

Engaging with crystallisation in qualitative research

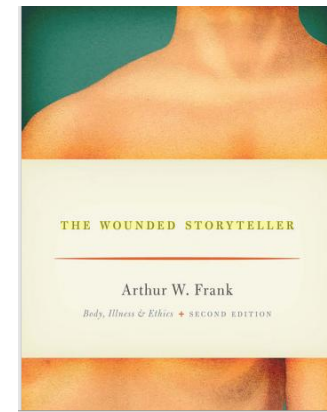
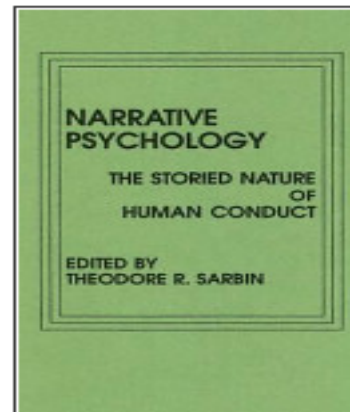
Brett Smith

Please do not use without permission

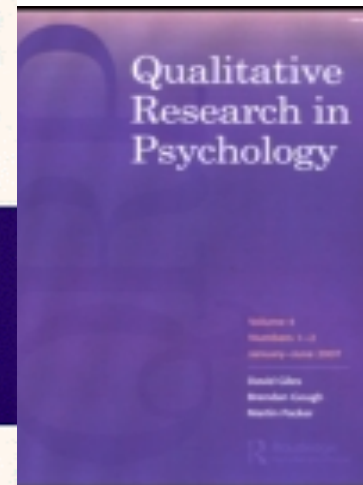
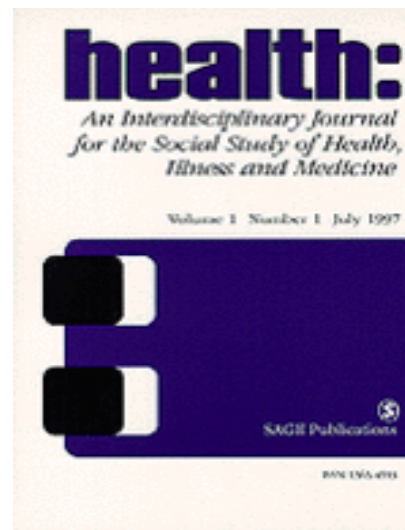
b.m.smith@lboro.ac.uk



Disabled persons'
well-being is too
often damaged;
why is this and how
could it change?



Realist tales



Representational reflections

- What is left out in realist tales: the embodied, relational, sensorial, and dialogic quality of life?; a range of theories/models interlacing?
- Was I ‘cooling out’ the person and their stories?
- What really is the ‘impact’ of my research in terms of its reach?

Representational reflections

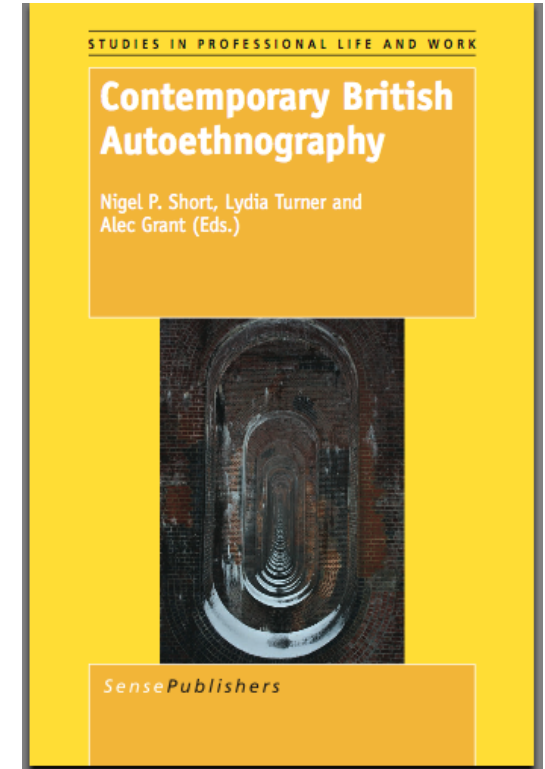
- **Professional** – ‘traditional research’ .
- **Critical** – work that critically examines research.
- **Policy** – work that provides solutions to problems.
- **Public** – work that reaches the general public

Burawoy (2005, 2007)

