

The Epistemology of What We Do and How to Explain it to Funders, Clients and Your Relatives



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IIQM Webinar, November 2013



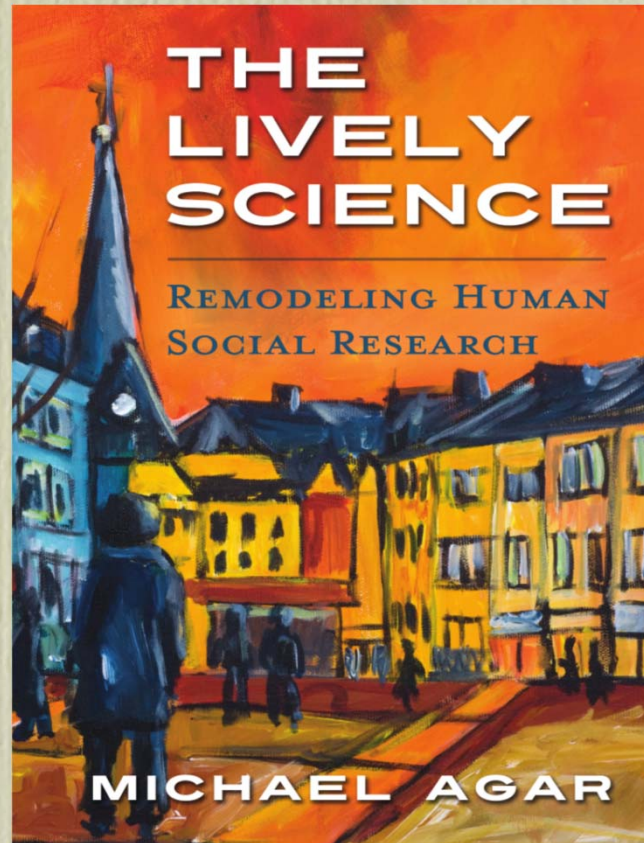
slide rules

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In the public version of the slides on the IIQM website, a couple of images used in the original presentation have been deleted.

A lot of this talk comes out of *The Lively Science*, written for a general audience



But this webinar is upgraded for fellow professionals in this thing we do

Let's start with examples from my checkered past of how different this science can look







**GEORGE
RAFT**
**ANN
SHERIDAN**
**IDA
LUPINO**
**HUMPHREY
BOGART**

THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT

**GALE
PAGE · ALAN
HALE · ROSCOE
KARNS**

Directed by Raoul Walsh

STORY BY BRADLEY STUBBS AND RICHARD MACALPIN · FROM A NOVEL BY E. L. BISHOP
A WARNER BROS. PICTURE

Presented by **WARNER BROS.**



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The context of work changes
So does scope and scale
But the work doesn't

Projects vary all over the place
and yet they move in similar ways and draw on similar
ideas that are different from the “received view”

And the questions that funders, clients and my relatives ask
about them haven't changed since I first used the approach
in the 1960s

The questions my
behavioral/social science
colleagues ask about it
haven't changed much either

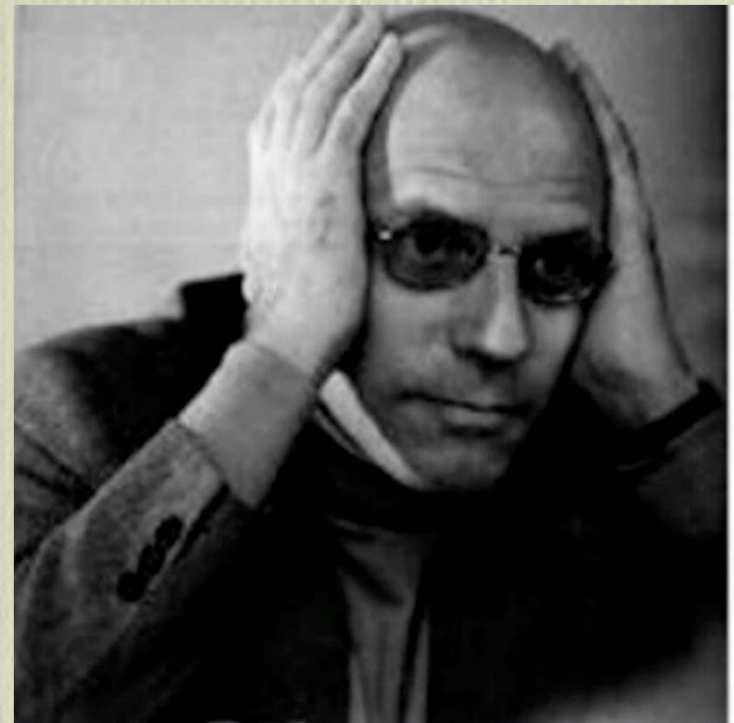
What is it? Is it X?

