INTELLECTUAL HISTORIES AND THE ACADEMIC DRAMA OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

The article draws on Victor Turner's (1980) heuristic concept of social drama to construct an academic drama between diverging intellectual genealogies. It reviews narrative inquiry's intellectual history and uses a dramaturgical perspective throughout to emphasize the varying diverging narrative paths this form of inquiry has taken. The intellectual history reviewed is not exhaustive but rather limited to a few scholars involved in developing narrative inquiry into a methodology and as a counter-narrative practice.

Keywords: Narrative inquiry. Counternarratives. Social drama.

RESUMO

HISTÓRIAS INTELECTUAIS E O DRAMA ACADÊMICO DA INVESTIGAÇÃO NARRATIVA

O artigo desenvolve, a partir de Victor Turner (1980), o conceito heurístico de drama social para construir um drama acadêmico entre genealogias intelectuais divergentes. Analisa a história intelectual do inquérito narrativo e utiliza uma perspectiva dramatúrgica para enfatizar os diferentes caminhos narrativos que esta forma de investigação tomou. A história intelectual revista não é exaustiva, mas se limita a alguns estudiosos envolvidos no desenvolvimento da investigação narrativa, em uma metodologia e prática contrarnarrativa.

Palavras chave: Inquérito narrativo. Contranarrativas. Drama social.

RESUMEN

HISTORIAS INTELECTUALES Y EL DRAMA ACADÉMICO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN NARRATIVA

El artículo se basa en el concepto heurístico de Victor Turner (1980) de drama social para construir un drama académico entre genealogías intelectuales divergentes. Revisa la historia intelectual de la investigación narrativa y utiliza una perspectiva dramatúrgica para enfatizar las diversas vías narrativas divergentes que ha tomado esta forma de investigación. La historia intelectual revisada no es exhaustiva, sino que se limita a unos pocos estudiosos que participan en el

desarrollo de la investigación narrativa en una metodología y como una práctica contra-narrativa.

Palabras clave: Indagación narrativa. Contranantes Drama social.

Introduction

It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told-except in the case of fiction.

Alasdaire Macintyre, 1984

We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact that he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove. By the fact of this living, he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.... The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise.

C. Wright Mills, 1959

Distance or separation does not characterize connected knowing. The believing game is a way of knowing that involves a process of self-insertion in the other's story as a way of coming to know the other's story and as giving the other voice.

F. Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin, 1990

Reviewing past discourses is an academic way of telling an accepted narrative. To plot the intellectual genealogy of any discipline resonates with Cornelius Castoriadis' sociohis-torical practices of "creation and destruction" (1991, p. 34) and Michel Foucault's (1980) subjugation of knowledges. Creation vis-à-vis destruction is dialectical, and it usually involves the unfolding of a dominant narrative at the expense of many others. In this light, I limit narrative inquiry's intellectual history to only a few scholars whose writing became central to academic discourse. Like all acts of knowing, many stories and storytellers are inevitably left out. To make this story more comprehensive for potential narrative inquirers, I make a modest offering of other intellectual histories future researchers can choose from. Thus, this modest offer is simply an act of prudence that acknowledges the incommensurability between various intellectual histories.

I draw on Victor Turner's (1980) concept of social drama to present an academic drama characterized by a breach, crisis, redressive action, and recognition of a schism (which I refer to as the recognition of a rupture). I use this concept not because there is a "real" drama unfolding in academia; rather, narrativizing an academic drama is meant to highlight how intellectual histories can be emplotted with their own expositions, rising actions, conflicts, falling actions, and denouements. Indeed, this form of storytelling falls within a fictional knowledge practice of interpretation and creation. Fiction or fictio, as Clifford Geertz (1973) clarifies, refers to the poetic, that is, a craft from which all things are made. The role of the narrative inquirer, in this case, is that of an artisan, who paints the landscape of other sociocultural worlds.

Interpretive texts, moreover, narrate the lives of others and are fashioned metaphors that are constructed through "imaginative acts" (GEERTZ, 1973, p. 15). And, as imaginative acts, they allow a narrative inquirer to disentangle the socially, culturally, politically, and historically embedded significance of symbolic actions and discourses. This imaginative fiction stresses the situatedness of all forms of knowing and doing. As the reader, you will bear witness to my dramaturgical creation, the incommensurability between diverging intellectual storylines, and their inevitable collision. I warn, once again, that this discursive collision is not aimed at creating academic rivalries (for we all know that too many feuds already exist). Instead, my purpose is to emphasize the power of difference and discursive multiplicity.