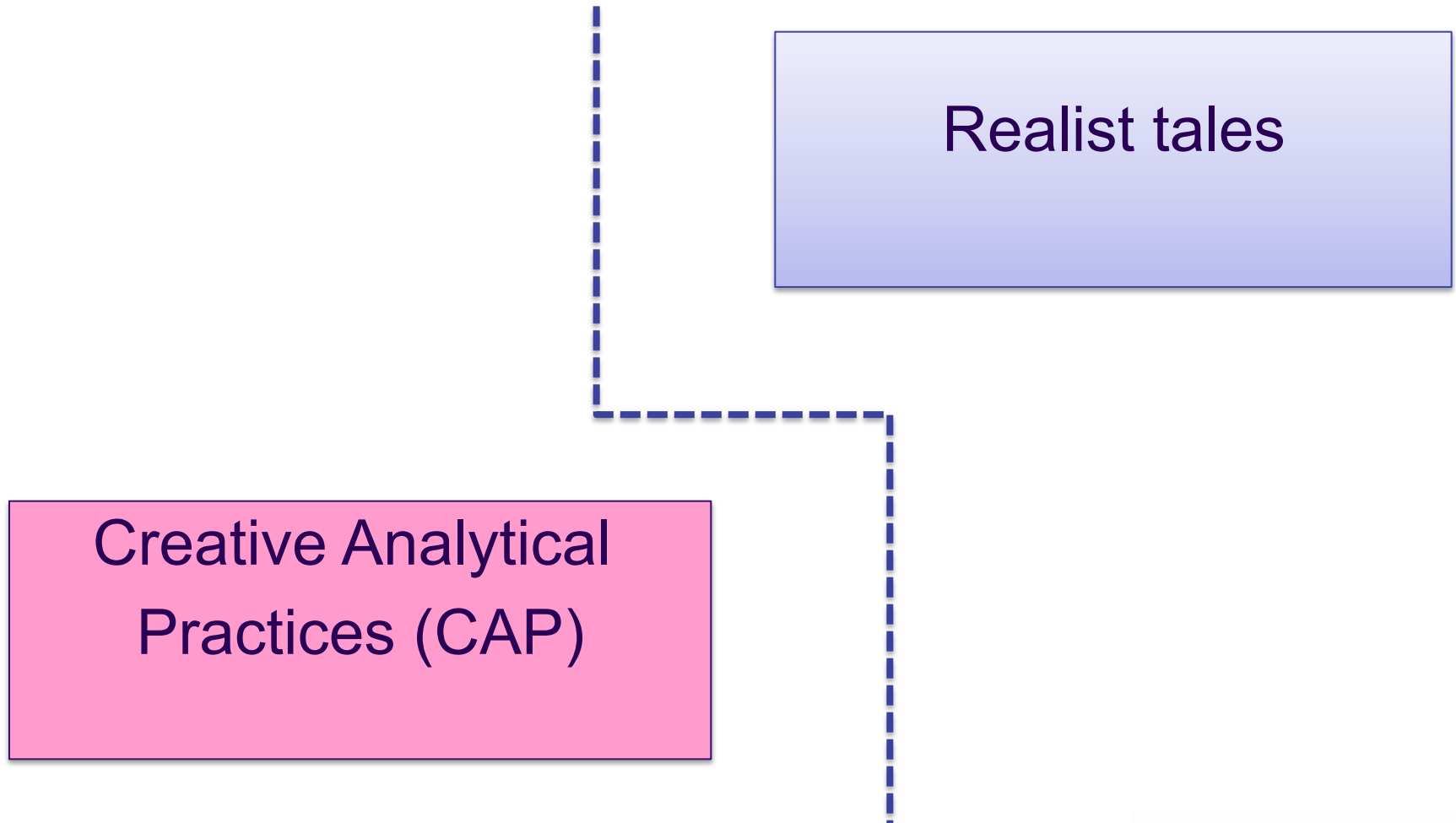


Creative analytical practices (CAP)

