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Original Article

Towards Participatory Worldview in Education and Research: A Philosophical Inquiry on the Question- Why Participatory?

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Abstract

This article portrays the author's philosophical inquiry on the prospects of a participatory worldview in education and research. To this, the author begins his inquiry process, reflecting upon his own personal/ professional shift from rational (analytical) academician to the transformative educational practitioner. The reflection further depicts his continuous inclination towards participatory science and worldviews. The author reflects upon his personal/ professional journey, which seemingly is parallel to the spiral of human civilization from participatory to (post)positivist to constructivist to transformative to participatory again. From there, the author makes philosophical observation at genealogical progression (spiral) of participatory worldview both in the East and the West. Also, the author observes current developments in the field of quantum science and renders how such developments have paved manifold ways for a participatory worldview in Social Science, particularly in education and research.

Keywords: Education. Research. Participatory worldview. Philosophical inquiry.

The world is a living whole
A vast interconnectedness
A cosmic harmony
Inspired and sustained¹

¹ Lines from Radhakrishnan's (1980) commentary on the Hindu holy book "The Bhagavadgita"

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Approaching the Participatory World

It has been a decade that I have been continuously looking forward to new and innovative ways to understand the world. Likely, since learning (and/or consciousness building) is necessarily incomplete, I am experiencing a series of evolution. Starting from delving upon existential predicaments of human beings in my MA English dissertation (Wagle, 2010), which seems more an abstract intellectual exercising of mind (perhaps my evolving as a mind-first rationalist); there, I had un/knowingly given less importance to human being's bodily engagement (or subjectivities). I did so because, perhaps, I was still not free positivist mindsets that I had developed throughout my school days (Wagle, 2016). Throughout my school days, adhering to the technical interest of modern education (Habermas, 1971), and/or dualistic (or reductionist) view of the school curriculum I had attended, I was fascinated by linear progression. To this fascination, I began looking for the absolute truth and single reality. However, as days passed by, under the supervisory influence of transformative educators at Kathmandu University School of Education (see Luitel, 2009; Taylor, Taylor & Luitel, 2012), it seemed that my interest in social science research gradually shifted from mind centered "logocentrism" to bodily experiences. I began to go more interested in my lived experiences and subjectivities. I began to question my earlier assumptions. It enabled me to go for self-examination, relating it to other people's (communal) experiences. Later, this appreciative turn towards reflective meaning-making through well-informed bodily reflection, in one way or other, informed my MPhil dissertation (see Wagle, 2016). In my MPhil thesis, I questioned the emotionally fragile one-size-fits-all schooling practices I grew up with. Likely, the questioning enabled me to celebrate non-dual but empowering changes in my perspectives (see Wagle, 2016) on personal and the professional life-word.

During the MPhil research project, unlike more orthodox forms of inquiry (looking for a cause-effect relationship, for example), I encountered multifaceted struggles to more intrinsically worthwhile knowledge i.e., knowing through critical self-reflection (Saldana, 2014). Adhere to the multifaceted complexity of the phenomenon; I couldn't limit my study to a single paradigmatic frame. To this end, I embraced a more holistic and more inclusive multi-paradigmatic transformative worldview (Taylor, Taylor, & Luitel, 2012). The worldview, informed through a multi-paradigmatic and multi-perspective lens, enabled me to critically question a few disempowering beliefs and values on school education, particularly the values which were inherently embedded in my situatedness. My academic journey that started from seemingly a single paradigmatic and analytic mindset, when came into acquaintance with transformative educators and researchers, likely began to look for multi-perspectival meanings through multi-paradigmatic engagements.

Perhaps, there is no agreed-upon best taxonomy of qualitative research approaches. In this quest, passing through multi-paradigmatic transformative educational research endeavors, while still working on my MPhil research project, I also developed some methodological orientations to an Integral Worldview (Wilber, 2002). Following the 'vision-logic' of Ken Wilber (2005), the integral paradigm in multi-paradigmatic Metaframe is all-inclusive of multiple paradigms. I have called the Integral Paradigm a Metaframe because it seemingly shows an explicit awareness of itself. Passing through the series of emergence, enactment, and transcendence, every other research paradigm in integral Metaframe is more matured and inclusive than the preceding one (Wilber, 2002). There, I began to see my life-world in terms of integrated flourishing within and beyond this complex web of integral ecology (see Wagle, 2016). Also, I began to see the need for whole-person learning in education. This whole-person learning in education could be holistic and transformative; mind-centered/intellectualist and bricolage/eclectic (Ferrer, 2002; Kinchloe, 2005). The Integral worldview strengthened my research orientation to methodological pluralism. This worldview undertakes the nature of

