

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF
KATHY CHARMAZ

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STUDIES IN SYMBOLIC INTERACTION VOLUME 56

FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF KATHY CHARMAZ

EDITED BY

ANTONY BRYANT

Leeds Beckett University, UK

Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

And

ADELE E. CLARKE

University of California, San Francisco, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For Kathy Charmaz and Norm Denzin with profound appreciation.

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Antony Bryant is Professor of Informatics at Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK; Chief Researcher, The Education Academy, Institute of Educational Research, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania. He has written extensively on qualitative research methods, being Senior Editor of *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* (2007) and *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory* (2019); both co-edited with Kathy Charmaz. His recent writing on Grounded Theory includes *Grounded Theory and Grounded Theorizing: Pragmatism in Research Practice* (Oxford, 2017), *The Varieties of Grounded Theory* (SAGE, 2019), and *Continual Permutations of Misunderstanding: The Curious Incidents of the Grounded Theory Method*, Qualitative Inquiry, May 2020. Other recent writings include *Digital and Other Virtualities: Renegotiating the Image*, co-edited with Griselda Pollock (IB Tauris, 2010); “Liquid uncertainty, chaos and complexity: The gig economy and the open source movement,” *Thesis Eleven*, FEB 2020; “A Conversation between Frank Land and Antony Bryant,” *Journal of Information Technology*, June 2020 Parts 1 & 2; “What the Web has Wrought,” *Informatics* 2020, 7(2), 15. In 2020, he was one of the founding members of *The Coalition for Grounded Theory*, a small group of grounded theory experts who organized *World Grounded Theory Day – 12-MARCH-2021* – an international webinar incorporating presentations covering the key *varieties of grounded theory*. (Details and access to the presentations can be found at (<http://www.groundedtheoryonline.com/bibliography-and-references/conference/>)). He is honoured to have been asked to co-edit this Festschrift for Kathy with Adele Clarke.

Adele E. Clarke is Professor Emerita of Sociology and History of Health Sciences at University of California, San Francisco. She recently co-edited *Situational Analysis in Practice: Mapping Relationalities Across Disciplines* with Carrie Friese and Rachel Washburn, and they also wrote *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Interpretive Turn*. With Jan Morse, Kathy Charmaz and others, she co-authored the 2nd edition of *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation Revisited* (Routledge, 2021). Wearing her feminist STS hat, she most recently co-edited with Donna Haraway *Making Kin, Not Population: Reconceiving Generations*. She is honored to have co-edited this Festschrift for Kathy Charmaz with Tony Bryant.

César A. Cisneros-Puebla was Professor in the Department of Sociology at Autonomous Metropolitan University-Iztapalapa, Mexico, for more than 30 years and currently teaches Qualitative Methods and Social Sciences

Epistemology at the University of Tarapacá, Chile. He has been Visiting Researcher at the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta, Canada (2001–2003), in the CAQDAS Networking Project at University of Surrey, UK (2008), and Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences in the University of Augsburg, Germany (2015–2016). He has published extensively on Qualitative Computing and Qualitative Methods and belongs to Editorial Boards in journals such as *Qualitative Sociology Review*, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *Qualitative Health Research*, *International Review of Qualitative Research*, and *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, among others. He was the responsible editor for the Spanish version of *FQS (Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research)* 2001–2016.

Norman K. Denzin is Distinguished Emeritus Research Professor of Communications, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author, co-author, or co-editor of over 50 books and 200 professional articles and chapters, has founded or led learned organizations and has founded or served as editor for five scholarly journals.

Gary Alan Fine is the James E. Johnson Professor of Sociology at Northwestern University. He is currently conducting ethnographic research on Civil War history enthusiasts. He is the author of two soon-to-be published books: an ethnography of senior citizen activists, *Fair Share: Senior Activists, Tiny Publics, and the Culture of Resistance*, and *Group Life: An Invitation to Local Sociology* (co-authored with Tim Hallett). He dedicates this essay to Kathy Charmaz.