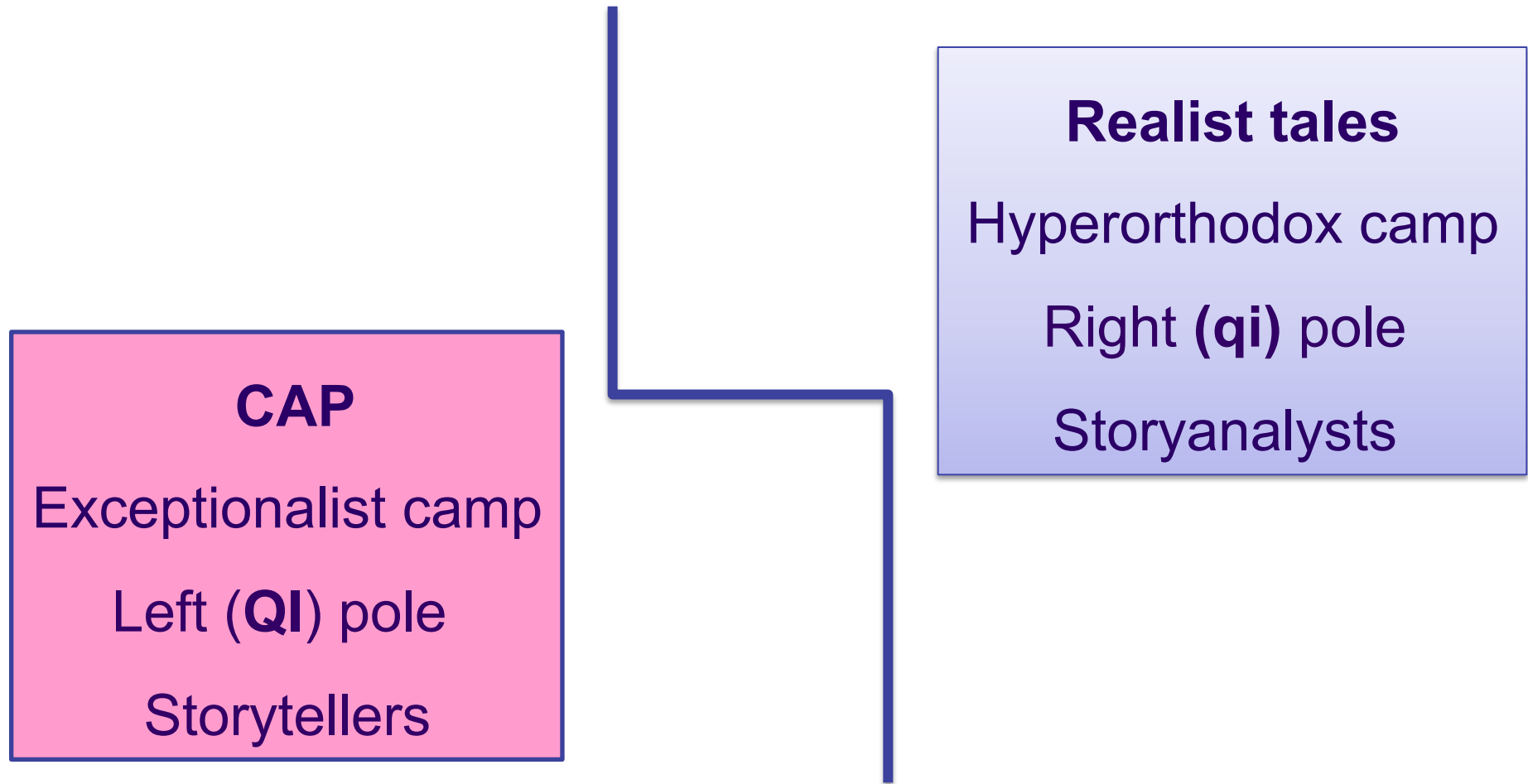
- Non-fiction
- My-story
- Music, dance, painting
- Ethnodrama & Ethnotheatre
- Poetic or 'Poetries'
- Docu-narratives
- Autoethnographies (e.g. evocative, meta, analytic)



Two qualitative representational communities



The example of narrative inquiry: A fractured field



(Bochner, 2001; Smith & Sparkes, 2006; Atkinson, 2010; Frank, 2010; Eisenhart & Jurow, 2011; Schiff, 2013)

The example of narrative inquiry: A fractured field

**Resisting the mystification of narrative inquiry:
unmasking the real conflict between story analysts and
storytellers**

Arthur P. Bochner

Contested terrain: claims and counter-claims

Atkinson - claim 1: how to misrepresent the fundamental nature of narrative data

2010

Analysis of qualitative data

Narrative analysis
CAP

- Thematic analysis
- Grounded theories
- Phenomenological analyses
- IPA
- CA
- Discourse analyses
- Netographic analysis
- CAQDAS
- **Narrative-under-analyses**

Realist tales

Two qualitative representational communities



A diagram consisting of a dashed blue line that starts below the title, goes down vertically, then turns 90 degrees to the right and goes horizontally, and finally turns 90 degrees down again to connect to the two text boxes.

