

***Qualitative research and subjectivity: the construction of information
processes***

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Rey, F. L. G. (2005). *Pesquisa qualitativa e subjetividade: os processos de construção da informação*. São Paulo, SP: Thomson.

Fernando Luis González Rey (1949-2019), a Cuban, psychologist and epistemologist, breaks normative systems, develops the Cultural-Historical Theory of Subjectivity and brings into focus the subject of many cultural challenges facing life, among them the resistance and opposition from those who did not understand their options, their positions, the theory and its value for the humanities and social sciences.

He came to Brazil in 1995, where he worked tirelessly in the creation of this theory until the end of his life, making evident his ethical and moral commitment to the production of knowledge on the development of the individual and of the society, especially in the construction of a research model involving qualitative research in epistemological and theoretical reflection processes and not on simple empirical data collection.

His thoughts on qualitative research, exposed in many articles and books, debated in Brazil and abroad, contributed and should continue to contribute to the formation of critical and creative researchers, as shown in the book “Qualitative research and subjectivity: The information construction processes”.

With this research model, as a theoretical production, it countered hegemonic dogmatism, methodologism and instrumentalism in the Human and Social Sciences. His major

contribution was exactly this, that is, to give the researcher the task of thinking and producing theory about the problem studied, or to understand and explain cultural-historical processes, dynamically interrelated in the constitution and development of the individual and society.

Based on the principles and definitions of Qualitative Epistemology, González Rey develops this research model for the study of subjectivity, a model that constitutes an advance for several fields of knowledge and cannot be ignored, especially by Education and Psychology.

The fact is that, in the development process of the theory of subjectivity, the author emerges as a subject of knowledge, creates Qualitative Epistemology and proposes the constructive-interpretative method that requires of the researchers a complex thought, a thought about the uniqueness of the human development process and its generalization in concepts.

With this qualitative research model, González Rey confronted the “ghosts” of traditional research, such as speculation and the fantasies of the researcher in the process of theoretical production. It was in this way that it transformed the value and consequences of qualitative research in the Human and Social Sciences. In fact, he assumed the researcher's speculation and fantasy as elements of the constructive-interpretative process of information about the problem studied.

In summary, imbued with the study of subjectivity as a complex of individual and social elements, internal and external, dynamically and contradictorily interrelated, the author presents in this book, in four chapters, the necessary explanations about the theoretical-methodological processes, which the researcher must know to face the complex task of producing knowledge about human phenomena.

In the first chapter, González Rey presents subjectivity as an ontological definition and discusses the theoretical and methodological implications of this definition for qualitative research supported by the principles of qualitative epistemology. For example, the principle of legitimacy of the case study for the production of knowledge as human production for the opening of “zones of meaning” or “spaces of intelligibility” on the problem and for the deepening of the theoretical construction on it.

From my point of view, this is one of the most important contributions of this author to qualitative research as a process of knowledge production. This contribution has instigated researchers to reflect on the complexity of the reality studied, or how it integrates multiple interrelated fields. In the second chapter, González Rey presents the methodological unfolding of this epistemology, the constructive-interpretative method, an alternative to the dominant instrumentalism in Psychology. Clearly, the author explains how this method allows the theoretical production of the researcher in the live research process and how this production

from the constructed information guides his dialogue with participants about the problem studied.

Also in this chapter, the author discusses the significance of the use of instruments in this qualitative research model, or the “inducers” of the subjects’ expressions about their experiences. It addresses, for example, how the use of written instruments – writing, sentence completion, and the conflict of dialogues - trigger these expressions, characterizing the quality of information built.

On the research project in this perspective, the author clarifies that it is not centered on the number of subjects, nor on the methodical organization of steps to be followed, but on what emerges at different moments of the process of construction and dialogue about information.

In continuation, in the third chapter, González Rey discusses what characterizes the constructive-interpretative method; that is, it allows the theoretical production in the different stages of the research process and guides the researcher regarding the methodological approach to be developed.

On this occasion, he talks about the research project in this perspective, which unlike traditional research, does not define the problem to be studied by the researcher, whose challenge is to be creative in the construction of a theoretical model that allows him to mean what the problem is.

In the last and fourth chapters, González Rey dedicates himself to explaining the “Information building processes in qualitative research guided by qualitative epistemology”, at which point he expounds his thoughts on the value of the conversational dynamics and instruments for promoting these processes. Thus, he explains that the value of information is to serve the interpretation and opening of new areas of meaning of the problem or the further development of theory.

With this, it shows how the researcher can, through the constructive-interpretative principle, counteract the positivist model of science. Instead of describing the “collected data”, it can produce a theoretical representation of the studied reality, integrating aspects of its organization and processuality.

Finally, he explains how his thoughts about qualitative research is different from qualitative research based on other epistemologies, such as discourse analysis and the analysis of discursive practices. For this, it offers examples of how the process of qualitative research, such as the production of knowledge, the categories of analysis represent implementation and organization of the constructive-interpretative process of information.

The invitation to review this book was very significant, since qualitative research from the perspective of González Rey is an inexorable advance, to be duly considered in several fields of knowledge, such as Socionomy, a theoretical system that deals with human relations, according to the author, the individual produces subjectivity.

Finally, I note that the fact of living more than 20 years with this great master, Fernando Luis González Rey, was a joy and an honor. From him I learned how to think about the issues of the human mind and to question without fear the immobility that characterizes the dogmatic positions in Psychology.

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