evolution as inherently transcendental (Ferrer, 2002). To this, it was likely that parallel to the transcendental nature of social evolution, my evolving consciousness required my shifting perspectives on being and becoming. It might be the reason that arriving at this stage as a Ph.D. researcher in education, still being adhered to predominantly transformative and social justice concerns (Habermas, 1971) on the one hand, and the whole person learning concerns on the other, I am relentlessly experiencing the shift. This time, perhaps, adhering to what Wilber (2002) calls ‘an age of synthesis’, I am looking forward to more collaborative and/or co-constructive epistemic practices in my personal and professional life ahead. It may be the reason that being part of the ever-matured shift from pre-modern to the modern to the postmodern world (or what scholars call the post-post-modern world), I am still in my continuous struggle for new patterns of thoughts and beliefs. At this stage, acting upon my changing role as a Ph.D. researcher in education through the community of practice and praxis of participatory action research (Oxley, 2004), I have come to embrace participatory worldviews. This worldview, in general, is supposed to appreciate the world as co-creation (Heron, 1996). In other words, it is supposed to appreciate research as co-authorship of communal thoughts (Mullins, 1997) and bodily actions.

Inquiry Agenda

Likely, my ontological and epistemic journey as I articulated in the very initial paragraphs depicts my continuous enfoldment and emergence from more reductionist to more transformative to a more participatory being. To this reference, allowing for new and transcendent perspectives on the life-world and the universe (Ferrer, 2002), here, I have laid a philosophical groundwork on the participatory nature of ‘being in the world’ with an overarching inquiry question- *What actually is ‘participatory worldview’ and what place does this worldview have in present-days (and the future of) education and research?*” For this purpose, drawing on extended epistemologies (experiential and/or somatic knowing, for example), and journeying from ‘I think’ to ‘I do’ to ‘I think-I do’ to ‘we think- we do’ orientations, here I have explicitly reflected upon present epistemological turn/s towards community ties, and communal awareness at things and practices. Researchers and educators who are interested in posthumanist system thinking (see Braidotti, 2019; Lewis & Owen, 2019), ecological ways of knowing, and holistic understanding of the phenomenon (see Benedikter & Molz, 2011; Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006) may find this study worth reading, particularly in making philosophical meaning of the participatory worldview and research paradigm in education and research.

Inquiry Approach

To this point, my method of inquiry is embodied-philosophical, a mind-body integrated reasoning. One reasonably good beginning that characterizes philosophy is that it begins with wonder (perhaps doubt in the modern sense). It involves thinking synthetically and logically about the subject at hand. Additionally, adhering to participatory philosophical inquiry, my inquiry endeavor makes collaborative observation (and /or multi-perspectival observation) of many of the already existing (or preceding) concepts. Also, it discovers co-creative relations between them (Wilber, 2002); and in doing so, integrates those knowledge traditions to unify and interpret them within a holistic frame. Thus, in my attempt to answer the most fundamental question ‘why participatory (in education and educational research)?’- I have made critical reasoning (Taylor, 2008) through different logics, perhaps co-constructive participation of feminine and masculine logics. Logic has appeared in many argumentative forms like dialogical logic, dialectical logic, and metaphorical logic. Such distanced (stepping back or

distancing of the observer) perspectives have generated different ways of knowing in my inquiry process. It is likely to allow me and my readers to understand participatory patterns and experiences (Kelly, 1999) of the discourse. Further, though I have followed primarily a rationalist approach, in making the inquiry itself participatory (all-inclusive), I have occasionally made arguments through sensory impressions (empirical data, and sometimes somatic), particularly when discussing concrete, and yet mystic details. It is from there, these participatory perspectives, through ‘embodied foresight’ (Floyd, 2012) make evocative visions for the future. These anticipatory spectrums of possible futures (prior actions that take into account or forestall a later action) are co-created by the participatory mind and given cosmos.

Philosophical Wonders

In this article, I have entered into the inquiry topic through philosophical wonders of the kind-wonder one: Unfolding the meaning, wonder two: Unfolding the genealogical progression of participatory thoughts, wonder three: Emerging with participatory MetaFrame in education and research, and wonder four: Participatory prospects of the future of education and research. In philosophical inquiry as such, wonder is a feeling of amazement, an intense curiosity, caused by something (un)familiar. One of the ways to a better understanding of the concept is, perhaps, through etymological and genealogical exploration of the subject. For this, to strengthen my reasoning from simple to complex arguments on the issues about the meanings and the historical progression of participatory MetaFrame, now I begin exploring what participatory looks like (or doesn’t look like) in general. The arguments are likely to strengthen my and my readers’ familiarity with the basic foundations underlying participatory worldview. Based on the arguments, the latter parts of the article make further arguments on the emergence of participatory MetaFrame and its prospects for the future of education and research.

