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## **(N)One Paradigmatic Research Design Space: A Transformative Approach**

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**Dr. Roshan Thapa**, Northern Light Academy of Aviation and Technology (Kathmandu, Nepal)

**Dr. Otto F. von Feigenblatt**, Royal Academy of Doctors of Spain (Madrid, Spain)

**Abstract:** *In this article I have epitomized odyssey related to pedagogical thoughtfulness in my doing of doctoral thesis on self-inquiry- a song of liminality. Liminality, a Latin derived word from 'līmen, etymologically means "a threshold"- is a nodal state which is marked with ambiguity or disorientation (Taylor, in Bohannon, & Glazer, 1973) covers the period when I was tangled me up in the blue, neither " Being There" nor "Being Here". Liminality as an eigenvector for an alternative ontology, epistemology and axiology, brings into my consideration of NPRDS at my disposal to riposte reductionists' oddities and ostentations in case of doing self-inquiry and, also I assume, other qualitative research.*

*All I ask my potential readers of this article is to understand NPRDS in the dominion of qualitative inquiry as an allegory of the shift from "The" to "A" is a "Pinteresque" and "Epistemic Break" in my attempt as a "Broader Crosser" with "A Practice of No Practice" that transpires through "Third Space". Such an endeavor, as a whole, has been so healing, insightful and therapeutic for me and I hope a similar impact on the personal and professional level of my potential readers, to add a brick in dominion of transformative research.*

**Keywords:** *Liminality, Transformative Research, Pinteresque, Third Space, Self-inquiry, "Satchitanand".*

### **1. Introduction**

Much Madness is divinest Sense  
To a discerning Eye  
Much Sense -- the starkest Madness  
'Tis the Majority  
In this, as All, prevail --  
Assent -- and you are sane --  
Demur -- you're straightway dangerous --  
And handled with a Chain --  
-Emily Dickinson

I have inaugurated my doing of self-inquiry then and this article with poem by Dickinson is to convey two ideas and narrate the kind of radical philosophy centripetal to my notion of NPRDS. My first point is obvious one, even if it is not made explicit: in spite of the abstraction and frequent recourse to qualitative research, I wish to assume somewhat holy position from the hitherto available traditions of qualitative research, that this nodal experiences is intensely personal objectify my standpoint; nevertheless, the poem and the quote must be thought of as a constant background to all that follows. Secondly, I want use them to suggest that the poem and the quote stands as an allegory of the polemics of my liminality, assenting versus demur the evocative and analytical alms of the predecessors of self-inquiry. I have my firm conviction on what a famous spiritual leader Dalai Lama quoted that “People take different roads seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they are not on your road does not mean they have gotten lost” (*n.d.*). This is a complex point, not meant to imply that incidents I narrate are actually personal; rather well drenched with core values of transformative research gaining its currency in academia at present.

The structuring of this article itself is a portrayal of transformative venture that my doctoral thesis on self-inquiry upheld. In align with the notion of Spry (2001)- “*Being There*” and

“*Being Here*”, from my position at “*Threshold*” , I begin with the narration of “*Being There*” illuminates my postcard experiences responsible for the resurrection of myself as a transformative self-inquirer with the notion of NPRDS at my disposal. From my position in “*Being Here*”-a scholar among scholars- I adjacently rationalize my notion of NPRDS with the narration of how my doing of self-inquiry during my doctoral thesis has been viable under NPRDS. The final stanza of the article is devoted concluding remarks narrates my assumption of possible future implication of my doing.

## **2. At Threshold: Illuminating Liminalities**

### **Being There: As a Story-teller**

*There was a cub reared along with a herd of sheep from the very day of its birth. As it grew, it learnt to bleat and eat grass. Then this flock of sheep was attacked by another lion. The lion was surprised to find a full grown lion running away in fear. Lion caught hold of this younger lion dragged it to the forest and told it that it was a lion and acting like a sheep did not befit it. To convince it, the older lion showed its reflection in the lake. The young lion was convinced that it was a lion and not a sheep and in a moment gave up its fear.*

In introspection, analogically, I was brought up by the reductionists who were the devotees of dualism training students dividing reality into two mutually exclusive either...or...categories and the privilege of one over another (Luitel, 2009). I was tangled up in the blue, with the tug-of war between evocative and analytical in case of doing self-inquiry. The more the consultations of books and scholars alike I became aware about the fact that since its border crossing from the social science around 30 years ago, transformative

researchers have been providing radically new perspective for examining and transforming curricular policies and practices at all levels, up to and including teacher education and graduate research (Taylor, 2013). I realized that the reductionist melody is the biggest fallacy dumping the reality partially through reflecting disciplinary territories, bending the range and methodologies and capturing only a narrow slice of experience (Berry, 2007). With this conscientization, the longer the journey their blossomed the more desire for demurring from the slaughter of reductionists.

