

What Does Method Matter in Applied Qualitative Research?

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY



Sally Thorne RN, PhD, FAAN, FCAHS
Professor, School of Nursing
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Introduction

- Registered Nurse
- Professor, University of British Columbia
- Associate Editor *Qualitative Health Research*
- Editor-in-Chief *Nursing Inquiry*



Sally Thorne, RN, PhD, FAAN, FCAHS

A Methodological Journey

- Thorne, S. (1985).
The family cancer
experience. *Cancer
Nursing*, 8(5), 285-291.



Dr. Joan Anderson

Phenomenology

- Thorne, S.E., & Robinson, C.A. (1988). Health care relationships: The chronic illness perspective. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 11, 293-300.



Dr. Jan Morse

Grounded Theory

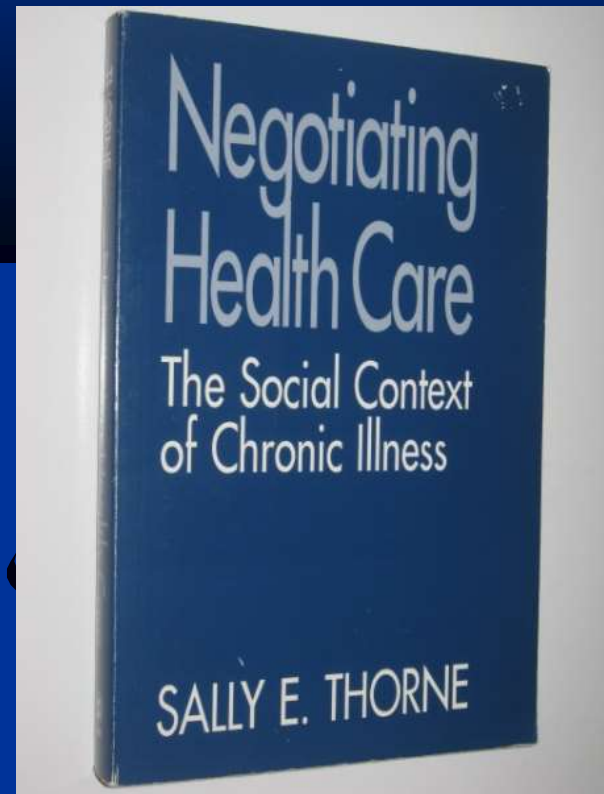


Dr. Juliene Lipson

- Thorne, S.E. (1990). Mothers with chronic illness: A predicament of social construction. *Health Care for Women International*, 11, 209-221.

Ethnography

- Thorne, S.E. (1993).
*Negotiating Health Care:
The Social Context of
Chronic Illness.*
Newbury Park, CA:
Sage.



Naturalistic Inquiry

- Thorne, S.E. (1991). Methodological orthodoxy in qualitative nursing research: Analysis of the issues. *Qualitative Health Research*, 1, 178-199.