The journal publishes refereed research articles that **experiment with manuscript form and content**, and focus on methodological issues raised by qualitative research.

The editors have considered this [CAP] trend carefully, and we have made the decision to resist accepting manuscripts of this genre for publication... [W]e are sticking to a policy that prefers **plain realist text**, plain speak, and **profound conclusions over artistic forms of data presentation**. (Morse, 2009, 19)

Thank you for your e-mail...Your paper sounds very interesting. Whilst we do publish qualitative research, the creative kind you describe is not deemed suitable for XXX journal as its not a valid method. (2013)

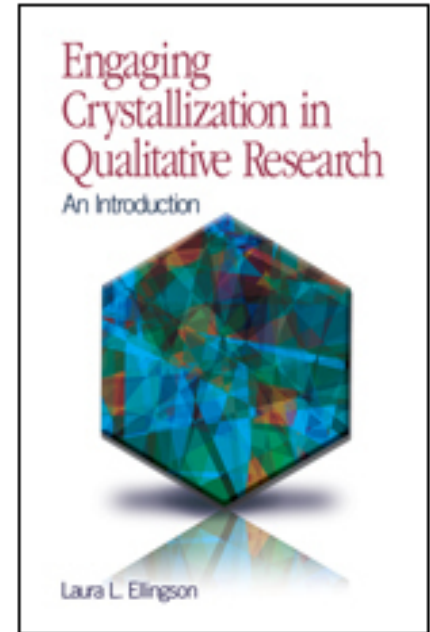
Crystallisation

Rather than a ridged, two-dimensional object, a central imagery for research is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. (Richardson, 2000)

Engaging with crystallisation

Crystallisation is about combining **multiple forms of analysis** and genres of **representation** (at least one CAP) into a coherent text or series of related texts to build a **rich** and openly **partial** account of a topic.

(Ellingson, 2009)



Two types of crystallisation

1) Integrated crystallisation

Brings together different analyses and forms of representation to produce a **single** text.



Woven



Patched

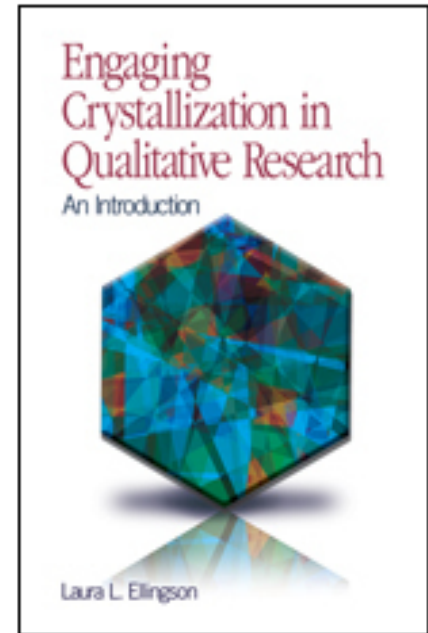
Two types of crystallisation

2) Dendritic crystallisation

Ongoing and dispersed process of making meaning through multiple forms of analysis and forms of representation to produce **multiple texts**.

Ontological and epistemological assumptions

- Relativist ontology
- Constructionist epistemology
 - Methods are constructions
 - Power relations
 - Embodied: “My body provides many subtle pieces of data as well as insights into data” (Ellingson, 2009, p, 36)



Designing a crystallised project: Some thoughts

- What do I wish to explore?
- What is the purpose of X analysis? What does it leave out?
- What questions do I still have?
- What audiences do I want to reach, and why? What are their expectations?
- How might people's lives and/or policies be improved using different analyses and forms of representation?
- How do accounts connect and shape each other, and with what effect?

Challenge 1: Producing ‘better’ CAP

“If I have to read another cultural studies analysis of ‘The Sopranos,’ I give up,” Mr. [Stuart] Hall said.
“There’s an awful lot of rubbish around masquerading as cultural studies.”