Wonder 1: Unfolding the Meaning of Participatory

So, what actually is the participatory worldview? It is likely that unfolding the meaning of participatory worldview best starts from making meaning of the term ‘participatory’. Literally, the word participatory is the adjective form of the verb ‘participate’, which in Latin means ‘participatus’ or to share. Share simply is the appreciation of the give-and-take relationship. If so, a participatory worldview, in general, is a way to appreciate the world in terms of the give-and-take relationship in every sphere of the lifeworld. Thinking in this way, my existence is but my continuous giving of something to the cosmos, and my continuous taking of something else from it in return.

Literatures in this area (e.g., Braidotti, 2019; Lewis & Owen, 2020) suggest that such a give-and-take relationship is exhibited in almost every disciplinary sphere of life. For example, in today’s socio-political orientation, the fundamental quality of participatory thoughts shares Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) self-reflexive constructivism, providing an opportunity for people, perhaps ‘post-conceptual mind’ (Heron, 1996) to be involved in deciding how something is done within shared ethos. Such an orientation, which holds that there are no absolute grounds of truth than shared construction in the context, appreciates the idea of democratic participation of people aimed at social transformation. In the language of Bookchin (2005) such orientations not only shape the ecology of freedom but also foster the emergence and dissolution of hierarchy. Likewise, in spirituality, it is the co-creative participation of mind, body, heart, and vital through co-presencing, mutual resonance, and attunement (Heron, 2006). It is to possess (and share) something of the nature of a person,

thing, or quality in the entire cosmos, co-creating both our togetherness and distinctness. Maybe, my evolution is but my continuous exchange of energy with-and-from everything (and every being) around. Delving upon it, I begin to appreciate everything around me in its totality. It seems that nothing exists alone in its individuality. Everything has to pass through a continuous cycle of a give-and-take relationship. Looking through this lens, I see participatory orientations as directly in opposition to modern ideals of individualism and anthropocentrism. Participatory approaches therein seek collaborative coherence to the multidimensional (from socio-political to spiritual) nature of human beings and their surroundings.

To this, Heron (1996) suggests that whatever manifests within our immediate experiential field is the presence in communion with other presences. Our 'participatory mind' (Skolimowski, 1994) is continuously (and/or inherently) participating in human society, and in the larger natural world. We participate in family, in community, in culture, in an organization, in business, and in politics. We also participate (and/or exchange energy) with air, with water, with soil, with fire, and with plants (see Abram, 1996). Seemingly, it is all about receiving something of the essence of a thing, incorporating it, and thus, being continuously transformed by such co-creative exchange of energy.

If so, 'participatory' is also all about mutual participation of manifold dimensions of the socio-ecological system that encourage co-constructive inquiry and learning process at every stage of the lifeworld. Socio-ecological orientations as such (similar to socio-political and spiritual orientations) stress that every element that exists interacts, and that all interaction is the exchange of energy (see Burns, 2015). Each gives something of themselves to other parts of the ecosystem, and they receive into themselves something from the ecosystem. In this 'material-discursive ontology' (see O'Neil, 2018), the mind interacts with matter; the mind with other minds; and matter with other matters. In human societies, minds in interaction make a 'group mind' or conscience collective. Likewise, in the material world, matters in interaction make design, engineering, architecture, or what we simply call it, the system.

To this stage, I wonder, does participation occur in human consciousness as well? Literatures (e.g., Skolimowski, 1994) further suggest that participation, like in the material and ecological world, occurs in human consciousness as well. To this, Wilber (2002) views that like all natural living systems, consciousness can undergo evolution, development or enfoldment. Perhaps, my being is, but the varied participation of matter and energy; varied participation of mind and body emerged to moment-to-moment enfoldment. Such orientations eloquently stress that the existence of every other thing is shaped by the participation of the knower (subject) and what is known (object). For example, my mind when actively participates with trees (or anything else), it gives a meaning that the tree exists. Perhaps, my consciousness, therefore, is the collaborative participation of my mind and the body. It is what Storm (1994) calls 'to be in relation', where we participate with the rest of creation as 'relatives'. Therefore, as existentialists take it, perhaps, things exist to me when my awareness consciously (or 'just so') participates in the very essence of the thing in my presence, which Heron (2006) calls 'mediate-immediate' (to be mindfully present at here, now). It inherently stresses the participation of 'place' (the body, and/or the immediate space) in the human understanding and knowledge development process, fostering meaningful connectedness to learning, feeling in it the sense of being, and belonging.