where X = anthropology
ethnography
grounded theory
narrative
qualitative
geisteswissenschaft
idiographic
phenomenology

For sure $X \neq$ science

**Foucault
in living
black and white**

Never mind investigative journalism,
intelligence analysis, history,
organizational development, etc



What are those similarities among all those projects? The answer is, they all use the same way of learning and representing the results



The similarities are about a **pragmatic epistemology**, not about theory or method or data

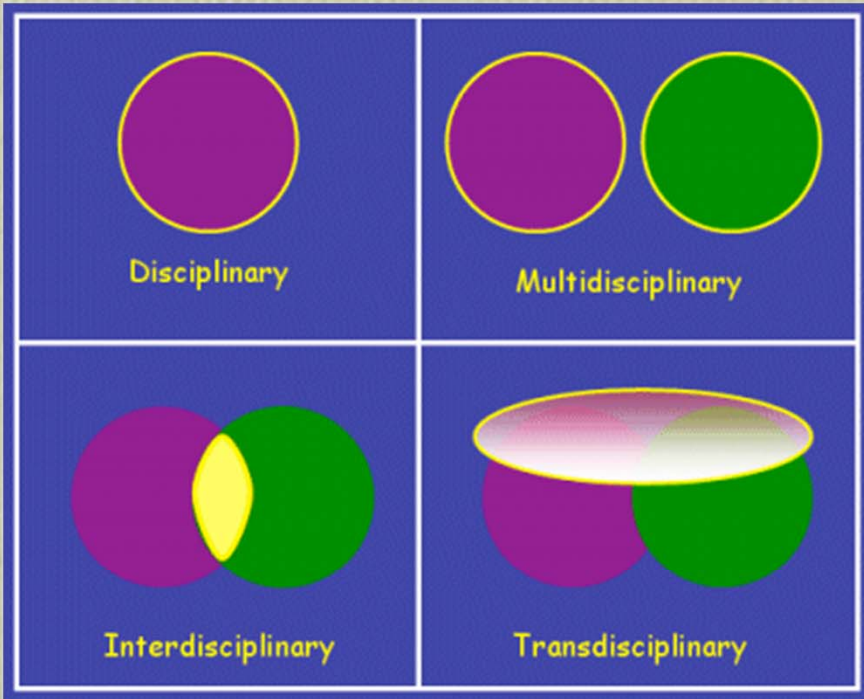
Here's a second thing those pictures share. The same images of work in the opening slides also make disciplines disappear

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Not much interesting right now is
going on in the center of any
traditional discipline

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It's a postdisciplinary
world out there



So what do we do about the disciplinary boundaries cemented into universities, professional organizations, funding sources, etc

