

The dominance of dialogical interview research¹

A critical view

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The Peruvian military regimes of the 1970s regularly held what they called diálogos with peasants and workers, in which a military officer would deliver exhortations to an assembled group of peasants or workers, and the worker peasant-leaders would praise the political approach of the military government.²

Qualitative research interviewing has during the last decades become a sensitive and powerful method for investigating subjects' private and public lives. The qualitative interviews have often been regarded as a progressive form of social research. The interviews sometimes go under the name of dialogue, a concept, which has also become popular in political, managerial and educational contexts. I shall here discuss the possibility that research interviews may also entail soft, subjectified forms of power exertion, and outline their asymmetrical power relations. As a contrast to a neglect of power and conflict in warm and caring dialogical interview research, I will depict various forms of agonistic interviews, which deliberately play on power differences and contradictions. I shall then address societal contexts of interviewing and draw in the use of dialogues by the exercise of power in politics, management and education. Finally, I discuss

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² Tedlock and Mannheim: *The dialogical emergence of culture* 1995:4.

interviews in relation to seductive forms of manipulation in the interview culture of a postmodern consumer society.

The prevalence of caring interview dialogues

The interview has been defined as a meeting at which a reporter obtains information from a person, as a meeting in which a person is asked about his personal views, and more generally as a conversation with a purpose. The qualitative research interview is sometimes called a dialogue. Dialogue may be referred to as a conversation between egalitarian partners. A dialogue is a joint endeavour where both parts are searching for true understanding and knowledge. In an interview it is the one part, who seeks understanding and the other part serves as a means in the interviewer's search for knowledge. To term interviews as dialogues is then a misnomer, as it gives an appearance of mutual interests in a conversation which takes place for the purposes of one part – the interviewer.

Within philosophy one discerns between a Platonic truth-seeking dialogue and an I-thou self-constituting dialogue after Buber. In the I-thou philosophy the dialogue is regarded as a precondition for an I to exist, the I is constituted in a conversation between an I and a Thou. A simplified version of the latter has permeated the social and health sciences' understanding of dialogues as personal and caring, which I shall briefly depict here. Later I return to the Platonic dialogue in relation to agonistic interviews.

When qualitative interviews came into use in the social sciences in the 1970s, they were often regarded as a progressive dialogical form of research, providing a caring alternative to the objectifying positivist quantification of questionnaires and the harsh manipulation of behaviourist experiments. The dialogue suggested a mutuality and egalitarianism, in contrast to the alienated relations of the questionnaire survey. The qualitative interviewers entered into personal relationships with their subjects, adapting a gentle, unassuming non-directive approach. The qualitative interviews give voice to common people to freely present their lived world in their own words, and allow a democratic interaction of the researchers with their subjects. Qualitative interviews may undoubtedly function progressively in many contexts. Thus interviews give voice to the many; the marginalised who do not ordinarily participate in public debates, may in interview studies have their views and situation communicated to a larger audience. Oscar Lewis book *The children of Sanchez* (1964) is one example of

an empowering use of interviews to bring to attention the living conditions of exploited groups in Mexico. Bourdieu et al. (1999) have in their interviews with French immigrants at the bottom of society brought forth their oppressive, suffering situation to a wider public.

We may, however, encounter a qualitative progressivity myth, where caring dialogical interviews in themselves come to be regarded as good and emancipating (Brinkmann & Kvale 2005). Qualitative depth interviews have been regarded as in line with feminist emphasis on experiences and subjectivity, and of close personal interaction and harmony between researcher and the researched. It has also been maintained that while the linear thinking of men may be captured by questionnaires, the soft qualitative data come closer to the female life world (Scott 1985). While the early endorsement of qualitative interviews as caring and liberating was pronounced in feminist circles, their oppressive potentials have later been pointed out by feminist researchers (e.g. Burman 1997). A book on ethics by a group of feminist researchers (Mauthner et al. 2002) discusses how warm and caring interviews through “faking friendship” may involve an instrumentalism of human relationships. They point out how interviewers through management of their appearance build rapport and trust with their interviewees, as expressed in an introduction to qualitative research

...trust is the foundation for acquiring the fullest, most accurate disclosure a respondent is able to make...In an effective interview, both researcher and respondent feel good, rewarded and satisfied by the process and the outcomes. The warm and caring researcher is on the way to achieving such effectiveness (Glesne & Peshkin 1992:87).