New York Times 18/2/2014

Challenge 1: Producing ‘better’ CAP

“Not everyone holds the capacity to be fluent in multiple genres and forms of analysis” (Ellingson, 2009, p. 16)

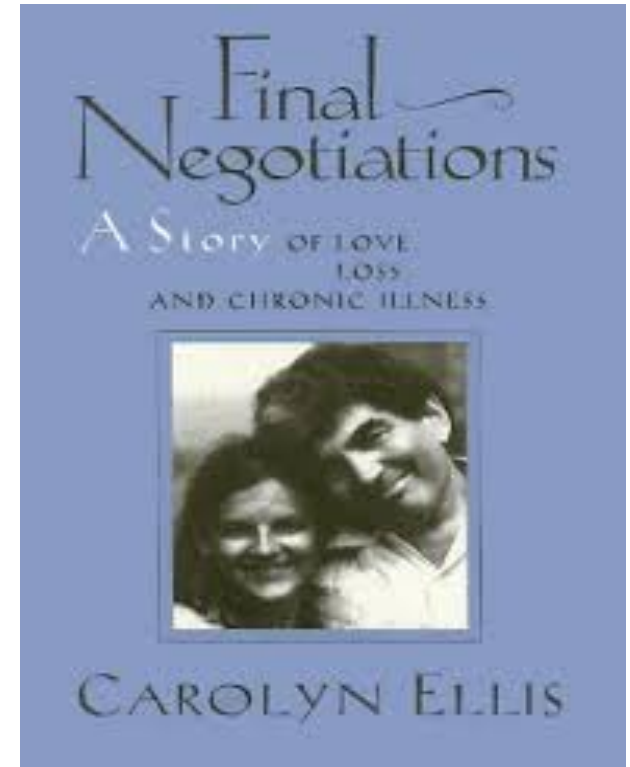
“The challenge is to produce better work” (C. Ellis, personal communication, 17/2/14)

“Creative analytical practices need to be held to high and difficult standards” (Richardson & St Pierre 2005)

Challenge 1: Producing ‘better’ CAP

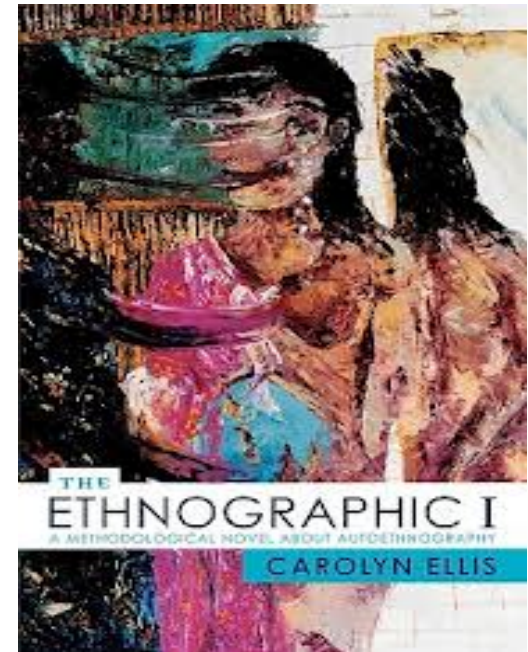
“Add writing to many curricula”

(C. Ellis, personal communication,
17/2/14)



Challenge 1: Producing ‘better’ CAP

“Produce stories that are different from what we already have, add to those rather than reproduce what is already out there”

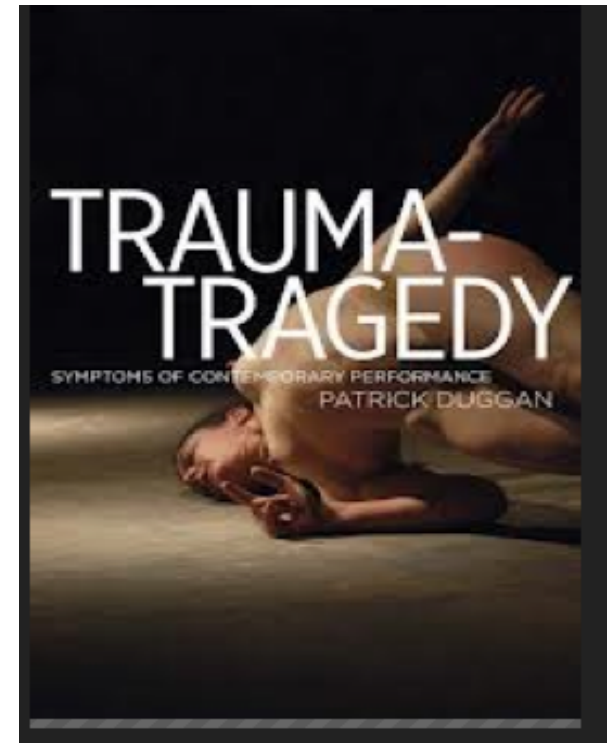


(C. Ellis, personal communication,
17/2/14)