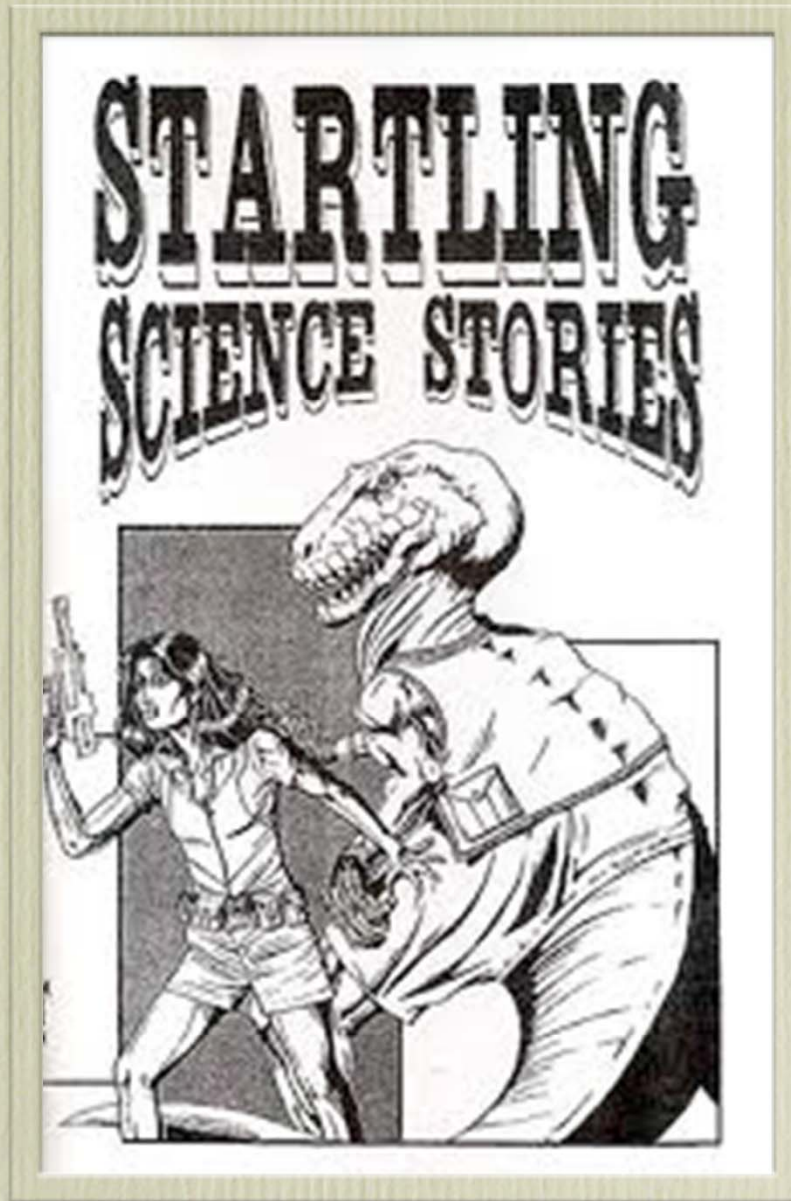
That's the second problem I like to work on
Call it a transdisciplinary epistemology

Because interdisciplinary is still about discipline,
And the practical epistemology is not

A Pragmatic Transdisciplinary Epistemology?!?

It's a different
kind
of science

based on evidence
organized by logic
in a way capable of
challenge based on
other evidence, like
any science



The phenomena
are what make it
different

intersubjective
self-referential
dynamic
emergent

We have met
the
phenomenon
and it is us

Brentano and Dilthey



Not your grandfather's human social science

- First person psychology
- Intentionality--beliefs, desires, emotions, purposes
- Lived experience
- History