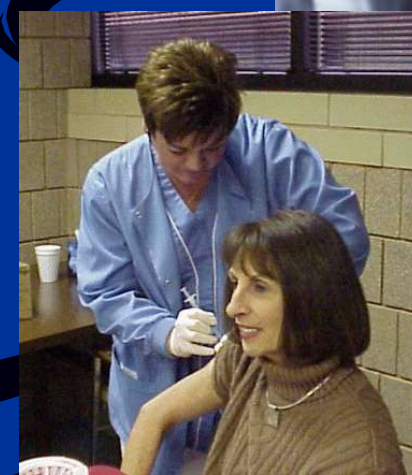
Dr. Margarete
Sandelowski

Primacy of Location

- Discipline
- Training
- Conceptual Orientation

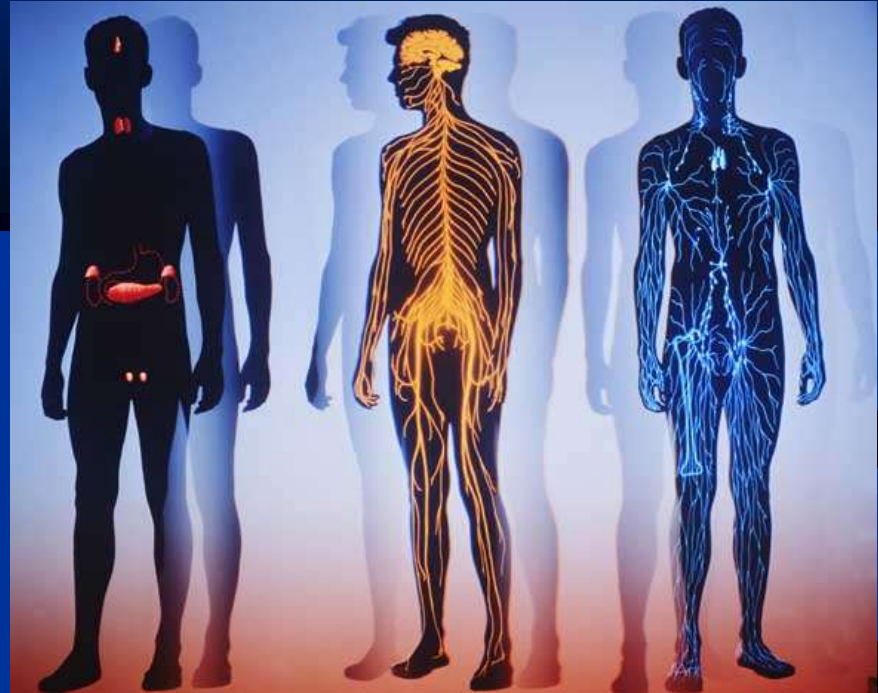


Nursing



Wholes and Parts

- Context for the conceptual understanding of a system in which all parts interact and are meaningful to one another.



Commonalities and Differences

- Context for understanding the nature of scientific claims about human health status, health experience and health care delivery



Experience and Ideas

- Context for coming to know what we know and the basis upon which we know it within an applied practice profession.