Exposition

We know that every theoretical turn has its own spinners and weavers working relentlessly to fabricate a new textual discourse. We also know that from emergent discourses new conceptual frames and methodological trajectories surface, which are then articulated institutionally to create what can easily be described as architextual edifices. Prior to the emergence of these complex discursive articulations, we can usually trace the creation of these discourses to some beginning—as an origin story beginning a long, long time ago. To use Ursula K. Le Guin's (1980) dramatization, a gathering was held around a campfire during a "dark and stormy night" (p. 191), so that a heretofore untold story could be told.

Well-known historians, philosophers, theologians, narratologists, literary theorists, anthropologists, and psychologists attended the symposium titled Narrative: The Illusion of Sequence at the University of Chicago (MITCH-

ELL, 1981). To name just a few, Jacque Derrida, Hayden White, Nelson Goodman, Victor Turner, Paul Ricouer, Frank Kermode, and Ursula K. Le Guin all contributed to this eclectic event. The essays presented by these influential thinkers were published a year later in a special issue in Critical Inquiry titled On Narrative.

Some may argue that these essays led to a paradigmatic shift in theory (BRUNER, 1991, p. 5). The pervasive academic discourse that "genres are not to be mixed," as Derrida & Ronell (1980, p. 55) politely put it, was certainly disrupted. Genres, understood this way, are confined discourses with distinct foundations and genealogies which are meant to stay pure, disciplined, and ever so obedient. Narrative ways of understanding, and its form inquiry, mixes genres and become a subversive practice meant to go against the grain of disciplinarity, that is, against the imprisonment of knowledge. It is, in other words, unequivocally transgressive against all foundational understandings and essentialist discourses. My point of departure thus follows a transgressive outlook that aims to take bits and pieces from those inquiring about the sociocultural world through narrative.

It is not a surprise that psychologist Jerome Bruner (1991) considered On Narrative the beginning of a paradigm shift (KUHN, 1970). Drawing highly from the collected essays, his book Actual Minds, Possible Worlds (1986) immediately transgresses and blurs the disciplinary genres of cognitive psychology and literary theory. Bruner begins the text with an epigraph written by pragmatist philosopher and psychologist William James: "To say that all human thinking is essentially of two kinds—reasoning on the one hand, and narrative, descriptive, contemplative thinking on the other—is to say only what every reader's experience will corroborate" (xiii). What Bruner develops and expands from this epigraph is paradigmatic and

narrative cognition. While the former mode of thinking is aligned more with mathematical-logical-analytical ways of knowing, the latter emphasizes how the meaning and the making of the world involves a narrative cognitive structure. One form of knowing is "preoccupied with the epistemological question of how to know truth" while the other mode is interested in the "broader questions of how we come to endow meaning to experience, which is the preoccupation of the poet and the storyteller" (p. 12).

Along with other textualist spinners in social theory (CLIFFORD & MARCUS, 1986), Bruner's narrative mode of thinking and doing helped destabilize the dichotomy between subject and object, known today as the crisis of representation. From these moves against dualist thought, stories became less about external reality and more about the complicated meaning-making practices enmeshed and entangled in relational webs of significance (Geertz, 1973). In Bruner's (1991) later work, we find a dialectical component to narrative, particularly the relational dimension between culture and the narrative construction of social reality (p. 15). This last point stresses that "we cannot take as our unit of analysis the isolated individual operating 'inside his or her own skin' in a cultural vacuum" (p. 20).

For Bruner (1991), stories are used to make meaning of our everyday surroundings and experiences which are intertwined to the symbolic systems in place that make the social construction and reconstruction of culture possible. This construction entails the "local capacity for accruing stories of happening of the past into some sort of diachronic structure that permits a continuity in the present" (20). Stories are thus individual constructions of lived experiences insofar as they form part of a broader socially and historically embedded narrative.