Gregory Hadley is a Professor of Cultural Studies and Applied Linguistics at Niigata University. He received his PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Birmingham (UK), where his primary focus was in the Sociology of English Language Teaching. A Visiting Fellow at the University of Oxford, he is the author of *English for Academic Purposes in Neoliberal Universities: A Critical Grounded Theory* (Springer, 2015) and *Grounded Theory for Applied Linguistics: A Practical Guide* (Routledge 2017).

Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman is Associate Professor of Sociology, Interim Vice President for Institutional Equity, and Senior Advisor to the President and Provost for Diversity and Inclusion at The University of South Florida. She received her BA from Cornell University and her MA/PhD in Sociology from Duke University. Her first book, *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families* (2015, UT Press), received awards from the American Sociological Association (Emotions Section and Embodiment Section) and book award from the Society for the Study of Social Interaction. This book is also the topic of her 2015 [TEDx talk](#). Along with several published articles and book chapters, in 2016, she co-edited the book *Race and the Politics of Knowledge Production: Diaspora and Black Transnational Scholarship in the USA and Brazil* (Palgrave). In 2022, she published a new book, *Second-Class Daughters: Black Brazilian Women and Informal Adoptions as Modern Slavery*, in

which she introduces how “affective captivity” facilitates the exploitation of Black women in Brazil.

Mitsuyuki Inaba is Professor at the College of Policy Science, Ritsumeikan University in Osaka, Japan. His research interests include Computational Linguistics, Digital Humanities, and Digital Forensics. He has published many article and research papers applying Text Mining and Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to the fields of forensic science and learning science. He is the current president of Japan Society of Mixed Methods Research (JSMMR). He is also a member of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), Japanese Society of Artificial Intelligence (JSAI), the Association for Natural Language Processing (ANLP), and other academic associations.

Hisako Kakai is a Professor of International Communication in School of International Politics, Economics, and Communication at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo. Her research interests include research methodology and intercultural communication. In her research, Hisako has been using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. She has published numerous journal articles and books in both English and Japanese. She co-translated into Japanese *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* by Kathy Charmaz (2006). Hisako is an editorial board member for the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. From 2015 to 2017, she served as the founding President of the Japan Society for Mixed Methods Research (JSMMR), the first and sole mixed methods academic association in Japan.

Elaine Keane is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Sociology of Education and Research Methods, and Director of Doctoral Studies, in the School of Education at the University of Galway, Ireland. Her research and publications centre on social class and diversity in higher education and teacher diversity, and she is lead editor of a book about diversifying the teaching profession (Routledge, 2023). Elaine’s research interests also include research methodology, especially constructivist grounded theory, on which she has collaborated and published with Professors Kathy Charmaz and Robert Thornberg and taught workshops in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the United States, including at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI) since 2015. Elaine also serves on the Editorial Board of the UK journal *Teaching in Higher Education*.

Janice Morse is a Distinguished Professor Emerita, University of Utah, College of Nursing and Professor Emerita, University of Alberta. She is Editor-in-Chief of *Qualitative Health Research*. She is a friend and colleague of Kathy’s, and has authored several manuscripts using grounded theory and conducted grounded theory research.

Kumar Ravi Priya is a Professor of Psychology at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. He is a Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Fellowship Awardee, 2017–2018,

for conducting his research at Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut, USA. For two decades, he has been engaging with post-disaster trauma, suffering and healing among the survivors of natural and human-made disasters in India. Five papers published in reputed international journals by his research team on the issues of mental health promotion during COVID-19 have been included in the WHO Database with unique WHO-COVID IDs. He is also the Chief Editor of a book series titled, *Mental Health Experiences of Vulnerable Groups from Interdisciplinary Perspectives: Critical and Qualitative Approaches* being published by Routledge, UK, in 2020–2025. His publications are primarily in the areas of qualitative methodology and disaster mental health, and include an edited book titled, *Qualitative Research on Illness, Wellbeing and Self-Growth: Contemporary Indian Perspective* published in 2015 by Routledge (Taylor & Francis).

