



December 1994

**Review of *New Foundations for Scientific Social and Behavioral Research: The Heuristic Paradigm*. Katherine Tyson. Reviewed by Gary Mathews, Western Michigan University.**

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**Recommended Citation**

Mathews, Gary (1994) "Review of *New Foundations for Scientific Social and Behavioral Research: The Heuristic Paradigm*. Katherine Tyson. Reviewed by Gary Mathews, Western Michigan University.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 21 : Iss. 4 , Article 17.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol21/iss4/17>

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promise to adequately introduce social work professionals to the legal aspects of social work practice.

Margaret M. Severson  
Louisiana State University

Katherine Tyson. *New Foundations for Scientific Social and Behavioral Research: The Heuristic Paradigm*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995. Hardcover. \$48.00.

Tyson had an article published on the same subject in the November 1992 Issue of *Social Work*. It prompted a statement of strenuous objection by no less than forty-two social work scholars in the July, 1994 Issue of the same journal. What subject could possibly prompt such profuse opposition?

The subject is a proposed paradigm shift from positivism to the heuristic paradigm. What is being proposed is a shift in the fundamental image of social work, including the meaning of truth; the values informing our search for the truth; the rules followed in the pursuit of knowledge; and the methods ordained as suitable for obtaining information about the profession. No wonder there is vigorous opposition to innovation in such essential beliefs and practices.

Such a sweeping challenge to the academic establishment should consider social work history, epistemology, research, and professional practice. *The Heuristic Paradigm* does just that, and does it in an engaging, precise, comprehensive, understandable way. Here, for the first time, in one central location is the entire case to be made by proponents of "postpositivism", an ambitious synonym for heurism. It is a genuine addition to the social work literature for a variety of reasons. It is a compilation of writings which describe two diverse points of view about the nature and methods of social work research. The work of many eminent scholars is presented without losing the central focus on social work. This is a rare treat in a sometimes insular profession. It makes, what will be for some, a compelling case for an emerging paradigm. Specific, concrete examples of the practical application of heuristics are provided. Critics have argued that such examples are sorely needed.

The ambitious scope of the work is reflected in the first sentence of the Editor's Introduction: "What is truth?". Ann Hartman's superbly crafted Introduction follows the Editor's Introduction. The Preface is written by Martha Heineman Pieper. Pieper's work is the exemplar for the heuristic paradigm in social work. Pulling no punches, Heineman Pieper gores such sacred positivistic oxes as the concept of reliability. Calling it "overvalued", she suggests that credibility is more important. And this is just the Preface!

The main body of this big book is divided into two major parts: Evolution and Debate, and Applying the Heuristic Paradigm. Part One describes in detail the history, the context, and the comparison with the positivistic paradigm. The contemporary debates centering around Martha Heineman Pieper's seminal papers are presented in their entirety, together with the verbatim writings of the most ardent of the loyal opposition which helps the reader to weigh much of the evidence presented by both sides. Part Two fully discusses and illustrates the application of the heuristic paradigm both within social work and in related disciplines.

One possible flaw is in the organization of some of the content. It is possible to become confused in maneuvering through the book. Is the Editor's Introduction written by Katherine Tyson? Why not identify the author by name, as is done with the Introduction? The discussion questions sometimes follow the chapter introductions, and sometimes come at the end of chapters. It would be more tidy and predictable for the discussion questions to always appear in the same location in each chapter. But these are minor complaints.

This is an important book which challenges us to expand our intellectual horizons. Nowhere can be found a more scholarly, more comprehensive treatment of this controversial and timely subject. Like it or not, the heuristic paradigm has arrived, and this is the place to read all about it.

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