Challenge 1: Producing 'better' CAP

The tragic scholar

- Misunderstood artists
- Tells tales simply of woe
- Personal therapy



Challenge 1: Producing ‘better’ CAP (**and realist tales**)

For years I had yawned my way through numerous supposedly exemplary qualitative studies...I would order a new book with great anticipation—the topic was one I was interested in, the author was someone I wanted to read—only to find the text boring...—yes —**boring**. (Richardson, 2000; p. 959)

Challenge 2: Demonstrating Impact

The effect of our work outside academia

Four star: Outstanding impact in terms of reach and significance.

Three star: Very considerable impact in terms of reach and significance.

Two star: Considerable impact in terms of reach and significance.

One star: Recognised but modest impact in terms of reach and significance.

Unclassified: The impact is of little or no reach and significance.

Challenge 2: Demonstrating 'potential'

Stories have the **potential** to stimulate personal and social change.

- Performative
- Subjectifiers
- Subjunctive
- Seductive, emotionally
- Critical consciousness raising

Challenge 2: Demonstrating ‘potential’

“These are just claims. Where is the ‘evidence’?”

How might we respond?

(How) can we demonstrate impact / ‘potentials’ / ‘claims’? (How) can we offer ‘evidence’? What do we mean by ‘evidence’? Do we resist ‘testing’ or offering ‘evidence’? What might the consequences be of resisting?

Challenge 2: Demonstrating ‘potential’

- Stories always out of control
- Power relations: ‘Countering the counter-narrative’ within organisations through silence, tokenism, resistance, and so on.
- RCTs

Challenge 2: Demonstrating 'potential'