The Nature of Knowledge for Nursing

- Processual
- Systematic
- Flexible
- Infinitely Adaptive

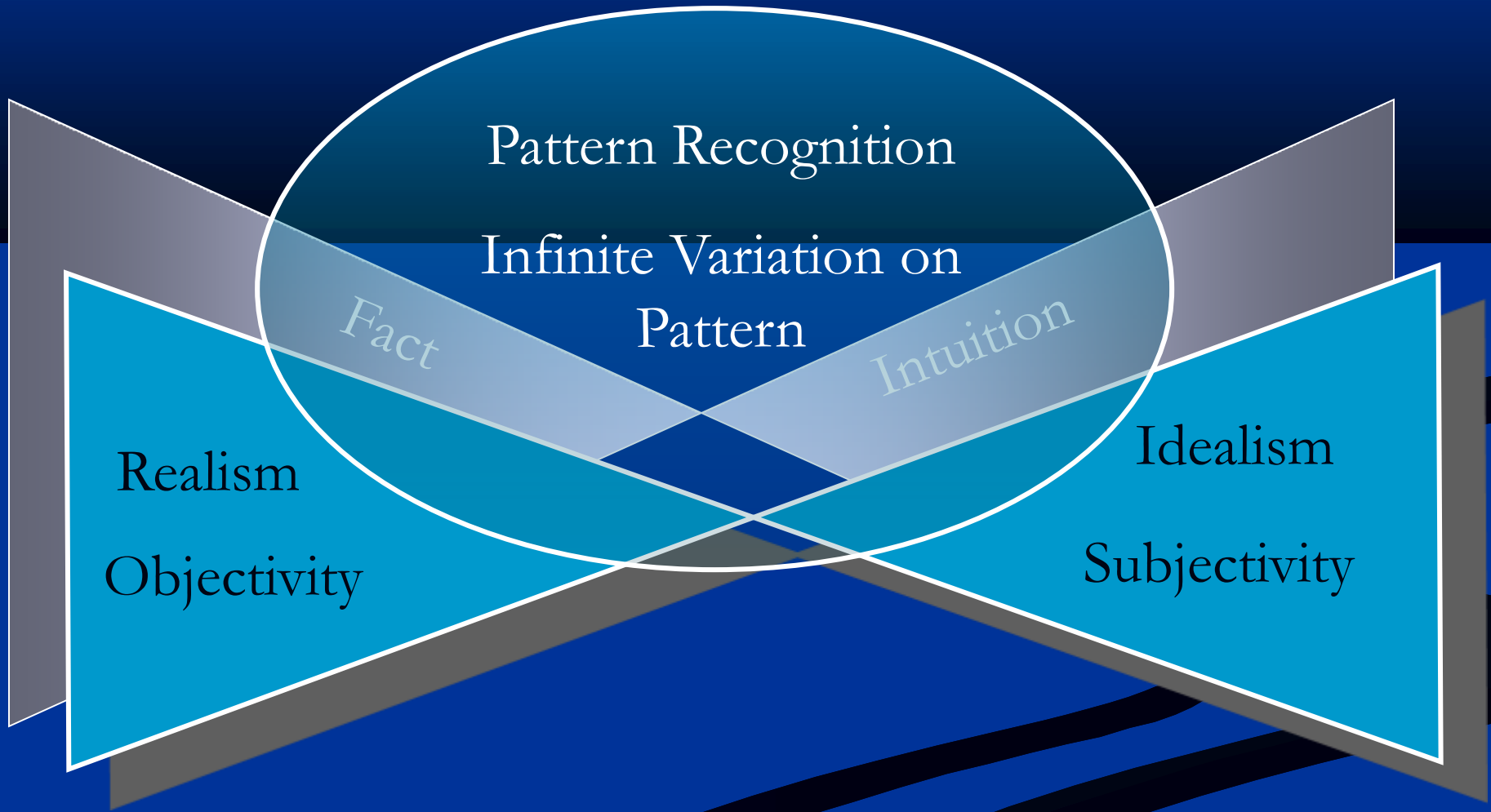


The Evidence Imperative

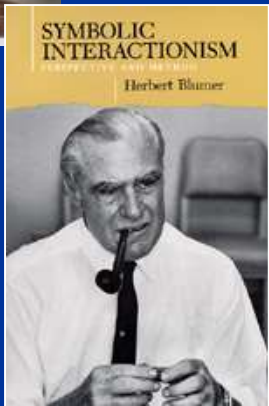
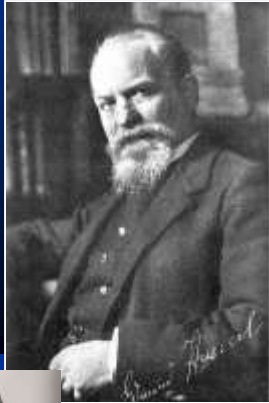
The “Truth Claims”
of our Era



Clinical Epistemology



Methodological Affinities



Phenomenology	Philosophy/ Psychology
Ethnography	Anthropology
Grounded Theory	Sociology

Confronting Resistance

- Health science community
- Social scientist colleagues
- Grant reviewers/journal editors
- Paradigmatic thinking