Creating trust through a warm and caring relationship here serves as a means to efficiently obtain a disclosure of the interview subjects' world. The interviewer may with a gentle and charming client-centred manner create a close personal encounter where the subjects disclose their private worlds. A quasi-therapeutic interviewer role, building on emotional rapport and therapeutic knowledge of defense mechanisms, may, with an expression of the therapist Jette Fog (2004), serve as a “Trojan horse” to get behind the defense walls of the interview subjects, laying their private lives open to the interviewer. When under external pressures from a dissertation deadline or from a commercial project deadline, interviewers may be tempted to profit from a warm, personal relation to their subjects to stretch ethi-

cally the respect of their subjects privacy in order to get some printable information on the tape in time. Close personal, emotional relationships may here make an interview situation more prone to manipulation than the rather distanced relationships of an experimenter and experimental subjects.

I shall now, in contrast to a common conception of qualitative interviews as egalitarian and progressive, turn to the power dynamics, and their potential manipulative and exploiting aspects. I shall first spell out the power asymmetry of research interviews and thereafter, as a contrast to the caring consensual dialogical conception of interviews, present agonistic forms of interviewing emphasising conflicts and power. Then in the last part of the article I turn to the current societal uses of dialogues as an embellishment of hierarchical social relations, and to the interview culture of a consumer society.

The present critique does not concern therapeutic interviews, nor does it concern the establishment of personal relations in research interviews. The analysis concerns a disregard of the manipulative potentials of warm caring interviews, a neglect, which may be supported by dialogical conceptions of interviews as a conflict and power free zone. The discussion will be rather critical and one sided. There are today sufficient writings on the virtues of emphatic, qualitative interviews, including my own book *Interviews* (1996), where the power asymmetry and the conflicts in qualitative interviewing were given little attention.

The asymmetrical power relation of the interview

The power dynamics in the interview, and the potential oppressive use of interview-produced knowledge, are rarely mentioned in literature on qualitative research. There are some exceptions, such as Scheurich's (1995) postmodern critique of a liberal humanist understanding of the research interview as a jointly constructed conversation, where he goes on to analyse the complex dominance-and-resistance view of the play of power in the research interview. Briggs (2002) has analysed the asymmetries of power that emerge in interview situations, investing interviewers with control over what is said and how it is said, and the subsequent circulation of the knowledge produced in the interviews. Wengraf (2001), who has written one of the few textbooks, which addresses specifically the power/knowledge, domination and resistance in research interviews, points

out how the power dimension of interviewing is dangerously likely to be overlooked by the well-intentioned interviewer.

I shall follow up these analyses and give an overview of some of the power relations in research interviews. The qualitative research interview entails a hierarchical relationship with an asymmetrical power distribution of interviewer and interviewee. It is a one-way dialogue and an instrumental and an indirect conversation, where the interviewer upholds a monopoly of interpretation.

The interviewer rules the interview. The research interviewer has a scientific competence and defines the interview situation. The researcher determines time and place for interview, initiates the interview, determines the interview topic, poses the questions and critically follows up the answers, and also closes the conversation. The research interview is not a dominance-free dialogue between equal partners; the interviewer's research project and knowledge interest sets the agenda and rules the conversation.