Donald Polkinghorne (1988, 1995) elaborates a similar argument in favor of narrative inquiry by drawing on the work of Bruner. While Bruner applied narrative and paradigmatic (logico-scientific) ways of knowing in the field of cognitive psychology, Polkinghorne argued for the methodological use of narrative as a way to understand the ways human action is produced and understood as storied. Although narrative inquiry, as a methodology, is not explicitly named or defined in his earlier work, in a well-cited article, he concisely describes narrative inquiry "as a subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action" (POLKINGHORNE, 1995, p. 5).

From Bruner's epistemological division between paradigmatic and narrative modes of thinking, knowing, and constructing reality, Polkinghorn (1995) proposes a parallel methodological distinction between narrative analysis and analysis of narrative. On the one hand, the analysis of narrative adopts a paradigmatic analytic frame. It begins with the collection of data in narrative form (e.g., "tell me your life story"). Subsequently, whole stories are broken down into typologies (e.g., categories and themes). This approach to narrative inquiry analyzes storied lived experiences and classifies them paradigmatically into thematic categories dependent on theoretical frameworks. On the other hand, narrative analysis departs from "actions, events, and happenings, but whose analysis produces stories" (p. 6). The narrative inquirer using this form of analysis/synthesis constructs a story from the participants' lived experiences.

Polkinghorne (1995, p. 12) expounds that in the "second type, narrative analysis, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories". Whereas the analysis of narrative meticulously implements

a reiterative coding process resonant with a grounded theory approach, the configuration of narrative aligns more with an ethnographic approach aimed at writing the participants' lived stories from multiple sources of data, including fieldwork. Narrative analysis is thus inductive while the analysis of narrative is deductive.

Narrative Inquiry in Educational Research

Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly's work (1990, 2000) did more than coin the term narrative inquiry. Their work also consolidated narrative inquiry's position in qualitative research in general and in educational research in particular. Arguing in favor of this approach, both authors maintain that,

> We might say that if we understand the world narratively, as we do, then it makes sense to study the world narratively. For us, life—as we come to it and as it comes to others—is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities. (CLANDININ & CONNELLY, 2000, p. 17)

Paralleling Bruner's use of William James' pragmatist text, Clandinin and Connelly invoke John Dewey's work (1926, 1934, 1938) to understand the continuity of experience, namely, the way "one positions oneself in that continuum—the imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experience base and leads to an experiential future" (p. 2). Alasdair MacIntyre's (1984) narrative unity is also used—although stripped away from its criticality—to intertwine lived experiences with the ways in which events are emplotted and narrated "after the fact" (GEERTZ, 1995). Stories, MacIntyre (1984) states, are "lived before they are told" (p. 211). It is only after life's

spontaneity that we begin to narrate that which has passed. Bruner (1991) conceived this meaning-making process as a mode of thought that finds the order of things. It is, in short, the narrative construction of our lifeworld.

For Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry entails the following:

> Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social. (p. 20)

Lived experiences, therefore, are the phenomena of interest and narrative inquiry is the methodology used to story them. The researcher is also always part of the story and social context, which resonates with Bruner (1991) and Geertz' (1973) epistemological and methodological understandings of narrative and its sociocultural and historical embeddedness.

Now that we have entered a methodological discussion, the place of theory needs further consideration. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) observe that the use of theory in narrative inquiry is the "central tension" researchers with "formalistic" backgrounds encounter (p. 38). They consider the use of theory as a 'downward' approach to research that follows a "paradigmatic sociopolitical analysis" (p. 38). They affirm that "sociological and political analysis can also make the whole lesser through the use of abstraction and formalism" (p. 38). It is worth citing them at length to understand what these tensions entail.