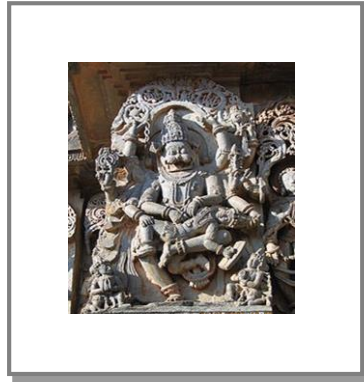
At this detour, finally, I got convinced by the notion of Denzin (2013) - "*The Death of Data*" - that data died long time ago, but few noticed (p.1) thus urged, "the readers to imagine a world without data, a world without method, a world without hegemonic politics of evidence, a world where no one counts, a world with ends" (p.1).

I mull over:

*How I could be idiosyncratically influential in introducing alternative ideas and paradigms to work out binary of reductionist?*

*How I could articulate an approach to research as what can be best called "writing to reach" which "evoke an emotional resonance" with the reader and make inextricable, unhearable, and confidential dimensions that I envisage as prerequisite to make my inquiry complete but impossible via normal means lucid and vivid?*

I was, in Wood's (2016) terms, with these productive tensions. The legend of *Narasimha*<sup>1</sup>, one of the manifestations of lord Vishnu<sup>2</sup> to destroy the narcissism of reductionist-like devil *Hiranyakashipu*<sup>3</sup> (see image), that my Eastern orientation has taught me becomes an impetus to look back and move ahead. Analogically, I have materialized that I need as in



in Giroux's (2005) sense of "Boarder Crossing" a discrete manifestation in the domain of self-inquiry. This concern strengthened my desire to embody critical democracy to unleash the transformative potential of educational research that embracing diverse perspectives can serve to strengthen the depth of engagement, quality, and potential impact of qualitative research (Guyotte & Sochacka, 2016). In that follows a notion similar to that of Jipson and Paley (2013) - '*No Style, No Composition and No Judgment*' - an impetus to think differently through distinct and

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<sup>1</sup>Narasimha is often visualized as having a human torso and lower body, with a lion face and claws. Vishnu is believed to have taken this manifestation to destroy the demon king [Hiranyakashipu](#).

<sup>2</sup>Vishnu is one of the [principal deities](#) of [Hinduism](#), who takes various manifestation. One of them was Narasimha.

<sup>3</sup>Hiranyakashipu, according to legend, was the king of the *daityas* and had earned a boon from Brahma that made him virtually indestructible. He grew arrogant, thought he was God, and demanded that everyone worship only him. He was subsequently killed by the Narasimha. His tale depicts the futility of desiring power over others and the strength of God's protection over his fully surrendered devotees.

interrelated mode of knowing as envisioning, knowing in action, knowing from cultural situatedness and knowing through critical reflexivity (Taylor , 2013). I am in align with Taylor, Taylor and Luitel, (2012) I developed the perspective that transformative research with its emphasis on experimentation liberates inquirer from narrowly conceived positivist notion of research as testing with the subscriptions of metaphor research as transforming personal-professional practices from the obviousness and status quo, a shift in the purpose of research from producing knowledge and information to developing consciousness and consciences (Taylor, Taylor, &Luitel, 2012). In other words, desire to exercise the principle of individuality and self-determination in my case of doing self-inquiry revived.

### **Being Here: As a Transformative Self-Inquirer**

The genesis of this individuality and self-determination in my case doing self-inquiry is in the philosophy of “*Satchitanand*”<sup>4</sup> which places its value on “I” (Bhaktivedanta Swami Praphupada, 1986). The word “*Satchitanand*”, in its segregation stands to mean: “*Sat*” meaning the existence, undeniably things exist speaks about my ontology; “*Chit*” meaning consciousness, with different consciousness(paths) we can understand to that “*Sat*” speaks about my epistemology” and; “*Anand*” meaning the state of blissfulness, we do things foremost for personal emancipation and satisfaction speaks about my axiology. My comprehension of “*Satchitanand*” is as par with the “Living Educational Theory” of Whitehead (2014) that qualitative research is focused on the generation of valid and evidence-based explanations by researchers of their educational

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<sup>4</sup>*Satchitanandais* a compounded Sanskrit word consisting of "sat", "cit" and "ananda", is translated as "Truth Consciousness Bliss".