Other traditions

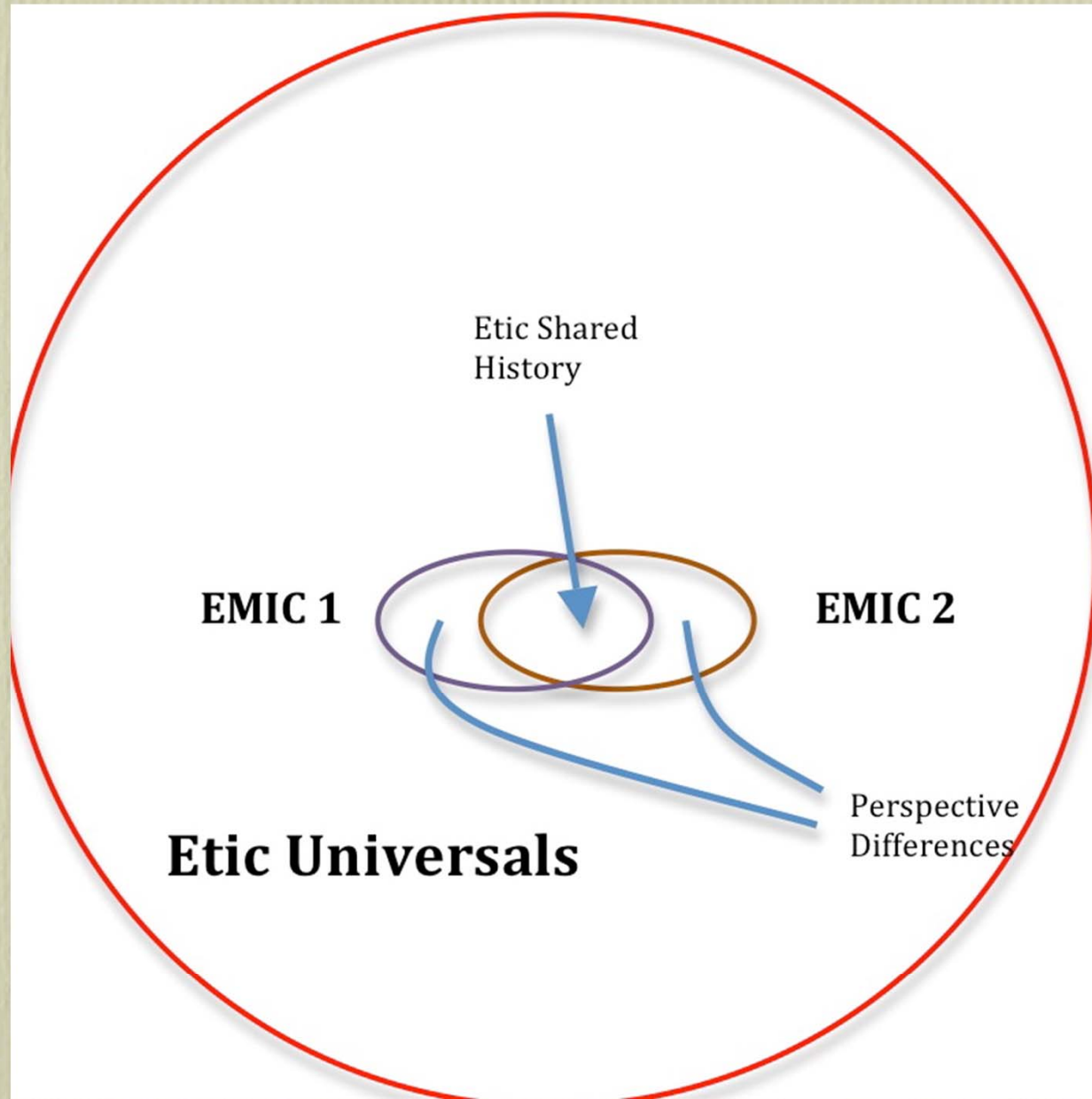
***a different kind of phenomenon
a different kind of science***

Here's a Try At It With Application Built In

- Rich Points --> **POV contrast is the figure**
- ...in terms of **intentionality**
-derived from **lived experience**
-which we can **learn dynamically**
-and **translate on universal grounds**
-and put to **use** --> Leverage Points
-with **human universals** as the ground to the figure all along the way

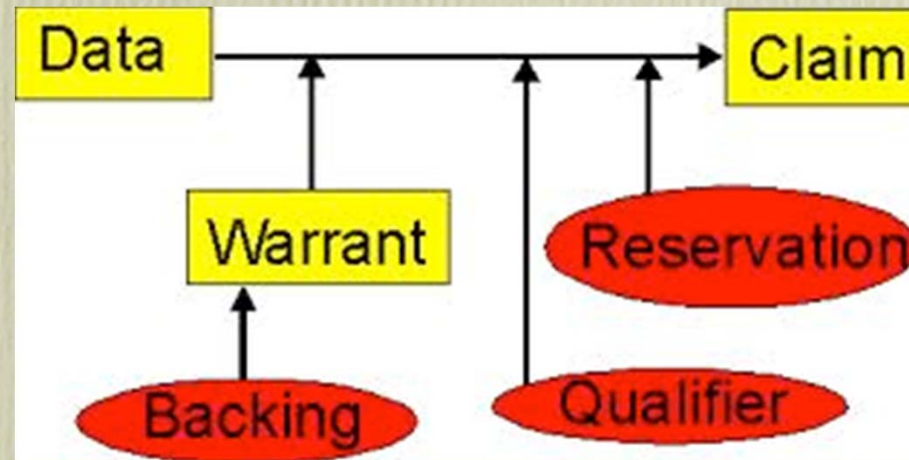
That would be an epistemology that works for the different projects I showed in the first few slides

Pope Benedict's "Culture of the Encounter"



intentionality and **lived experience**, but
intersubjective rational reconstruction instead
of objective claims

Habermas plus Toulmin



The “Learn Dynamically” Part

- Rich points and IRA logic and context/meaning questions and nonlinear dynamic systems
- Interesting that people love rich points, get IRA, but have more trouble with C/M questions
- Adjustable for time, depth and breadth
- Know when to hold ‘em, etc.