Bringing all such manifold nature of participatory perspectives together, perhaps, now I am at the stage to define participatory worldview in general. To this end, the worldview that acknowledges such participatory nature of the cosmos is, thus, the participatory worldview (Agrey, 2014; Benedikter & Molz, 2011). Here, "Mind and the given cosmos are engaged in a co-creative dance so that what emerges as reality is the fruit of an interaction of the given cosmos and the way mind engages with it" (Heron, 1997, p.4). In its celebration of the holistic (and/or integrated) nature of things, the participatory worldview, seemingly, is a response to

the increasingly apparent limitations of the Mechanistic Worldview. In so doing, against dualistic and ethically detached approaches to reality, participatory worldview adopts interactive and co-creative approaches to being and becoming.

Now, I wonder what modern science has to say on participatory worldview as such. At surface studies, it seems that modern science (Cartesian/ Newtonian) and its knowledge claims are directly in opposition to the participatory nature of the living world. Interestingly, however, the mechanistic worldview, which modern science advocates, like all other things in the cosmos, is itself participatory at its core. For example, modern science itself is ‘returning’ to the very state of celebrating co-creative cosmos through discoveries on quantum mechanics like quantum physics, and/or quantum mind (Kauffman, 2016). Recently, quantum scientists have begun to see similar quantum effects both in the sub-atomic phenomenon and in human consciousness (see Boyer, 2021). Unlike the cause-effect process and linear structure, the complexity of the lifeworld rests in the interweavement of chaotic circles. It is also likely that many of the ‘scientifically acclaimed’ worldviews people discovered (or are in the process of discoveries), e.g., ecological spirituality, and other theories like the theory of relativity, Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, Bohr’s complementarity principle, and theory of complex social adaptation, in a way or other, appreciates complexly webbed participatory approaches to reality.

Therefore, perhaps, the participatory worldview, being inherently non-exclusive, is the participation (and/or continuous enfoldment and emergence) of various worldviews that continuously emerge in course of human civilization. If so, from participatory perspectives, who I am today (referred to the shifts I discussed in the initial paragraphs) is my continuous enfoldment of lived experiences, which in the words of Damasio (2010) is my ‘autobiography made conscious’. In other words, my belonging, being, and becoming are all about interactive co-creation (mediate-immediate) of the participatory world I am engaged with. Likewise, where the human civilization today is the continuous enfoldment (and co-creation) of cosmic memories, which inherently happens in all spheres of life (Kauffman, 2016). Perhaps, here arise the basic philosophical foundation of participatory worldview i.e., the micro-macro dichotomous collaboration and co-creation of the cosmos.

Wonder 2: Unfolding the Genealogical Progression of Participatory Thoughts

Observation of the basics of ‘participatory’ now encourages me to reflect upon the historical progression of participatory thoughts and practices, which I suppose, would enable me to figure out its parallel influence in research and education, particularly in the learning and inquiry process. To this end, I start with the question- *how and when the participatory worldview as such developed?* Is participatory worldview a recent paradigmatic development? Is it that many holistic frameworks, approaches, and understandings (like system thinking) in the learning and inquiry process were not in practice before? My exploration of the broader range of classical literature in this area (as suggested in the following paragraphs) suggests that participatory thoughts were in discourse starting from long before (also see, Esbjörn-Hargens and Wilber, 2006). Though participatory worldview, in this name, is discussed recently in the academic world, the philosophy has age-old historical tradition. In one way or other, the worldview must have shaped the way people saw the purpose and the process of education (and also the arts, literature, culture, politics, science, and ecology) in different periods of human history (Benedikter & Molz, 2011). Here as well, I begin with the simple statement that the origin and the development of the human world are but continuous co-creative participation of everything that exists.

Going back to the very past, it seems that the aboriginal worldview, with spiritual and integrated cosmos itself was participatory in nature. Human cultural worldviews must have evolved with this animated worldview, where human beings and their human attributes were identical to God, and God was identical to the entire cosmos (Rao, 2005). To this, it is evident that what scholars call ‘the participatory turn isn’t very recent at all. Its origin goes back to ancient tradition and is at the center of much of Eastern (and also the Western Greek) philosophy (see Radhakrishnan, 1980). Many of the academic literature discussing co-creating relations, particularly those written in Western contexts have given less space to discussing the synthetic (the participatory) nature of the Eastern Worldview. Nonetheless, as I enquired about Eastern classics, I have come to acknowledge that the polytheistic conceptions as such were too deeply rooted in the Eastern consciousness. The *Mukunda Upanishad*, for example, speaks of *brahma-vidya* or the science of the eternal as the basis of all sciences, *sarva-vidya-pratistha* (Radhakrishnan, 1980). It recognizes the close connection of mind and body and interprets life and nature in the way of monistic idealism.