Susie Scott is Professor of Sociology at the University of Sussex. She specialises in the micro-sociological theoretical perspectives of symbolic interactionism of Goffman's dramaturgy and phenomenology, applied to questions of self-identity. She has conducted studies of shyness, swimming, asexuality, performance art and total institutions. Susie is the author of *Shyness and Society: The Illusion of Competence* (Palgrave, 2007), *Making Sense of Everyday Life* (Polity, 2009), *Total Institutions and Reinvented Identities* (Palgrave, 2011), *Negotiating Identity: Symbolic Interactionist Approaches to Social Identity* (Polity, 2015) and *The Social Life of Nothing: Silence, Invisibility and Emptiness in Tales of Lost Experience* (Routledge, 2019). Susie is currently working on a project funded by the Leverhulme Trust, entitled "Narratives of nothing: stories of the great undone."

Denise R. Simmons, PhD, PE, PMP, LEED-AP, is the Associate Dean for Workforce Development in the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering at the University of Florida. She has over 10 years of construction and civil engineering experience working for energy companies and as a project management consultant; over 15 years of experience in academia; and extensive experience leading and conducting multi-institutional, workforce-related research and outreach. She is concerned first about the human condition and driven and inspired by what a civil engineering or construction organization can achieve related to sustainability and the triple bottom line by attending to the needs of its people. Supported by more than \$7.5M in federal funding and with results disseminated across more than 100 refereed publications, her research focuses on developing and sustaining an effective engineering workforce, with specific emphasis on topics related to civil engineering; engineering education; and inclusion. As director of the Simmons Research Lab, her current interests include competency development via education and training; interactions between humans and technology; and conceptualization of leadership in engineering.

Robert Thornberg is Professor of Education at the Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning at Linköping University in Sweden. He has previously been a member and the Secretary of the Board for the Nordic Educational

Research Association (NERA) and a member of the Swedish Research Council's Committee for Educational Sciences. His major areas of research interest are school bullying and bystander behaviors of bullying and peer victimization, particularly in relation to moral and social processes, among children and adolescents. Thornberg uses a range of research methods such as qualitative interviewing, focus groups, questionnaires and ethnographic fieldwork, but has particular expertise in grounded theory. He has published numerous articles in a range of peer-reviewed journals and written and co-authored book chapters on grounded theory in various method books. Publication examples are: Charmaz, K., & Thornberg, R. (2021). The pursuit of quality in grounded theory. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18, 305–327; Charmaz, K., Thornberg, R., & Keane, E. (2018). Evolving grounded theory and social justice inquiry In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage; Thornberg, R. (2012). Informed grounded theory. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 56, 243–259; Thornberg, R. & Charmaz, K. (2012). Grounded theory. In S. D. Lapan, M. T. Quartaroli, & F. J. Reimer (Eds.), *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*. John Wiley/Jossey-Bass; Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded theory and theoretical coding. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative analysis*. Sage; Thornberg, R. & Dunne, C. (2019). Literature review in grounded theory. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of current developments in grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage; Thornberg, R., & Keane, E. (2022). Designing grounded theory studies. In U. Flick (Ed.), *Sage handbook of qualitative research design*. Sage.

Terrie Vann Ward PhD, APNP FNP-C, GNP-BC, is currently practicing as a nurse practitioner in Washington. She serves as a mental health consultant for older adults residing in nursing homes. She took her BSN at DePaul University in Chicago, IL, her MSN (psychiatric nursing) from Rush University in Chicago, IL, and her PhD in nursing from the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. Her work focuses on chronic illness, older adults, mental health concerns, and social justice concerns.

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VOLUME EDITORS' PREFACE

The chapters that comprise this *Festschrift* for Kathy Charmaz are testimony both to her powerful and enduring legacies across many academic fields and to her profound interactions with and commitment to those she encountered in her extensive scholarly sojourns.

True to form, as Adele Clarke explains in her contribution, Kathy made clear and precise arrangements for this *Festschrift* in the weeks before she died in July 2020. Earlier in the year she had prepared detailed instructions regarding a possible session in her memory at the SSSI conference scheduled for 2021 in Chicago. As the pandemic intensified, however, it was clear that such events were no longer on the agenda in the foreseeable future. Fortunately, Norm Denzin immediately came forward with the generous offer to publish a *Festschrift* in Kathy's honour in his series *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*. Kathy was really thrilled and honoured by this, and she was able to discuss her wishes with Adele for how this should be developed, who should edit the collection, and who should be approached to contribute.