The interview is a one-way dialogue. An interview is a one-directional questioning. The role of the interviewer is to ask, and the role of the interviewee is to answer. It is considered bad taste if interview subjects break with the ascribed interviewee-role and by themselves start to question the interviewer. We are here far from the reciprocal change of questioning and answering in a spontaneous conversation.

The interview is an instrumental dialogue. In the research interview an instrumentalisation of the conversation takes place. A good conversation is no longer a goal in itself, or a joint search for truth, but a means serving the researcher's ends. The interview is an instrument for providing the researcher with descriptions, narratives and texts, which the researcher then interprets and reports according to his or her research interests.

The interview may be a manipulative dialogue. A research interview may often follow a more or less hidden agenda. The interviewer may want to obtain information without the interviewee knowing what the interviewer is after, attempting to – in Shakespeare's terms – “By indirections find directions out”. Modern interviewers may attempt to use subtle therapeutic techniques to get beyond the subjects defences.

The interviewer's monopoly of interpretation. In social science research the interviewer generally upholds a monopoly of interpretation over the interviewee's statements. In daily conversations, as well as in philosophical dialogues, there may be a conflict over the true interpretation of what has been said. In contrast hereto, the research interviewer, as the “big

interpreter”, maintains an exclusive privilege to interpret and report what the interviewee really meant.

The power asymmetry of the research interview needs not be as one-sided as depicted here, the interviewees also have their possibilities of counter-measures.

Counter control. The interview subjects have their own countering options of not answering a question, talk about something else than the interviewer asks for, or merely tell what they believe the interviewer wants to hear. Some interviewees may themselves start to question the interviewer, and in rare cases also withdraw from the interview. The strength of the different counterstrategies will differ among interview subjects, with child interviews and elite interviews as two extremes.

Membership research. Some interview researchers attempt to reduce their dominance over their research subjects, such as when they give their interpretations back to the interviewees for validation in the form of “member checks”. There are though limits to such attempts to equalize the roles of the researchers and their subjects. There may be emotional barriers of the interviewees towards critical interpretations of what they have told and limitations in the subjects’ competence to address specific theoretical interpretations of their statements. On a practical level few interview researchers will let their subjects have the final say on what to report and what interpretations to put forth in their dissertations.

We may conclude that a research interview is not an open and dominance-free dialogue between egalitarian partners, but a specific hierarchical form of conversation, where the interviewer sets the agenda in accord to his or her research interests. While a hierarchical interview relation is a legitimate way of doing research, and so is the use of personal interview relations to produce knowledge. But the use of the term dialogue about the research interview is misleading; it is not an open conversation in the sense of an informal exchange of ideas, nor a dialogue in the sense of a mutual search for true knowledge by egalitarian partners. The neglect of power, conflicts and hierarchical relationships, supported by the conception of interviews as dialogues, may provide liberal humanistic interviewers with an illusion of equality and of common interests with their subjects, while the researchers at the same time dominate the interview situation and retain sovereign control of the later use of the interview produced knowledge.

Agonistic interview alternatives

There exist alternative conceptions and practices of interviewing to the caring and consensus-seeking research interviews. Different as the following alternatives may be among themselves, they acknowledge power differences and conflicts in the interview: the Platonic dialogue, actively confronting interviews, agonistic interview, and the psychoanalytic interview.

The Socratic dialogue. Socrates used the dialogue as a joint search for true knowledge. A Socratic approach to interviewing would imply emphasising conflicts in interpretations and approximate an egalitarian power distribution. It would entail a mutuality where both parts pose questions and give answers, with a reciprocal critique of what the other says. Some current elite interviews with experts, where the interviewer also confronts and contributes with his or her conceptions of the interview theme, come close to a Socratic dialogue. The research interview is no longer understood as via regia to an authentic inner self of the interviewee, but becomes a conversation, which stimulates the interviewee and interviewer to formulate their ideas about the research theme, and which may increase their knowledge of a common theme of interest. The openness of the Socrates' dialogues is debatable; it is thus also possible to read several of the dialogues as Socrates, through a cunning strategy of leading questions and flattery, leading his Sophist opponents through their own answers towards the truth Socrates wants to arrive at.