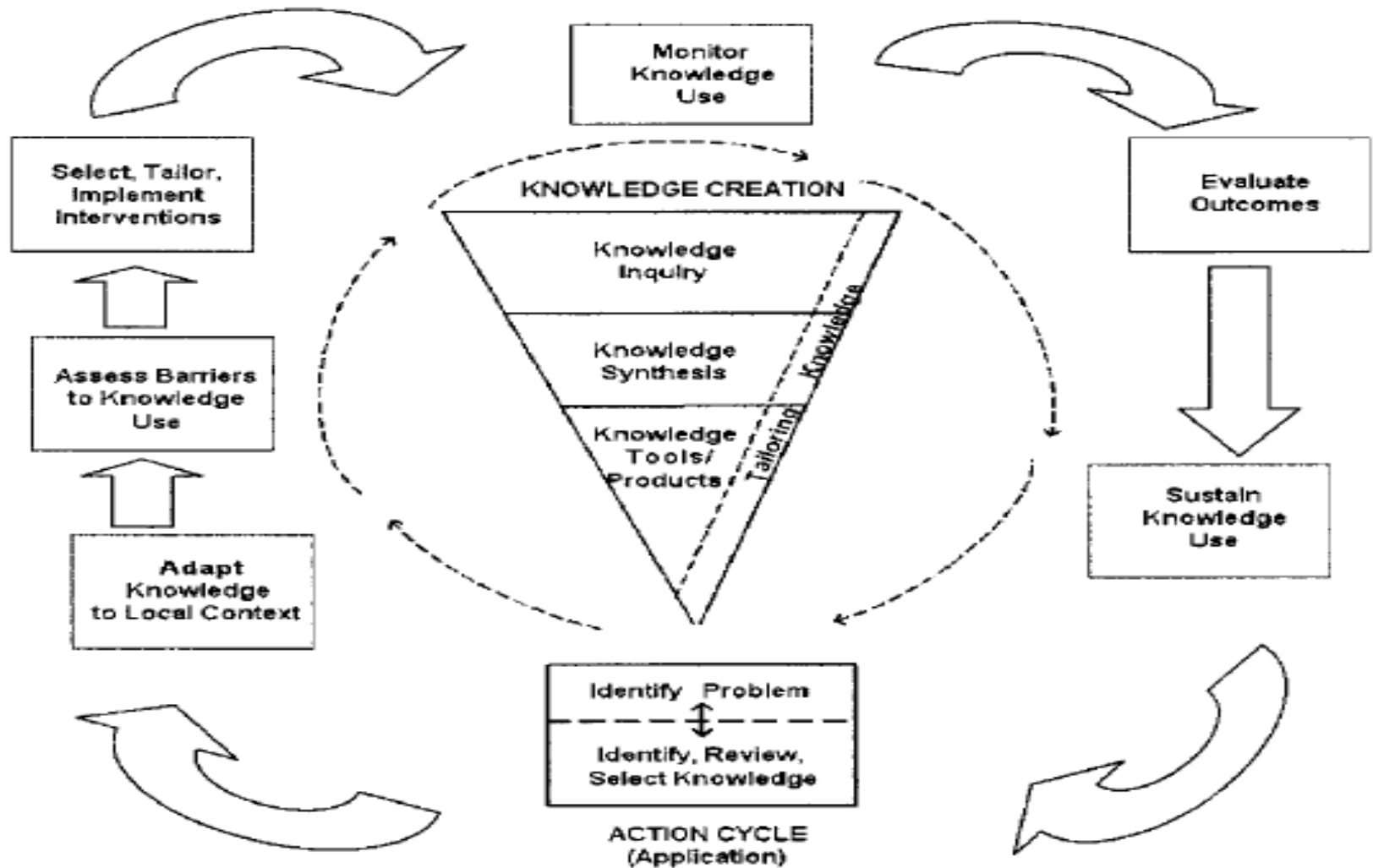
Set our own criteria

- **Catalytic authenticity** - Does the research stimulate some form of action? (Guba & Lincoln 1994)
- **Impact validity** – the extent to which the research has an effective role in social change (Barreras & Massey, 2013)



Pathway to impact

Lost in Knowledge Translation



Knowledge to action process

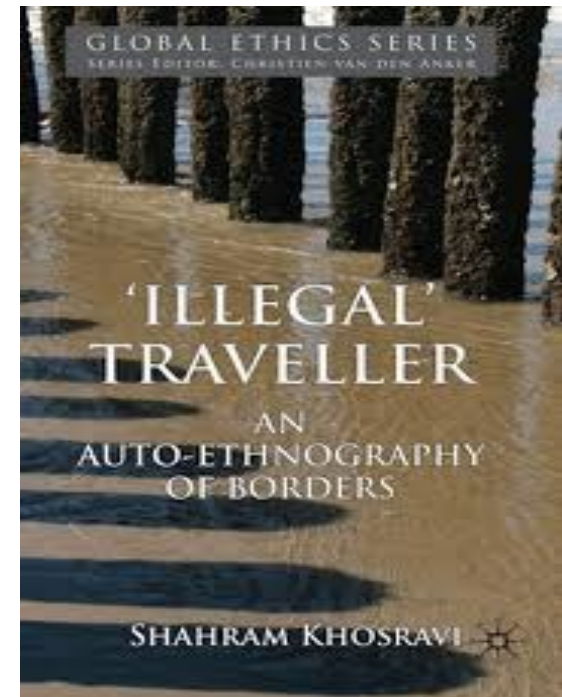
Ian D. Graham, PhD; Jo Logan, RN, PhD; Margaret B. Harrison, RN, PhD; Sharon E. Straus, MD, MSc; Jacqueline Tetroe, MA; Wenda Caswell, RN, MEd; and Nicole Robinson

Challenge 3: Audit culture

Measured on

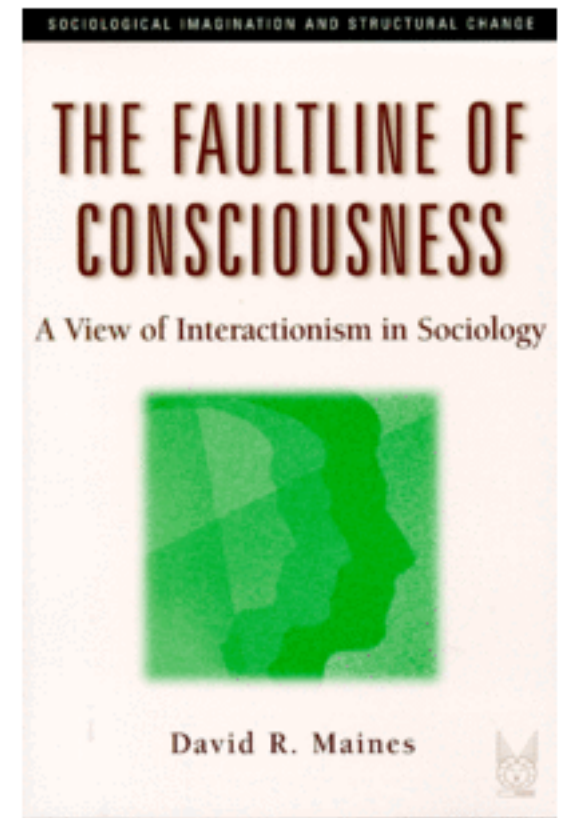
1. REF – 0, 1*, 2*, **3*** **4***

‘Significance, rigour and originality’