influences in their own learning, and in the learning of the social formations, which influence their practice and writings for the generation of living educational theories

Ontologically, postulates of a relativist is viable in developing the notion NPRDS as I believe reality is neither fixed nor entirely external but is created by and moves with, the changing perception and beliefs of the viewer, i.e., inter subjective (Duncan, 2004). I discard the notion of the existence of single reality with my belief in the existence of experience based, contextual realities in the form of multiple mental constructions at different times in different circumstances (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

Epistemologically, I am directed by what Bhabha (1994) calls “*Third Space*” represents a series of dialectical movements between and beyond binary opposites thereby opening a new vista for thinking and actions aiming to generate holistic meaning. My notion of “Third Space” as dialectical movements, thus, suspends the prevailing essentialisms that process and products are separate, and “AND” or “OR” typed categorization of the reality with its emphasis on renewed articulation so as to represent ever unrecognized fluidity, liminalities, uncertainty and partiality embedded in them (Luitel,2016). I endorse an academic leap from “*The to A*” to questioning and re/narrating metanarratives that were culturally, politically, and ideologically and, of course knowledge in time and context.

My potential readers might ask here:

*What will happen to dualistic categories after embracing a third space perspective?*

*Do we need to polarize in order to publicize?*

Not at all. For my axiology is evolved around what Reinertsen and Otterstad (2013) called “*Pinteresque*”, which means placing in the company of authors considering unique or influential enough to elicit an eponymous adjective. As an individual’s living educational-theory practitioner, I believe in the values-based explanation an individual offers for their educational influence in their own learning, the learning of others and the learning of social formations (Whitehead, 2014). Thus, for me, they will remain as partial representing categories rather than all-encompassing categories, thereby engendering much-needed synergies for thinking inclusively and creatively (Luitel, 2016). Upholding the “Third Space” metaphor I wish to exercise and promote an interdependent mode of thinking and actions rather than exclusively isolated and individualistic thinking arising from Cartesian dualism. My goal is to explore and experiment – to learn and write as much about my understanding of how can I locate our voices in my writing as possible. I have my strong conviction on what Richardson, (2000) said that conducting research is an active form of self-(re)creation and all the research we do, also change our understanding of who we are. Hence, I find it important to seek new ways that best express my intentions and epistemological understanding. I wished to go with my standpoint of “(N)One Paradigm”.

### **(N)One Paradigmatic Research Design Space: Rood to Epistemic Emanicipation**

“(N)One” ... it may surprise the potential readers “(N)One” as an adjective to categorize my standpoint. Do not get any negatives vibes, if emerged, guide you. “(N)One” is metaphorical: In a lesser radical post-modernist tone, “(N)One” signifies revelation of my dissonant during liminality that led the resurrection of my “self” as a transformative researcher than to be a fanatic devotee of any



specific design as interpretivism, criticalism, feminism and postmodernism, but “A” “fusioner” of all with possible contribution, which ultimately forms “One” specific design from many numbers of paradigms as much needed visibility as a key basis for liberating myself from the possible enslavement. Largely influenced by one of the postulates of integralism- “None is Privilege” (Luitel, 2009), “(N)One” at my disposal odors the fragrance of “Soham” philosophy that subscribes inclusionary logics and genres to account for multidimensional possibilities of human thinking and expression that are needed to illuminate phenomenon considered in the study (Luitel, 2016). This has, in turn, made NPRDS, an “Arts- Based Design”, both in the form of knowing and representation, a project very similar to the bricolage that decolonizes methodologies using tools at hand; many different tools at hand; collecting different parts from different sources; creative, unique and no blue print on how to build/construct the objects-the texts/knowledge/research (Berry, 2007). Rather than using any specific theories and perspectives as monological framework, epistemic pluralism is operationally viable as inclusionary and empowering design; I use them as the referents that shed light on research journey (Slattery, Krasny& O’Malley, 2007). NPRDS, thus, bids “Good-Bye” view to all blue-prints and bring into the consideration of “*a practice of no practice*” in which “No style” “No Composition”, “No Judgment” functions.

Again, beyond denotative meaning of “No” within NPRDS simply signifies none-acceptance of prior designs and itself a herald of “One” specific incipient style. Connotatively, these terms within NPRDS are viable as a positive, independent way to analyze the collective, different aspects of my work as they relate to my notion of research as an art, as an “images of thought” that are helpful to generate ideas and languages for recasting the work as a set of problems that need to be worked through from new angles “so that

we can find a way out of them” (Paley & Jipson, 2013, p.4). The metaphor “bringing everything back to the here and now” and ‘things coming together’ best explains my synergetic act. The former is a tempocentric move in a sense it is the deconstructive technique serves to cut projections of linear causal notions of time and space to bring synchronic narration by vigorously situating the inquiry ‘right here’ and ‘right now’ and there is no ‘room’ for conceptual projections of the future or abstractions from the past to take hold and proliferate and the later “things coming together” which means the mutual dependence or interdependence of all phenomena, which discards the notion of before and after or ends and means as in such projections like ‘first I will design and then I will follow. There is no ‘first this then that’.