Actively confronting interviews. There are academic interview studies, which actively follow up and confront the subject's answers. Bellah and co-workers (1985) practiced what they called active interviews, which create the possibility of public conversation and argument. Active interviews do not necessarily aim for agreement between interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer questions what the interviewee says, for example if he contradicts himself, with Socrates as the explicit interviewer model. The Socratic attitude is explained as follows: "Though we did not seek to impose our ideas on those with whom we talked [...], we did attempt to uncover assumptions, to make explicit what the person we were talking to might have left implicit" (1995:304). We may also call to attention Piaget's interviews with children as actively confronting their understanding of physical and moral concepts and to a recent Foucault inspired analysis of the discourses of the interviewer and her interviewees as "discourses crossing swords" (Tinggaard 2003).

Agonistic interviews. A confronting approach may be radicalised by focusing on the conflict and power dimensions of the interview. This could be done by regarding the conversation as a battlefield, as suggested by Aaronson (1999) in her Bakhtinian inspired analyses of conversations. Such an agonistic understanding of the conversation is in line with Lyotard's depiction of knowledge in a postmodern society. He regards every statement as a move in a game, which is: "...at the base of our entire method: namely that to speak is to fight, in the meaning of a game, and that speech acts go forth from a general agonistics" (1984:xx). An agonistic interviewing would apply confronting modes, the interviewer deliberately provoking conflicts and divergences of interests, as seen in some forms of journalistic interviews. In contrast to the consensus-seeking dialogue, the interview would become a battle where the goal is to defeat the opponent, such as in Socrates' dialectical questioning of the Sophists, leading to insight through dialectical development of opposites.

The psychoanalytical interview. In contrast to a harmonious understanding of an interview as a dialogue between egalitarian partners, the psychoanalytic interview entails a clear hierarchical power asymmetry, visualised by the patient lying down and the therapist sitting up. The psychoanalytic interview takes place in the patient's interest in being cured for his suffering, and has a side effect produced significant psychological knowledge (Kvale 2003a). The therapist gives his critical interpretations of what the patients tell him back to the patient, and accepts neither the patient's "yes" or "no" at face value as validation, or disconfirmation, of an interpretation. The psychoanalytical situation is designed to create conflicts, to provoke maximum resistance from the patient towards the therapist's interventions. According to Freud the psychoanalytic theory is built upon the resistance the patient offers to the therapist interpretations.

I have here depicted some agonistic alternatives to the harmonious and emphatic dialogue conceptions and practices of research interviews. The diverse emphatic and agonistic interview practices may be relevant for different subjects and research purposes. I have here emphasised a transparency and acceptance of power, conflicts and dissensus as contributing to the objectivity of interview research, in line with a dialectical conception of knowledge as developed through contradictions. When the knowledge potentials of agonistic interviews have been relatively little developed in current qualitative research this may be due to a dominance of egalitarian consensus-seeking conceptions of social research. I shall now turn from dialogues and interviews in social research to their uses in broader societal

contexts, where dominance and inequality may be masked through caring and egalitarian dialogical conceptions of hierarchical and commercial social relationships.

Dialogues in management and education

The recent interest in applying dialogical interviews as a research method, reflects not only an internal scientific development – with a decline of positivism and the acknowledgement of phenomenological, hermeneutical and discursive approaches – but relates also to a general social development towards a dialogical culture. The concept of dialogue is today popular in politics, management and education. I will here outline the exertion of power through dialogues in these social arenas as one frame of reference for understanding the prevalence of dialogical conceptions of research interviews.