We were particularly keen that the *Festschrift* did justice to the profound and varied ways in which Kathy's work has inspired and stimulated practitioners as well as researchers. As such, our invitation noted that we welcomed contributions that incorporated some level of reminiscence and personal reflection, but also focused on the substantive ways in which contributors had benefitted from Kathy's work – building upon, extending, and enhancing her ideas. We requested that contributors discuss their own work in this regard, and the work of others who have taken up Kathy's work and influence along similar lines.

When Tony and Kathy were preparing *The Handbook of Grounded Theory* (2007), they were told that of the 30 or so potential contributors no more than 50% would accept the invitation, and that they should plan the volume accordingly. In the event, not only did all those invited respond positively, but several of those who had been invited to review the proposal asked if they could also be included. Everyone wanted to be associated with a collection edited by Kathy! Subsequently for *The Handbook of Current Developments* (2021), all those invited eventually contributed chapters, and in this case, under Kathy's careful guidance, the invitations went to a wide and international selection of authors, ranging across a variety of disciplines. It was therefore no surprise to us that all the invitations for her *Festschrift* prompted speedy, positive, and enthusiastic responses.

Kathy's knowledge of writers and researchers engaged in grounded theory and qualitative research in general was encyclopaedic. Those with whom she corresponded and collaborated encompassed seasoned researchers as well as those at

earlier stages of their careers and was not restricted geographically. Consequently, the 14 contributions which comprise this volume are testimony to Kathy's international reputation, as well as her rich and varied networks. A few are brief, largely personal accounts and reminiscences; others are more substantial, but even these highlight Kathy's personal relationship with the author(s) in addition to her influence and input as researcher, scholar and authoritative writer.

Norm Denzin's is the shortest contribution, but his role in promoting and supporting Kathy cannot be overestimated. For example, he made sure her legacy was acknowledged in her lifetime by receiving in 2018 the Lifetime Achievement Award in Qualitative Inquiry for Dedication and Contributions to Qualitative Research, Teaching, and Practice, International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. Kathy was always ready to offer anecdotes about herself, including the oft-repeated and highly deprecatory one about Anselm Strauss telling her she couldn't write! This may have held a grain of truth in the 1970s, but those of us who wrote with her over the past 25+ years can readily attest to the high standards of writing to which she adhered, and which she also expected from her collaborators. Amongst her colleagues, however, she was always ready to stress how important Norm had been to her; offering her a platform for her papers and conference presentations – opportunities that elsewhere were usually only available to those with positions at prestigious institutions, and then largely restricted to men. Kathy was convinced that, but for the support of Norm and a few others, her work would have been largely ignored, or "borrowed" by others and passed off as theirs. In preparing the *Festschrift*, this was pointed out to Norm whose immediate response was that this was the lesser part of their mutual debt; he owed far more to Kathy than she owed to him.

Janice Morse and Adele Clarke were near contemporaries of Kathy, all key representatives of the "Second Generation" of Grounded Theorists (Morse et al., 2009, 2021). Here Morse offers a brief sketch of Kathy's early years and upbringing, contextualizing the enormous challenges she faced both in general terms as a woman trying to make her way in the class-based and male-dominated academic world of the 1960s and 1970s, and personally battling with ill-health and a variety of blows to her self-esteem as she developed her career. Deliberately making extensive use of Kathy's own words, Morse shows how Kathy succeeded "in spite of" a whole host of trials and obstacles, drawing on her background and personal experiences to enrich her studies and writings. The result is an object lesson in research practice – that remaining continuously engaged with one's research participants, themselves often embroiled in the harsh realities of life, is adhering to the highest standards of academic rigour and clarity.