It seems Hindu orientation to yoga itself is participatory. Perhaps, the very foundation of participatory worldview in terms of human (spiritual) development is in Eastern *yogasastra* (Science of Yoga). Derived from the root *yug*, which means to bind together, *yogasastra* stresses binding (collaborative participation of) one’s energies arising from mind, body, heart, and vital (Morgan, 2012), which as it advocates, harness embodied foresight (Floyd, 2012). Such monotheistic tendencies were exhibited very early in identifying one God with another and/or throwing all the Gods reduced to the three spheres of the earth, the air and the sky. Further, in appreciating holism, the visible infinite (objective) and the invisible infinite (subjective) are taken up into the spiritual whole- “He who is this Brahman in man, and who is that in the sun, those are one”².

Now I turn to Buddhism. This vital teaching of the Upanishads, the oneness of all life, is accepted in Buddhist philosophy as well. Buddhism claim that the universe as a place is fundamentally holistic, and is characterized by unbroken wholeness (Chang, 2021; De Angelis (2018). It is from this unbroken wholeness (the Mandala) of ecological realities, as Naess (2005) claims, the lifeworld stimulates feelings of ecological oneness. It stimulates interconnected belongingness among the beings and the non-beings. Buddhism holds this view in terms of moral law that the whole existence, divine, human, and animal, in all spheres are linked together by the chain of moral causation³. In Buddhism, causality not only defines interrelations between cause and effect. It defines how things happen, and how change occurs in its continuous co-creative participation of cause and effect. As Macy (1991) and Chang (2021) eloquently put it, the Buddhist term *Dharma* also carries participatory views of a dynamically interdependent process of the cosmic world. Everything comes into being owing to certain conditions. It performs its give-and-take role and disappears when the conditions disappear. This process of mutual causation continues to eternity. Combs et al., (2002), likewise, find such participatory orientations in the Buddhist middle path. It is the path of harmony- no left, no right but continuously in the flow of the law of causation. In another word, it is a ‘dynamic’ middle that has “no beginning and no end, but always a middle from which it grows and which it overflows” (Combs et al. 2002, p. 90). It seems, thus, that Eastern ancient worldviews had high regard for epistemological pluralism, and therefore, it inherently forwarded manifold ways of learning and inquiry, coherent to the multidimensional nature of human and cosmic life-world.

It seems ancient Greek celebrated the participatory nature of being and becoming as well. Looking at Western Greek philosophy, the Socratic Method of inquiry was highly

² Max Muller, The Upanishads (S.B.E. Vols I. and XV.).

³ The Dhammapada and Sutta Nipata, S.B.E., vol. x.

interactive and cooperative and focused on joint learning in the context of the individual student (Also see Capra, 1997). This approach embodies the essence of participatory inquiry. Plato, the student of Socrates, further explored how the contingent physical world participates in the realm of the Forms. The participatory views as such were exhibited later in the medieval period, where the medieval scholastics eloquently stressed- we are a microcosm that is a reflection of the macrocosm.

My observation to this end is that the ancient thoughts as such, however, were not entirely synthetic. In every stage of civilization, mechanistic worldviews and mechanistic science developed in parallel and continuously informed one another. Both in the ancient East and ancient West, the empirical-causal orientations in the material (and social) world had gone parallel to synthetic orientations (see Radhakrishnan, 1980). For example, Ancient Indians had also laid the ‘pure analytical’ foundation of mathematical and mechanical knowledge. Aristotle, in ancient Greece, following the footsteps of early atomists like Democritus (around 5th BCE), laid the objective foundation of natural philosophy based on cause and deduction. Following the Aristotelian trend, in the early 17th century, Rene Descartes’ ‘Discourse on Method’ (1637), to a larger extent, created a philosophical foundation of reasoning based on empirical objectivity. It separated the observer from the observed and sought universal law-like knowledge production. To this response, little later, again Immanuel Kant’s ‘Critique of pure reason’ (1781) stressed the learner’s subjectivity in learning. But, as I find it, unlike participatory collaborative subjectivities, Kant’s subjectivity was highly individualistic.