Challenge 4: 'Collective' amnesia

- Convenient amnesia (for gain?)
New wine in old bottles
For appearance of originality
Career progression
- Amnesia of the unacquainted



CAP or Performative/Performance inquiry?


We wish to call attention to the way...

1. Work is performed *for others*.
2. How words *do* things.
3. *Aesthetic* skills are key in *observing* and *reporting*.

‘What’s in a name?’

Mischief, Mystery, and Moments That Matter: Vistas of Performative Inquiry

Kenneth J. Gergen¹ and Mary M. Gergen²

Qualitative Inquiry
2014, Vol. 20(2) 213–221
© The Author(s) 2014
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/1077800413519074
qix.sagepub.com


Reflection

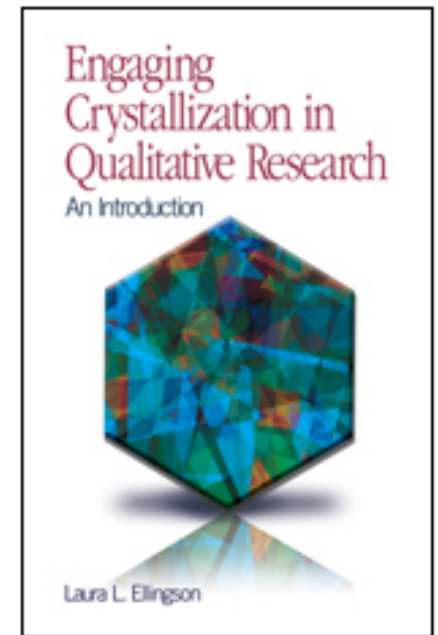
Bricoleur?

Not saying or arguing for

- ‘Anything goes’ methodologically or theoretically. Pick and mix approach – IPA and CA; DP and SDT
- ‘Mainstream’ realist: “These texts assume the author can give an **objective** accounting or portrayal, of the realities of a group or an individual” (Denzin, 2014, p. 574)

Not saying or arguing for

- Ignore epistemology or ontology
- More is better
- Triangulation
- A final solution

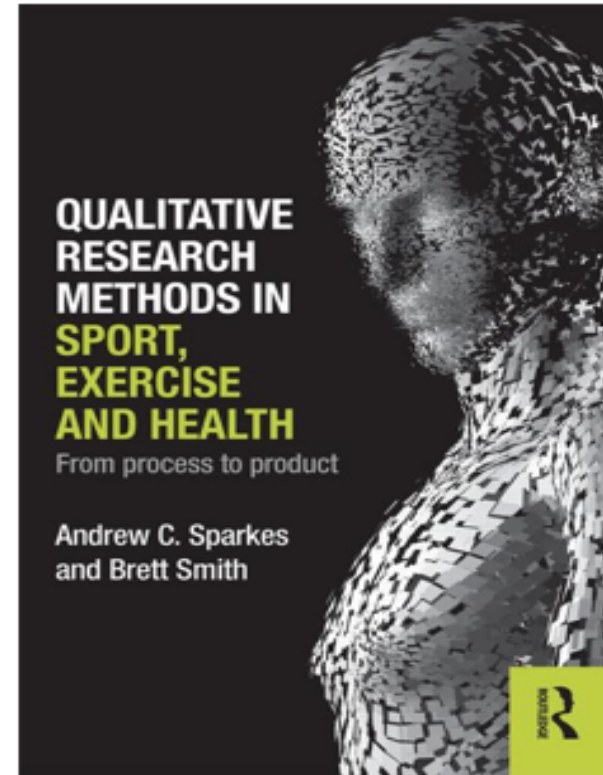


But

- Jigsaw
- Crystal
- A methodological path for allowing multiple analyses and forms of representation to be considered as part of informed choices

Conclusions

- CAP is here thanks to many people taking risks.
- But we cannot be complacent.
- Crystallisation might be useful



[View image](#)