The invitation to an egalitarian dialogue tends today to come from the one at the top of a hierarchical relationship. I remember from Norway in the 1970s that when managers had conflicts with their workers they would call for a dialogue. It was necessary to go away from conflicts and violent actions and enter into a dialogue where one talks together about the common problems. There were also critical voices to the much talk of dialogue – labour leaders and Marxist workers would point to the unequal power positions in a dialogue of managers and workers, where the employers would set the agenda for the dialogue. There would not be a dialogue between two equal partners, on the contrary, one part had the legal right to manage and distribute the work of the other part, and to hire and fire the other part. More recently I see in Time Magazine (Dec. 17th, 2001) a picture of a violent demonstration, where workers were throwing stones at the police. The accompanying caption stated: “No talk: Algerian Berbers demand rights, not dialogue”.

The epigram introducing this article depicted the Peruvian military in the 1970s using dialogue meetings to admonish their peasants and workers. Dialogues are today a mainstream method to involve the citizens to follow the rulers’ demands, eg:

At the moment the political leader enters into a dialogue with the institutions and genuinely requests a given course, the institutions will be far more obliged to seek to carry out the superior political aims (Danish Department of Finances 1995:32)

In an anthology on dialogue and power in organizations the authors analyze problems by introducing dialogical communicative relationships within hierarchical organizations ruled by profit. In some cases the initial humanistic ideals came in the organizational practice to mask the use of “pseudo-dialogical techniques of manipulation” (Alrø & Kristiansen 2004).

I have also read about dialogue in education, which should be a humanistic and progressive alternative to the monologues of authoritarian teachers. In a Danish dictionary I found the following definition of an educational dialogue:

Dialogical pedagogy – education where teachers and students together and on an equal level, share each others knowledge and experiences, intentions and attitudes (Psykologisk-pædagogisk ordbog 1999).

On a conceptual level it is somewhat incongruous to use the word “teacher” in a setting where the teacher possesses no substantial or institutional authority over the pupil. If a teacher literally interacts with the pupils on an equal level this would imply an abdication of the teacher as a teacher. Within an educational context, teacher pupil interactions further tend to take place in situations where the teacher will be in a power position with regard to the students in the coming examinations. Students appear well aware of the power differences between teachers and students, while teachers may tend to overlook their power regarding the students, a finding common in interview studies (e.g. Kvale 1980). Within educational theory Løvlie (1984) has put forward a principal critique of a therapeutic and counselor inspired dialogical pedagogy for overlooking the asymmetrical relation of teachers and students. He replaces a romanticised Rogerian concept of dialogue with a Habermas inspired concept of discourse, and he argues for an open and strict Socratic discourse with a common search for truth as the ideal pedagogical relation.

The widespread use of dialogues may today create an impression of personal freedom and equality in social relations, which are characterised by hierarchical power relationships – in economical life between employer

and employees, in education between teacher and student, and in qualitative research between interviewer and interviewee. The use of illusions of freedom and equality to encounter resistance by embellishing and masking power exertion is not new. A writer on education depicted in 1762 the soft indirect forms of manipulation, now used in modern management and education, in the following way:

Let him [the child] always think he is master while you [the teacher] are really master. There is no subjection so complete as that which preserves the forms of freedom; it is thus that the will itself is taken captive...No doubt he ought only to do what he wants, but he ought to want to do nothing but what you want him to do (Rousseau, 1911:84-5).

The interview culture of a consumer society

I shall now turn to the extensive role of dialogues and interviews in the soft power exertion of a consumer society. Power is everywhere. Qualitative researchers have criticised the objectified power exertion of quantitative questionnaire and experimental research, notoriously in behaviourism with its goal of predicting and controlling the behaviour of other people. The objectifying control techniques are today followed up with subjectifying forms of power exertion, where the subjects learn, as exemplified above, through dialogical relationships, to want to do by themselves what they socially have to do. We are today so immersed in a dialogical culture that we may have difficulties to see its pervasiveness. We may here call to attention the Biblical statement “You see the splinter in you brothers eye, but not the beam in your own eye”, as rephrased by the Norwegian philosopher Hans Skjervheim (1996): “We do not see the beam in our own eye, because it is the beam we see with”. In our context we may rephrase again: we see the alienated objectified forms of power exertion of quantitative behavioural research, but not our intimate subjectifying dialogical exertion of power, because the dialogue is the beam we see our dialogical culture through.