Translating the Differences

- Longtime used as metaphor for ethnography but seldom examined
- SLC, TLC, domestication and foreignization
- The universal base: Etic/emic and psychic unity/relativism
- Levels of context
- Why I get fired--Bakhtin and Flack

But it's not all differences
Maybe not even mostly differences
What about the psychic unity part
What about **human universals**
What about a theory of what it means to be
human?
Redfield's mantra

<http://www.pangeaday.org/filmDetail.php?id=18>

It might be, in our poststructural world, that the best way to teach intercultural communication would be to teach human universals.

The **Leverage** Part?

- Donella Meadows, 1997
- *Limits to Growth*
- Turning a freighter
- “A small shift in one thing can produce big changes in everything.”
- **Leverage points**

Are You an Applied/Engaged/Public/Participatory/ Action Type???

- The fundamental application
- Naive realism vs. perspective-taking
- The problem is, structure follows strategy
- The bigger problem is, people who ask for innovation usually don't want it
- Clear “bottom line” indicators together with “aligned interests”

Here's The Try At It In Hindsight

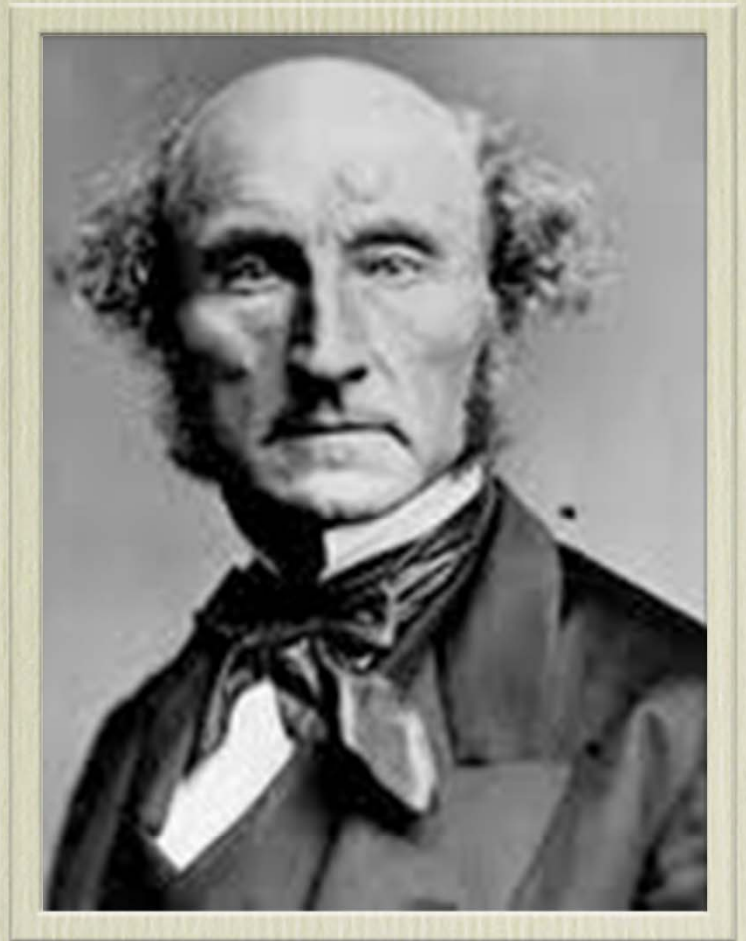
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Knowledge and Human Interests

- Researcher as subject, research as human social world
- Tales of drugworld and waterworld
- The danger: “Can we talk about me for awhile?”
- One way or another, the researcher and the research are part of the data

Spinning in his grave

- Non-monotonic but logical?
- Non-experimental but empirical?
- Non-quantitative but mathematical?
- Non-materialistic but understandable?
- Non-linear but formalizable?
- Bollocks!!!





Practical Transdisciplinary Epistemology?



Jazz Maybe?

Human social science is just catching up with the concept. It isn't about playing a certain kind of music. It's about playing any kind of music in a certain way. That "certain way" is what a practical transdisciplinary epistemology is about.