Perhaps, the development of the worldviews and inquiry approaches in the progression of human history is, but co-creative participation of subjective-objective observations of the phenomenon. In setting out his synthetic philosophy of being-in-the-world, Martin Heidegger distinguished ‘the present-at-hand’ and ‘the ready-to-hand’ (Heidegger, 1927), referring to one with the mind and the other to the body. He stressed their continuous participation to define what we call it living. His ‘ready-to-hand’ stressed the perspective that human action is embodied. Michael Polanyi, likewise, challenged to “normal science.” He proposed that personal knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) plays a vital and inescapable role in all scientific research, indeed, in all human knowing. It is likely that such undertakings, in their attempt to escape the hegemonic grip of the Cartesian/ Newtonian worldview dominant in the twentieth-century life-world, were in continuous dialogic and dialectical interaction, both seeking their own space in the learning and inquiry process. In the academic forum, throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, John Archibald Wheeler continued to promote and articulate his conception of the participatory universe. Discussed particularly in his articles “Universe as a Home for Man” (1974), “Genesis and Observership” (1977), and the compilation piece “Law without Law” (1983), Wheeler re-established ancient synthetic worldview in modern ‘scientific’ world. Similarly, Henrik Skolimowski, in his *The Participatory Mind* (1994) and *Eco-Philosophy* (1981) logically explained that there is a continuous interaction between mind and knowledge and that both are evolving and changing together. Stepping in those footsteps, still later, John Heron proposed a cooperative inquiry methodology. Heron (1996; 2006) proposed an approach to human inquiry that explicitly stresses a participative paradigm. Perhaps, ‘legitimizing’ intentional interplay between action and reflection in the learning and inquiry process; it laid the foundation for a participatory framework in education and research.

Arriving at this stage, my emergent argument is that no worldviews take academic appreciation unless it forwards a ‘philosophical frame’ to see and understand the phenomenon. Being an age-old worldview, it seems only recently that the participatory undertakings have begun to find academic acceptance. Here onwards, my philosophical inquiry is focused on exploring a participatory frame, which discusses the ways the social

science researchers may use this worldview and the research paradigm to observe and interpret the phenomenon.

Wonder 3: Emerging with Participatory Meta Frame in Education and Research

Arriving at this stage, it is evident that participatory worldview, in every stage of human civilization, sometimes stronger and some other times insubstantial, stressed plurality in the learning and inquiry process. Following it, now it is in dialogical counter to the often ‘colonizing’ unilateral nature of disciplinary (and/or single paradigmatic) knowledge and research. Beginning from here, and also considering my emergent experiences with Participatory MetaFrame in my Ph.D. thesis, I explore how participatory worldview, though remained a dominant philosophical lens since the early stages of human civilization, took years to get acknowledged in the academic world, particularly in social science research. For example, the fundamental concept of participatory research goes back to Aristotle’s division of knowledge into episteme (logically-built knowledge), tèknê (action-oriented knowledge), and phrónêsis (practical virtue, wisdom). The term, phrónêsis is more participatory. Here, ‘thinking’ participates with creativity and enables an individual or collective individual to make practical wisdom about what is the right thing to do in a situation. Parallel to this, the details of the holistic vision of the ancient east, the yoga philosophy, the Buddhist Mandala, and their suggestions about the participatory nature of everything that exists are already discussed in the initial sections of this article.

Arriving at this stage, I wonder, why then, participatory research departed so long from Western (academic) research traditions? Here, Greenwood’s (2008) observation of this question seems straightforward. Predominantly influenced by Cartesian-Newtonian science, the academic world through easily accepted and legitimized theory and ‘scientific’ ways to knowledge, hesitated for long to make value-laden subjective meanings. Acknowledging a single observable reality, scientific methods of positivism and post-positivism continuously stressed value-neutral objectivity, and for long, it remained the dominant research paradigm in social sciences (Taylor, Taylor & Luitel, 2012). It made considerable efforts in legitimizing knowledge claims as valid in case the claim was based on empirical objectivity and mathematical certainty. Slowly, in appreciating local realities as co-constructed by society, constructivists raised questions about the neutral objectivity and restrictive logics of the (post)positivism (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Tobin & Tippins, 1993). Parallel to this, influenced by the philosophers Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, critical theorists and practitioners stressed the need for collective interventions in micropolitics of social transformation (Kincheloe, 2008). Passing through the developmental phases, gradually the idea of collaborative meaning-making and a collective transformation began to hold the attention of social science academics, and practitioners.

But, arriving at this stage, I come to the argument that the idea of ‘collective subjectivities’ took a longer time than ‘individual subjectivities’ to find its place in the academic world. Whether it was (post)positivism, constructivism, or critical-emancipatory, they all, in one way or other, strived to legitimize single-paradigmatic observation in the learning and inquiry process (see Taylor, Taylor & Luitel, 2012). At the same time, more inclusive paradigms like constructivism and critical-transformative, however, had already grounded the seedlings for multiple ways of understanding the complex phenomenon. There, in addressing the limitation of single paradigm inquiry approaches, an alternative research paradigm, a new era of “paradigmatic and methodological pluralism” (see Gunnlaugson, 2005) emerged. Acknowledging the epistemic integrity of research methods, multi-paradigmatic research celebrated various forms of knowing i.e., knowing as a social construction, knowing as dialogical/dialectical envisioning, and knowing as aesthetic

meaning-making, all of which it drew from various paradigms (see Luitel, 2009). Now, the knowledge community has begun to celebrate plurality in every sphere of life-words. Integral methodological pluralism (Wilber, 2002), for example, is still in the process of flourishing. Based on integral theory, this intended synthetic approach applies three heuristic principles, namely, non-exclusion, enfoldment, and enactment.