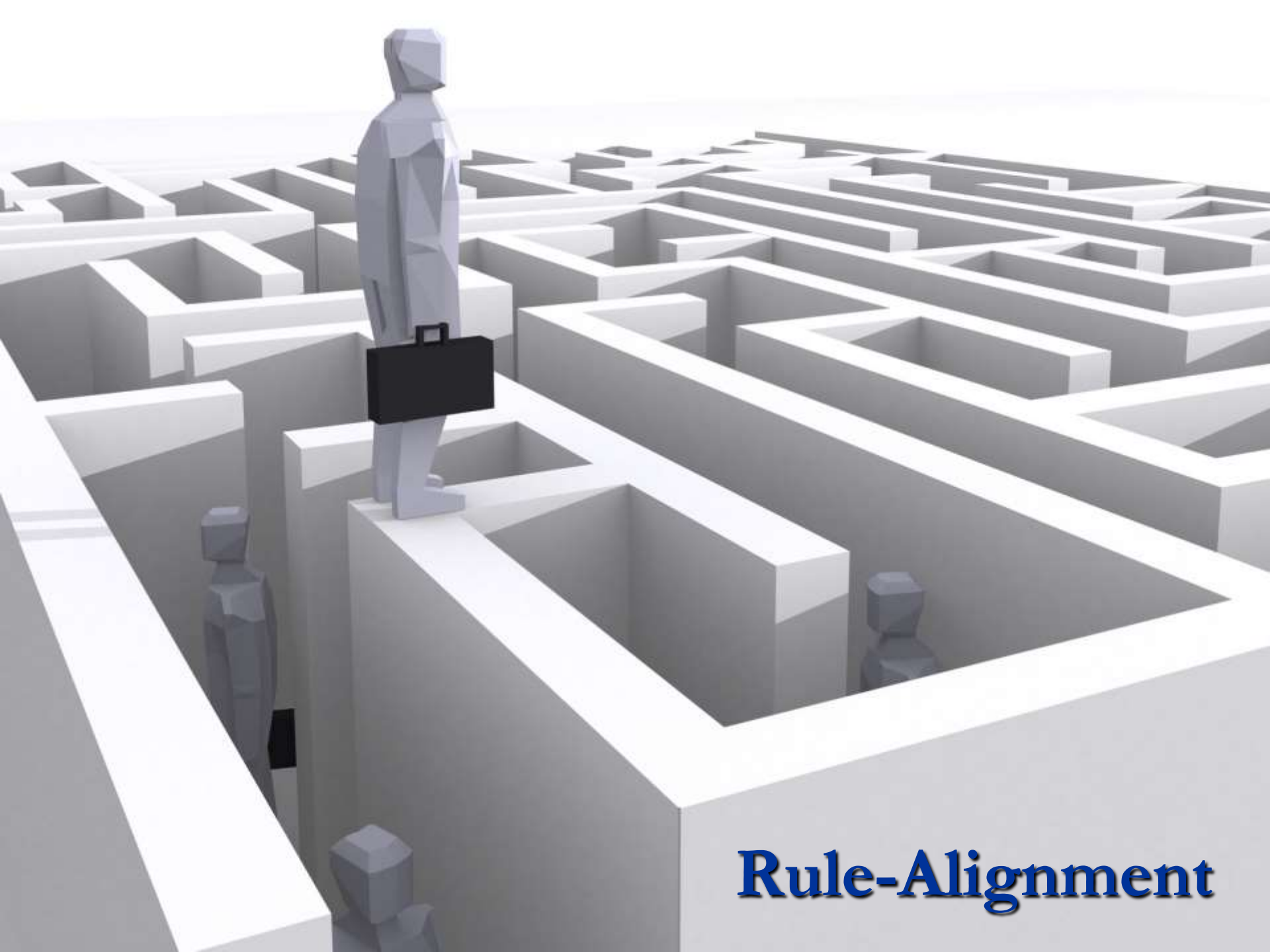


Methodolatry

“slavish attachment and devotion to method”

“a preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the exclusion of the actual substance of the story being told.”

Janesick, V. J. (1994). The dance of qualitative research design: Metaphor, methodolatry, and meaning. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 209–219). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.



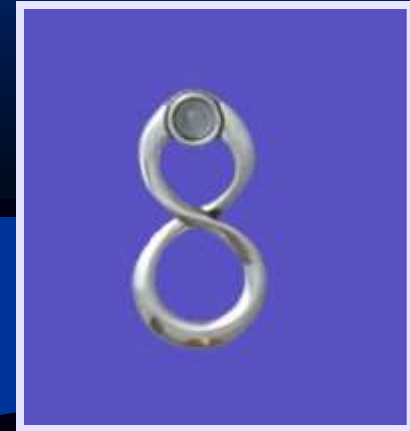
Rule-Alignment

Methodological Rigidity

1986:

The problem of rigor in qualitative research.

Adv Nurs Sci. 8(3): 27-37.