Personal dialogues as a mode of control relates to a new intimization of social relations, depicted by Sennett (1974, 1993) as the tyranny of intimacy. Private life is made public, in the media talk shows, and in social research. Atkinson and Silverman (1997) have posed the question of why

the interview and its narrative products have come to play such a dominating role in social science research today. They point to a general culture where the production of the self has come in focus and where the interview serves as a social technique. Within a neo-romantic cult of the spontaneous narrating self, the interview is regarded as providing an authentic gaze into the other's soul, and the experiential narratives as a dialogical revelation of the authentic inner self. The media, most conspicuously in the many talk shows, are dominated by a new subjectivity and a culture of confession, where the self is revealed and reconstructed by narrating the personal life history. The interview becomes an emphatic social technology for biographical reconstruction and reconfirmation of a fragile self. Atkinson and Silverman conclude that the emphatic access to authenticity in interview research thus recapitulates central cultural themes by placing the biographical narrating self in the centre of social research. Briggs (2002) has analysed the key role interviews in the political technologies of the post modern era; in a society fragmented in time and space the interviews serve to create an illusion of face-to-face communication decision-making as forming the centre of social and political processes, providing a discursive machinery for naturalising social inequality.

We may ask further to the social bases of the hegemony of an interview culture which emphasises subjective experiences and narrative constructions of the self. I shall here go beyond a "Zeitgeist" – spirit of the age – as evoked by Silverman & Atkinson – to address the economic bases of the interview culture. The current pervasiveness interviews may also be traced to a transition of the economic system from a dominance of industrial production to consumption as the key to economic growth (Kvale 2003b). With the transition from dominance of the sale of products for use to the sale of experiences, life styles and identities, it becomes paramount for a market sensitive capitalism to carefully investigate the consumers' experiences and the meanings the products have for them. Trend spotting the consumers' meanings and styles have become decisive by the fabrication of new individual life styles the products may be attached to. Qualitative interviews provide a key access to the consumer's world, today commonly in the form of focus groups interviews. The consumers' experiences, wishes and desires are sensitively traced through therapeutically inspired interviews for the design and marketing of new products. Exploring and taking account of consumer wishes and desires by interviews have multiple functions. They may serve to improve and enrich the consumers'

choices of products, and they may serve to manipulate the interests of the consumers in the direction of increased consumption and profits.

We shall note that research interviewing may not only recapitulate dialogical forms of control of a consumer society, and provide knowledge for the manipulation of consumers, but is also historically linked to the advent of a consumer society. Qualitative research interviews were introduced in consumer research in the 1930s, nearly half a century before the breakthrough of qualitative interviews in the social sciences (Dichter 1960). Today the most extensive application of qualitative research interviews probably takes place within consumer research, in particular in the form of focus groups. Thus in year 1990 more than 100 000 focus group interviews were conducted in the United States (Vaugh, Schumm & Sinagub 1996). From Great Britain it has been estimated that qualitative market research – most commonly in the form of focus groups – accounts for perhaps \$ 2-3 billion a year of a world-wide market industry (Imms & Ereaut 2002). We may add that what may be the largest single interview investigation ever conducted took place in management. In the 1920s industrial counsellors at the Hawthorne electrical plant, following up experimental findings on the importance of management interest in the workers, carried out more than 20 000 qualitative interviews with the workers (see Kvale 2003a). The interview findings lead to the human relations leadership in industry, where the old harsh industrial discipline became replaced by a softer manipulation through understanding and empathy. Within the social sciences the hard objectifying questionnaires and experiments are today being supplemented with less resistance provoking softer, subjectifying interview techniques.