It seems now that the very ancient participatory worldview of animated cosmos, passing (and unfolding) through tremendous epicycle of learning, has reached its maturity. Today, the participatory orientations have emerged as a further paradigm and more a MetaParadigm in its own right (Ferrer, Romero, & Albareda, 2005). It has been referred to as MetaParadigm in a way that the paradigm seemingly shows an explicit awareness of itself. Locating the nature and production of knowledge as an outcome of social relations, this all-inclusive approach is developmentally, ontologically, and epistemologically holistic (Heron, 2006). To this, also developed from Heron and Reason (1997), and Guba and Lincoln (2005), here, I discuss how I employed a paradigmatic inquiry frame of participatory worldview in my Ph.D. thesis. The MetaFrame brings forth an account of participatory reality, participatory knowing, values, and methods:

Table 1

Participatory MetaFrame

Participatory Ontology	Participatory Epistemology
Reality is subjective and co-created	Shared experiences are used to build socially constructed knowledge
Participatory Axiology	Participatory Methodology
Its value lies in comprehensive human flourishing	Inquired through methodological pluralism, grounded in shared experiences

So, what is the nature of participatory ‘reality’? As illustrated in the MetaFrame above, my understanding of participatory reality is that it is collectively subjective and co-created. It is mediate-immediate, collaborative, and multi-leveled (Heron, 2006). Though it has not directly challenged the ontological assumptions of stable and predictable reality, being more inclusive, it seems that the MetaParadigm has given directions for manifold ways of understanding the phenomenon (Benedikter & Molz, 2011; Esbjörn-Hargens & Wilber, 2006). It has also forwarded the need and possibility of collective subjectivities together with individual subjectivity. In the participatory paradigm, given cosmos and human minds are engaged in continuous interactions, and thereby, co-create collaborative reality. Observed through epistemic stands, shared experiences in the participatory world are used to build socially constructed knowledge. Co-constructions as such are always susceptible to transformation. Participatory knowing, as Heron (2006) puts it is not only experiential, but also propositional, and presentational at the same time. It is demonstrated in skills, expressed in theories, and presented in aesthetic arts. Further, participatory knowing involves critical subjectivity. In other words, it involves self-reflexive attention to the context.

The appreciation of participatory realities (relational ontology/ies) as such, enabled me to wonder - why participatory? Or, what values do participatory knowing hold (at present time and space)? As Heron (2006) undertakes it, participatory co-creation serves for comprehensive human flourishing in relation to being. It transcends individual care and wellbeing to global care and wellbeing. It is higher-order, responsible engagement, which as Bateson (1972) describes it, undertakes reflective (and therefore, transformative) action. This praxis (or Aristotelian *phronêsis*)-oriented reflective action is grounded in our being in the

world (Heidegger, 2002). Therefore, participatory values, as I have begun to see them, lie in higher-order critical thinking, informed through collective actions. Likewise, from a methodological standpoint, the participatory inquiry is informed through practical action-in-collaboration. Sowing further spaces for practitioner research (like PAR), it is grounded in shared experiences. In this collaborative form of inquiry, democratic dialogues between and among the participating stakeholders are supposed to foster critical consciousness of shared living, doing, and knowing (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2008; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). The Participatory Worldview, thus, seems to be a dynamic, emerging concept, and no account of it can be considered final and complete. It is all-inclusive. It presents human beings and communities as embodied in their world and serves the democratic and practical ethos of practitioner research. To this, while working with a participatory worldview and the research paradigm in my Ph.D. thesis, I used it both as a political statement and a philosophical discourse. It occurred both at an individual (and/or collective individuals) and the social level.

Wonder 4: Participatory Prospects of the Future of Education and Research

Now, taking into reference the philosophical exercises on the participatory worldview above, and also reflecting on my embracing of participatory school pedagogies in my Ph.D. in education, I eventually move to the latter focus of this inquiry endeavor- what could be the participatory prospects of the future of education and research? Does this worldview likely to offer, as it claims, the opportunity to profoundly connect with each other physically, psychologically, and spiritually? Maybe the better question to start with is- what if all human dimensions- body, vital, heart, and mind, or both feminine and masculine dimensions co-creatively participate in the unfolding of human learning? Does it readily address practical-ethical demands of pedagogy (Van Manen, 1991)? Does it acknowledge ecological holism (see Williams, 2013), the give-and-take ethical relations (O'Neil, 2018), and embodied authenticity (Braidotti, 2019)? Do human beings find it supportive to generate a holistic understanding of our ecological connectedness? Here, stepping on participatory vision-logic (Wilber, 2002), I have turned to the futures-oriented lens to discourses. The anticipated discourses, in the language of Floyd (2012) are a path to embodied foresight, where the participatory mind and given cosmos interwind for future recoverability.