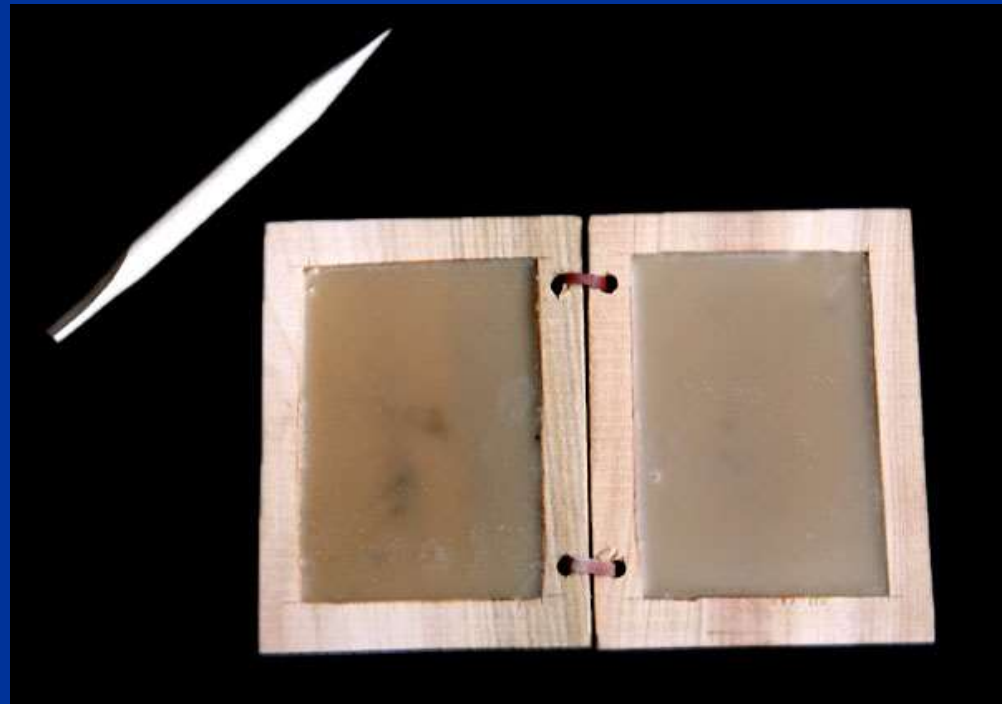
1993:

Rigor or rigor mortis: The problem of rigor in qualitative research revisited.

Adv Nurs Sci. 16(2): 1-8.

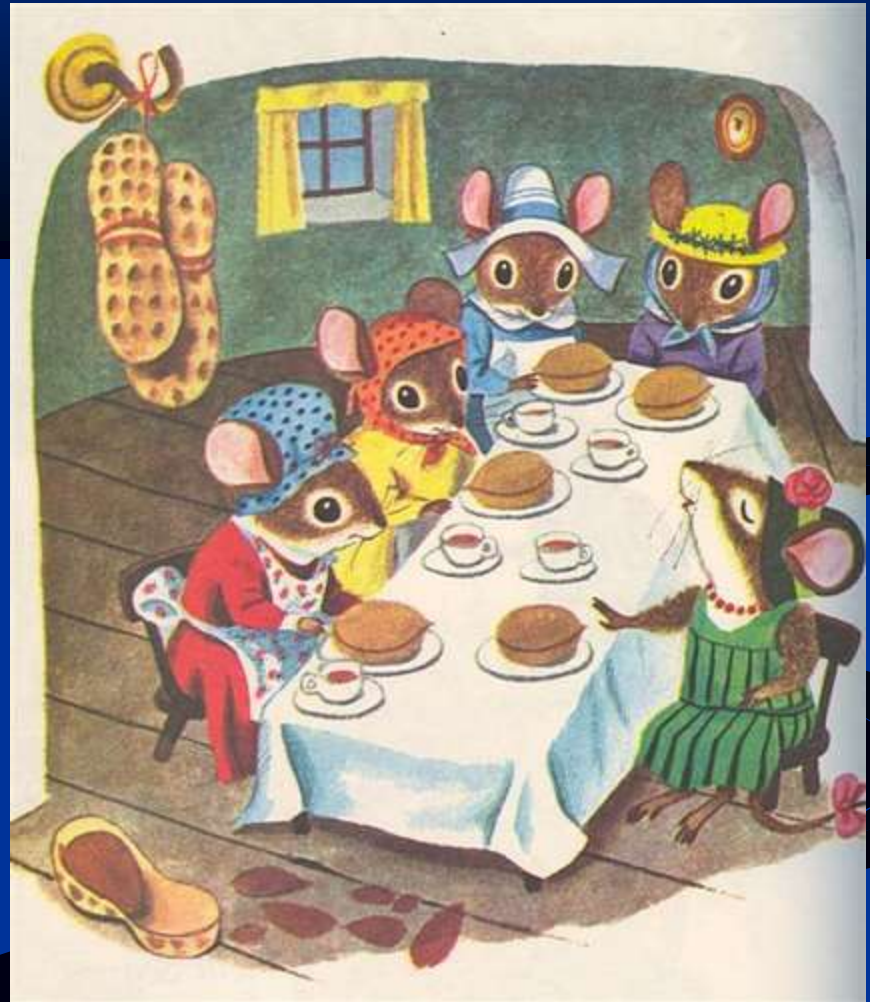
The Entrée: Tabula Rasa

“Nothing is known...”