In light of the pervasive use of qualitative interviews in marketing and management it appears unwarranted to conceive of qualitative interviews such as emancipating and democratic, giving voice to the neglected and the oppressed. Qualitative interviewing may just as well, in all likelihood far more extensively today, be employed to explore and exploit the experiences and desires of workers and consumers, in order to better predict and control their behaviour. Taking the societal context of dialogues and research interviewing in account, with a transition from monological to dialogical modes of social control, and a change in economy from production to consumption of products and experiences, the heralding of caring interview dialogues and their anarchy of multiple voices as empowering and progressive appears questionable. We may here be reminded of August Comte's observation almost two centuries ago:

Those who in revolutionary epochs, with a strange form of pride, boast of the cheap merit to have inflamed the anarchistic passions of their contemporaries, do not at all recognize that their regrettable apparent triumph is in particular due to a spontaneous, predetermined tendency of the corresponding total societal situation (August Comte, Lecon 48).

Concluding perspective

I have in this article attempted to go beyond internal scientific reasons for the breakthrough of qualitative interviews research in the social sciences to also address broader societal trends of the last half of the 20th century. The rise of qualitative interviewing corresponds to social changes in the exercise of power, which involves a transition from direct objectifying forms of domination to more indirect subjectified forms of social control. An egalitarian conception of research interviews as caring dialogues may mask the power asymmetry of a hierarchical research relationship, thereby recapitulating the social embellishment of domination by a dialogical conception of the relations of management and workers, and pupils and teachers as egalitarian. Research interviews are also in line with a pervasive interview culture of making the private public, where qualitative interviews provide a *via regia* to the consumers' experiences and desires and the subsequent manipulation of their behaviour. With the close personal interaction and the powerful knowledge produced by interviews, ethics becomes as important as methodology in interview research (Brinkmann & Kvale 2005).

The present critique does not concern the philosophical use of dialogues after Plato and Buber, but addresses the employment of dialogues as masking contemporary exercise of power. The original concept of dialogue still inspires interviewers to work for transparent agonistic interview forms with openness to power and contradictions. Pointing out the power asymmetry within the interview situation, in emphatic as well as agonistic interviews, and the immersion of research interviewing in the dialogical interview culture of a consumer society, is not an argument against the value of research interviewing in the social sciences. It may, though, imply a caution with regard to conceiving of the qualitative interview as a unique authentic and democratic dialogue, and suggest careful analyses of the power dynamics within different forms of interviewing and their potentials for

ethical transgressions, as well as paying attention to social, commercial and political uses of the different forms of interview produced knowledge.

A key issue remains of who obtains access to, and who has the power and resources to act upon, what the multiple interview voices tell. I will here conclude with a fairy tale:

Little Red Riding Hood comes home to find a big wolf in her grandmother's bed and clothes, masking the nice grandmother. (Little Red Riding Hood is the questioning interviewer of this tale; I shall, however, focus on the Big Bad Wolf as portraying an interviewer role). The little girl was greatly amazed to see how her grandmother looked and asked:

Grandmother, what big eyes you have!
All the better to see you with, my child.
Grandmother, what big ears you have!
All the better to hear you with, my child.
Grandmother, what big teeth you have got!
All the better to eat you up with.
And saying these words, this wicked wolf fell upon
Little Red Riding Hood, and ate her all up.

There are many kinds of wolves. Today we may perhaps include some qualitative interviewers, who through their gentle unassuming approaches, including a charming faking of friendships, may circumvent their subjects' defences and invade their private worlds. Their big eyes and ears sensitively grasp what the multiple interview voices of their subjects tell them, all the better to control and potentially exploit their subjects. We may here note the admonition of Charles Perrault (1628-1703), who authored the French version of Little Red Riding Hood, and added the following morale:

Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say, "wolf", but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.

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