS

Narrative texts are a form of discourse that has been fixed by writing. Some postmodern scholars have defined text to include anything that can be interpreted, from a photograph to a film score. For this entry, Paul Ricoeur's definition of a text as a discourse fixed by writing is used; however, it is important to recognize that some scholars recognize forms other than the written word as having textuality.

Scholars of rhetoric divide texts into different types depending on the author's intent. Narratives are characterized by temporal organization: beginning to