Narrative Imperative

“My study participants speak their truth...”



Researcher Role Abdication

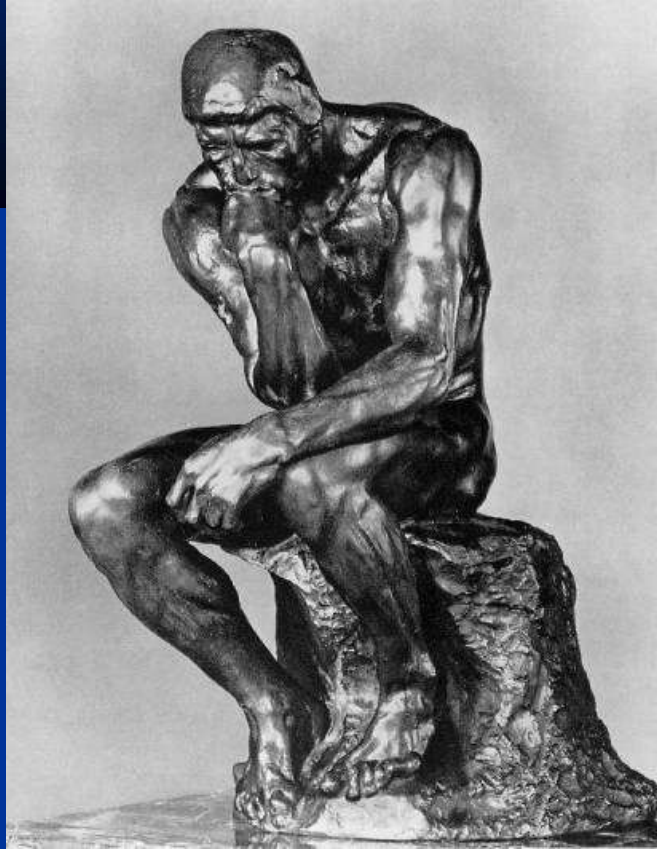
“The data speak for themselves...”



The Meaning of Meaning



The Primacy of Abstraction



“The overarching metaphor...”