Clarke's contribution complements this, focusing on Kathy's "late flowering," specifically the work Kathy produced in the last 25 years of her life, largely developing her constructivist grounded theory. In effect Clarke argues that the richness and measure of Kathy's later work emanated from the complexities and challenges of her early years, moving from occupational therapy into an academic career. Her becoming an academic was "accidental," but provided a unique combination of experiences and social awareness which she drew upon in

her later work centered on social justice. Taken together with Morse's chapter, we can see that Kathy not only overcame the early obstacles put in her way, but used her experience of overcoming them as a foundation for moving from trepidation and apprehension to becoming "older, wiser, and much more daring."

The contributions from Hisako Kakai and Mitsuyuki Inaba, and Gary Fine span Kathy's development as the doyenne of constructivist ground theory. Fine shows how Kathy's landmark work from 1991, *Good Days, Bad Days*, opens up the temporal and reflexive aspects of qualitative research, "the threads of temporality as integral to identity." Kakai and Inaba then take Kathy's work into the era of Big Data and text mining, not simply as a technology-oriented technique but as an encouragement for researchers wanting to promote social justice.

Kathy's concern to encourage researchers from far and wide is exemplified in the contributions from César Cisneros-Puebla (Chile), Greg Hadley (Japan), Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman (Brazil), and Kumar Ravi Priya (India), as well as that from Kakai and Inaba (Japan). They all indicate how Kathy's re-orientation of GTM laid the intellectual foundations for their work. But crucially, in all cases, this was accompanied by an intensely personal form of support and mentoring by Kathy herself. This is also a key aspect of the contributions from Terrie Vann Ward, Denise Simmons, and Elaine Keane. In the words of Vann Ward, being mentored by Kathy was the chance to experience "an educated woman striving to do her best in sharing what she had with all she encountered."

The remaining contributions come from two of the people with whom Kathy collaborated extensively over the past 20+ years. Robert Thornberg writes from the perspective of a Professor of Education with extensive experience of research focusing on bullying and victimization amongst schoolchildren and adolescents. His contribution explains how Constructivist Grounded Theory dovetails with "the new sociology of childhood". Specifically, it aligns with Kathy's focus on the ways in which "participants' in this case children's – everyday life, shared understandings . . . experiences and perspectives [are put] at the center of inquiry." Robert and Kathy's joint writings have enhanced GTM, developing Kathy's focus on social justice and continuing articulation of the Chicago legacy of American pragmatism and symbolic interactionism emanating from the work of Anselm Strauss.

Antony Bryant in his contribution explains how he first came to read Kathy's work around 2000–2001. He contacted Kathy, and in the words of Captain Renault in *Casablanca*, "it was the start of a beautiful friendship". Kathy regarded him as a kindred spirit, and encouraged by Patrick Brindle at Sage in London, they embarked on what became *The Handbook of Grounded Theory* (2007). This landmark collection included a wide range of grounded theorists and qualitative researchers, all personally known to Kathy. When Sage approached Kathy and Tony for "an updated volume", they thought it would be far better to prepare an entirely different but complementary one, with new contributions from some of the earlier authors as well as inviting new contributors, particularly those working outside Europe and North America. Kathy was particularly pleased with this later volume, *The Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory* (2019), as many chapters took up her exemplary work on social

justice issues. Kathy and Tony were also delighted that both collections included a wide range of GTM orientations, broadly representing “the varieties of grounded theory”.

In early 2020, one of the contributors to the later *Handbook*, Vivian Martin, contacted Kathy with the idea, like Jan Morse’s (2009) “Second Generation”, of trying to bring together a disparate group of grounded theorists with the aim of moving on from the rancour and suspicion that had become an unpleasant and unwelcome facet of those writing about and using the method. Kathy was, of course, fully supportive of this, and with her encouragement Vivian duly contacted a range of people who subsequently embarked upon a venture that became, initially *The Grounded Theory Coalition*, and latterly *The International Grounded Theory Alliance*. Unfortunately Kathy did not live to see this come to fruition, but their inaugural *Grounded Theory Day* on March 12, 2021, with contributions from the key “varieties” of GT, is in no small way testimony to Kathy’s unique contributions to GTM and qualitative research, and the inspiration she provided to so many.

Antony Bryant and Adele E. Clarke

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