Another way to conceptualize NPRDS is, thus, a multi-dimensional methodological approach opens an analytical window on the experience of practitioners, similar to that of Davis (2010) an approach that is flexible enough to identify and trace the experiential trajectory of practice, and precise enough to allow critical appraisal of the phenomenological information with some philosophical accuracy. NPRDS is, as a type of research that one of Ellis’ students once described as “violat[ing] . . . everything . . . about social science research” (Ellis, 1999, p. 673) to challenge, remap, and renegotiate the boundaries of knowledge that claim the status of master narratives, fixed identities, and an objective representation of reality status is guided by the central thrust of inaugural poem—*“much madness is divinest sense”* as research is to educate oneself. Thus, validity and the reliability for positivists’ quality standards have no space within NPRDS, but is understood as epistemic criterion. To me, it is intellectually naïve to solicit the *“similarity”* of the process and product of different time and context in different time and context, human consciousness always being in an ever-changing state that only exists. NPRDS calls for empathy and if it

simply quakes the mind of my potential readers I think I am and the potential consumers of NPRDS are done.

### **3. Self-inquiry within NPRDS**

With very nature that NPRDS bestowed upon through my doctoral thesis and writing being mode of inquiry within autoethnographic tradition that my doing of self-inquiry during my doctoral work followed, at this detour once again I feel that retreat into my doing of self-inquiry is what Delamont (2009) said an abrogation of the honorable trade of the scholar. I wish to epitomize the entire process borrowing from Reinertsen & Otterstad, (2013) as stated in the box and likely it was: With NPRDS at my disposal, challenging the reductionist myth of conceiving research design in terms of technical-procedural steps as the sole basis for knowledge production and considering my life experiences as the primary source of evidence, in congruent with structuring the self-inquiry I begun with looking at my epiphanies that required working on the bigger picture of the nature of knowing in my inquiry. Liminalities therein hosted several emergent dimensions in my doing that required multiple views and perspectives about various forms of knowing as figurative, narrative, poetic and metaphoric to name few. This approach gradually led me to the world of research paradigms, comprehensive belief systems and worldviews that offered possibilities of employing a host of logics (i.e., thinking), different methods of representation (i.e., expressing), various ways of legitimating (i.e., standardizing) and multiple research methodologies (i.e., knowing) (Taylor, Taylor, & Luitel, 2012).

In doing so, I have interweaved my lived experiences with the critiques of autoethnography I have found most compelling, largely

grounded in the Delamont's (2009) arguments against autoethnography focusing on "social scientists who are not usually interesting or worth researching" (p. 59)— but also with consideration of the tensions between evocative (Ellis &Bochner, 2006) and analytic (Anderson, 2006) approaches. These tensions bring forth my respective and often differing perspectives in align with Delamont (2009) who asserts "Autoethnography is, whatever else it may or may not be, about things that matter a great deal to the autoethnographer" (p. 57). However, I was purposeful with the auto-experiences I have thought to include, explore, and interrogate. This has enabled me to "wonder about myself" and to share my own experience with others who might be able to learn from it. As Hunt (2014, p. 6) said, I comprehend autoethnography "is a useful approach to professional education and lifelong learning and employed my writing as a powerful means of reaching out to and connecting with my potential readers. In other words, I have employed (Critical) autoethnography for its two inherent virtues: its advocacy to preserve epistemic integrity among the different paradigms functional within doing of self-inquiry and employ arts-

*"I really don't . . . I can't define what it is myself. I use the term 'menace' and so on. I have no explanation of any of that really. What I write is what I write."*

*I refuse. I try hard. I follow rules. I theorize. I listen. I see you and I know about getting lost—have been. I Am. I try love. Inclusive pedagogies, dialogues, play; I want that. I agree. When I collect data I try to open up. I am aware of transparency issues and myself.*

*"Do truth, freedom, humanity, justice, desire anything else than that you grow enthusiastic and serve them.*

*Talking to me? Loving data? I am at hearing of the data—text and textuality. Data shapes and negotiate. Data are shaped and negotiated. There are data dilemmas—paradoxes. Begetting thinking . . .*

*(Reinertsen&Otterstad, 2013,p.5)*

based method by departing from the dualistic notion of information collection to an inclusive notion of information generation, where in self-inquiry is viable as research product, writing process, storied texts, and methods that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political ( Ellis &Bochner, 2006).