The Convenient Exit

*“Saturation
was
achieved...”*



Truth Claim Grandiosities

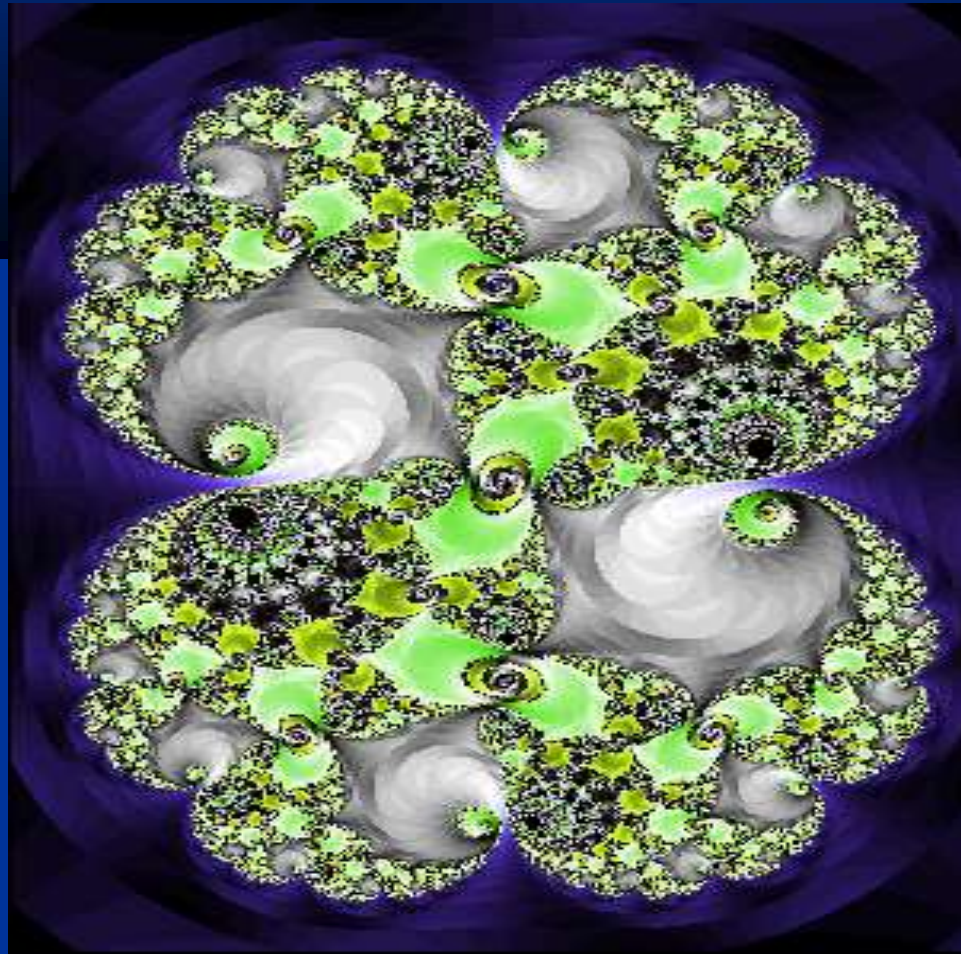
Lachrymal validity



Adulatory credibility



Theory in Applied Qualitative Research

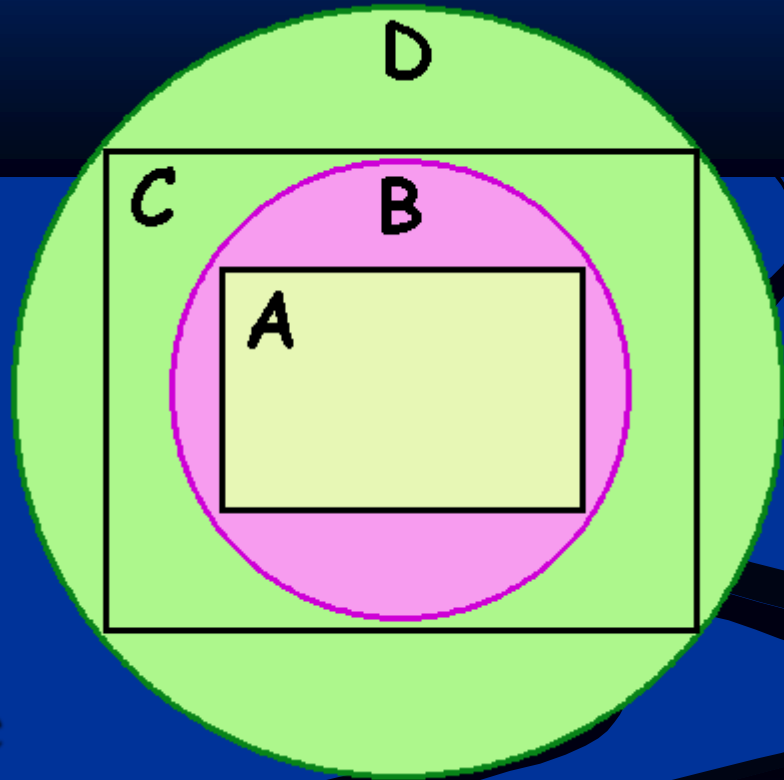


Epistemological Differences

Social Science



Applied/Health Science



**Social
Science**

Discovering laws and
principles

Discerning human
universals

vs

**Applied
Health**

Solving health
problems



What Theory Privileges



and

What it

Obscures

The Fallout of Borrowed Theoretical Tradition

- Losing the disciplinary grip
- Manipulating language signifiers
- Discrediting the field with fuzziness and irrelevance



Emancipation of Applied Qualitative Methodology

THE AN
TRADITION
QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH



Venturing Beyond Description and Theorizing



Bringing a Clinical Angle of Vision into the Evidence-Based Context

- Counter the limits of conventional science
- Capture experiential phenomena
- Expose patterns in complex experience
- Categorize commonalities and variations
- Expand critical reflection on context