Eloquently questioned in my MPhil thesis (Wagle, 2016), today, for the most part, the dominant educational (and the academic world) celebrates perennial ideals of Western-Modern linearity (see Burns, 2015; O'Neil, 2018). The ideals are non-participatory in believing that the educational values are almost stable, and they are universal truths. Kincheloe, (2008) calls it an inherently very conservative and inflexible philosophy of education. It is likely to commence learning in terms of binary oppositions between 'pure' and 'impure' forms of knowledge, accepting one, and excluding the other. Thus, unlike participatory holism, it inherently worships fragmented learning (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009). Other similar groups, which we call essentialists, make emphasis on high academic standards. They support the departmentalization of knowledge; and therefore, they inherently seek linear progression through intellectual reasoning. For this purpose, these groups of essentialists celebrate facts, ideas, theories, analysis, critique, and comparison.

Being aware of such limited ways of knowing the lifeworld, some education practitioners have begun to move away from teaching isolated facts toward a more constructivist view of learning. For this group of people, knowledge is constantly accumulating and fundamentally changing, and therefore, the linear and fragmented approaches may not transcend learning to continuously emerging erudition. These groups of people, the constructivists, thus, are progressive educators (Tobin & Tippins, 1993), who focus on the social context and larger community of learners, and shift away from individually-based

teaching and learning to interdisciplinary teaching and learning (Kaufman & Brooks, 1996). Learning as such not only accepts the necessity of data-driven intellectual (and/or analytical) tools but also makes enough promise to add to it complex thinking, giving enough space for multi-perspective (Taylor, Taylor & Luitel, 2012). As time passes by, constructivist education as such has been further strengthened with the transformative agenda of critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2008) and an aesthetic plurality of postmodernism. Growing matured from its precedes, it seems that the future of participatory learning is constantly moving in the direction to facilitate multidimensional inquiry modalities through co-creative participation of all human dimensions at all stages of the inquiry and learning processes (Ferrer et al., 2005). Under such circumstances, if the participatory worldview forwards some practical possibilities for holistic flourishing, or what Luitel and Taylor (2019) forward ‘praxis-oriented practitioner research as transformative learning for sustainable future’, it is likely to have higher prospects in shaping education practices at present.

Also, this participatory prospect is readily observed in educational research, which in return is likely to shift present educational discourses at the participatory level. As discussed in earlier paragraphs, participatory research is known for its inclusivity, democratic ethos, and political and moral imperatives. It is “context-bound and addresses real-life problems” (Kindon et al., 2010, p.14) rooted in participants’ experiences and realities. For example, this approach emphasizes “imaginatively re-entering” the context in which the action is generated (Kelly, 1994, p. 1.). If so, participatory research has higher prospects of developing a participatory curriculum, which possibly considers the learning context. In the long turn, it is likely to empower teachers to be mindful of their classroom contexts, and thereupon, take self-directed responsibilities for improving their teaching practices. Additionally, the prospects of participatory research in education are readily observed in school-organizational learning (Payne, 2008), and teacher professional development as well. Here, unlike conventional training practices, teachers and related stakeholders communicate their assumptions and beliefs to ensure that they are continuously learning and affecting the change together (Stringer, 2007). This practice is reflected in the participatory principle that all people, regardless of age, gender, or level of education, generate co-creative knowledge through collaborative decisions (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Such collaborative reflection and informed actions are likely to work as key attributes of learning in school organizations. Also, traditionally, the relationship between researchers and participants has largely been perpetuated in terms of existing power inequalities (Erickson, 1995). It has distanced the professional boundaries between practicing teachers and academic researchers. To this reference, another important prospect of participatory research is observed in its potential to put researchers and participants on the same level.

Conclusion

Overall, my observation so far is that the worldview which we call participatory worldview is all about ‘give, take, and emerge’ relationship between and among everything that exists in the cosmos. It is an age-old worldview. Though it took seemingly longer periods in finding its space in academic discourse and research endeavors, now passing through different up-downs of human civilization, and continuously learning from the experiences, the worldview has further strengthened its maturity. Now, enfolding all the paradigmatic developments and scientific discoveries so far, the worldview has emerged as an all-inclusive philosophical lens of ecological flourishing. It inherently seeks co-creative and constructive relationalities between place, presence, playfulness, and progress in every human and cosmic phenomenon. In fostering collaborative space for transformative sustainability in every spare of the lifeworld,

its prospects, therefore, are highly observed in social sciences, particularly the education, and educational research practices.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest reported by the author in the article.

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