Largely inspired by Eisner's (2008) work on "*Arts and Knowledge*", my approach is artistic than scientific in character is all about experimenting with alternative representational methods that aim to go beyond dualism to accumulate all possible information from all possible sources to relocate myself in the arena of self-inquiry. From a methodological perspective, writing to reach has enriched my understanding of how both evocative and analytic approaches and, more broadly, how different theoretical perspectives might be thoughtfully considered in this self-inquiry process. Ellis' approach to autoethnography, evocative autoethnography, inspired me as I sought to bring myself, my vulnerabilities, and my readers into my writing. At the same time, I endeavored to balance this focus on resonance with what Anderson (2006) described as "theoretical illumination" (p. 388). I have taken this convergence as a type of diffractive movement where I began to mark my difference from within and as part of an entangled state. My aim was not to overcome or solve these challenges, or to produce a grand theory but, rather, to draw my potential reader into a space richly decorated with what Geertz (1974) termed "experience-near" and "experience-distant" (p. 28) concepts, so that they, too, might find themselves compelled to consider the possibilities of alternative learning.

My approach is guided by the worldview that the study 'naturally' gets its form from the myself engaging the specific art practice and understanding that to approach, analyze, and represent the results of the inquiry in a relevant artistic format best support my intentions (Barone& Eisner, 2006). Amidst the criticism against

alternative representation, I have hoped that these stylistic features dominant in my self- inquiry has made this self-inquiry an artistic design: the creation of virtual reality, the presence of ambiguity, the use of expressive language, the use of contextualized and vernacular language, the promotion of empathy, and the presence of aesthetic form (Eisner, 2008). I have my process transparent, providing insight into the “the trials and tribulations,” which Forber-Pratt (2015, p. 12) lamented are often absent from the methodological literature. Drawing upon theoretical proposition material determinism that it is not the consciousness of human that determines their being, on the contrary their social being determines their consciousness I have interwoven blurred genres (narrative, poetic, metaphoric, photographic and performative) in my methods of inquiry into synergic whole which I believe makes inextricable and unhearable dimensions lucid and vivid. I am of opinion that these popular culture are the store house of knowledge and representative of the reality. They are the symbols of the society constructed not out –of- blue or build-in-idealism and the vehicles through which culture (knowledge) travels.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Being the victim of dualism for long, conducting this self-inquiry as par with empirical research designs was not at all my intention. In my understanding of knowledge is evolved around a rigorous and individual quest for meaning making that accepting research methodologies, as they existed and were available to me, is like cutting wings from my intellectual thought. Accordingly my quest for positionality, NPRDS, as a fragmented approach, came into existence which has facilitated alternative episteme in dominion of self-inquiry. I hope that such a hybrid space with its interconnection to the historical, intellectual and political landscape can produce better orchestra to gain new insights, knowledge and

ideas with the eyes towards social justice, inclusiveness, diversity, plurality and so forth.

Something like an earthworm with no distinct head and tail, NPRDS is an iterative process which like double edge sword that cuts both ways is emergent and based on my ingenuities: product in

process, process in product; methods in theories, theories in methods; fiction in history, history in fiction; writing in inquiry, inquiry in writing; practice in theories, theories in practice; knowledge in arts, arts in knowledge; and arts in



research, research in arts. NPRDS is a more rhizomatic to replete with multiple openings and potential lines of flight. And, self-inquiry within NPRDS is what Mitra (2010) called steeping the “post-scripted nature of (auto) ethnographic research, wherein I continually revised and reframed my argument, based on moments of clarity from available sources. I hold the view that writing is constitutive of the (emergent) process of inquiry wherein multiple genres are in demand, rather than being an add-on activity performed on completion of the inquiry, within and has given rise to an emergent research design (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005). I hope my process is still pulsing and expanding, marinating even. However, I find peace in my, albeit exhausting, process. It was meaningful and exquisitely dialogic and it taught me about myself, autoethnography, and all the spaces in-between. I have hoped that my voices continue to echo beyond the imposed boundaries of this self-inquiry. It is worth stating here that even my current perspectives differ (sometimes greatly) from those reflexive and theoretical lenses I donned even a few months ago. By subscribing

NPRDS my aim is to demur the prior conventions with humility, wisdom and critical reflexivity to add a similar brick on transformative research.

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