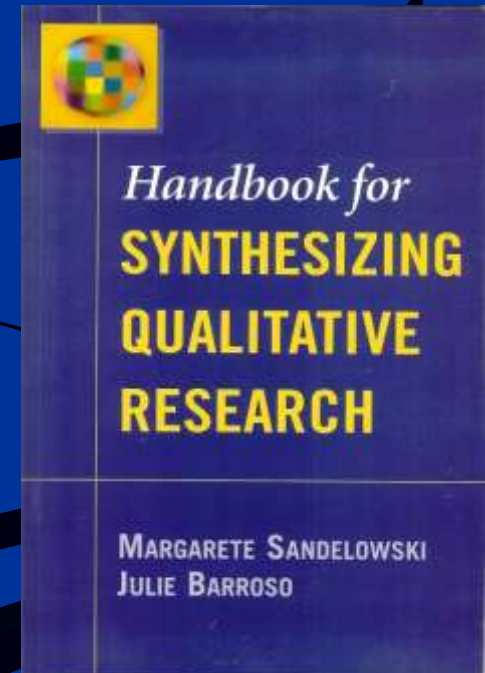
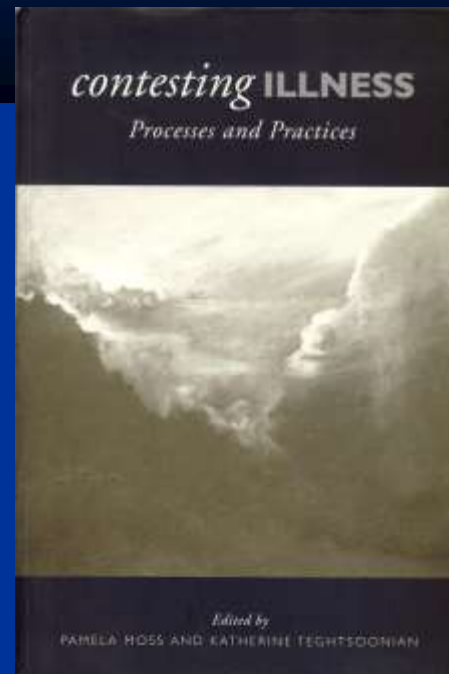
The Explicit Contribution of Applied Qualitative Science

- That which science misses/
misunderstands
- That which defies quantification
- That which behaves in ways that
cannot be regularized
- That which changes outside the context of its
natural complexity



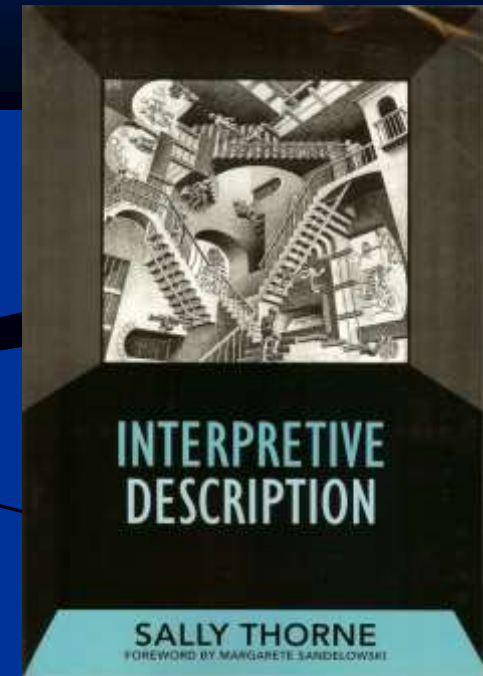
Applied Qualitative Methodology

The Next Generation



Interpretive Description

- Derived from NURSING epistemology
- Borrows the best of technique from conventional (social science method) without taking along the theoretical baggage
- Uses theory as a tool, not as the ultimate purpose



Strategic Design Logic

→ Intelligent Science



Corrective to Inherent Limits of Measurement and Generalization



Gap Filler



Illuminator



Variance Interpreter



Challenger



Humanizer



But moving toward integration, synthesis and application

Inductive Analysis