> The 'framework' is a formalistic view; it is a view that things are never what they are but are rather what our framework or point of view or perspective or outlook makes of them. Further, because nothing is as it seems, the only things

worth noticing are the terms, the formal structures, by which things are perceived. One does not teach, one mindlessly reproduces social structures; one does not have emotionally credited intentions, one has preset expectations; one does not have experiences that are one's own, one merely moves forward by contextual design. Formalists say that the facts of the case, the experience one claims to have, to the data collected by empiricist researchers have little bearing on their claims. Persons, they argue, can never see themselves as they are because they are always something else; specifically, they are whatever social structure, ideology, theory, or framework is at work in the inquiry. Because narrative inquiry entails a reconstruction of a person's experience in relation to others and to a social milieu, it is under suspicion as not representing the true context. (p. 39)

As an antagonistic relationship appears in this story, an academic drama also begins. Without clarifying the differences between formalist and other ways of conceptualizing the "hegemonies of politics, culture, gender, and framework" (p. 40), as they put it, tensions emerge and a drama appears in the horizon. As the differences between theoretical frameworks and theoretical perspectives are left unmentioned, disarticulating substantive and formalist theories from the ontological and epistemological sensibilities and commitments involved in all forms of inquiry becomes more difficult.

To make matters more complicated, Clandinin and Connelly did not specify which school of thought they were referring to—i.e., whether they were referring to positivist, functionalist, poststructuralist, interpretivist, interactionist, or critical theory. According to them, the best way to go about narrative inquiry is to bracket our understandings of social structures and ideology. To bracket such understandings helps prevent theoretical frames from weighing in too heavily in thinking and writing about the lived experiences of our participants. Fol-

lowing this advice, should the use of Dewey's theories and pragmatic philosophy be placed under scrutiny as well? How far shall we go with our questioning the use of theoretical perspectives before we end up with a nihilist academic discourse?

As the tensions emerge, I turn to Victor Turner's (1980) work as a conceptual guide to construct an academic drama. I turn to him primarily because his anthropological, ethnographic, and theoretical work added a performative dramaturgical layer to the ways in which we understand sociocultural and political conflict in narrative form. As he also presented his essay Social Dramas and the Stories about Them in the momentous symposium mentioned initially, I recover the useful connections he made between narrative and social drama. Turner believed,

> Social dramas occur within groups of persons who share values and interests and who have a real or alleged common history.... The *breach* is seen as the expression of a deeper division of interests and loyalties than appears on the surface.... Once visible, it can hardly be revoked. Whatever may be the case, a mounting *crisis* follows, a momentous juncture or turning point in the relations between components of a social field—at which seeming peace becomes overt conflict and covert antagonisms become visible. In order to limit the contagious spread of breach, certain adjustive and *redressive* mechanisms, informal and formal, are brought into operation by leading members of the disturbed.... The final phase [of this social drama] consists either in the reintegration of the disturbed social group—though the scope and range of its relational field will have altered, the number of its parts will be different, and their size and influence will have changed—or the social *recognition* of irreparable breach between the contesting parties, sometimes leading to their spatial separation.... This phase, too, may be registered by a public ceremony or ritual, indicating reconciliation or permanent cleavage between the involved. (p. 150-151)

Social dramas thus unfold in sequence yet are never predetermined. It is the relational and dialogical character of social dramas that make them unpredictable and indeterminate. Whether the looming crisis is redressed effectively or whether the "disturbed social group" decides to reintegrate is also never a certainty.

Narrative Breach

The close reader might have noticed that the intellectual history I have described so far is dominated by psychosocial perspectives (HUBER et al., 2013). For unknown reasons, sociologists were not assigned any room around the metaphorical campfire. As my background is in sociology, I began to question why sociologists did not present their work at the symposium, given that it took place at the University of Chicago, of all places, known for its groundbreaking and unconventional methodologies since the early 1900s. Was sociology so far removed from narrative forms of inquiring in the 1980s? Had sociology completely forgotten its own pragmatic, symbolic interactionist, and ideographic genealogy? Had it not contributed to narrative modes of research through its narratively construed ethnographic studies?

Gubrium and Holstein (2008) answer these questions and trace the use of narrative inquiry back to the early 1900s. The Chicago School, which played a major role in developing urban sociology, ethnographic methods, and symbolic interactionism, also inspired interest in narrative modes of thinking. George Herbert Mead (1934) (Dewey's contemporary and colleague), for instance, worked at the University of Chicago at the time and dedicated much of his work to understand mind, self, and society in relation to the symbolic domain. More specifically, he connected the "self to everyday life, in particular, the social interaction, and situations through which self-understanding de-

velops" (GUBRIUM & HOLSTEIN, 2008, p. 243). In other words, "Who and what we are in this context are not so much personal but relational stories; they are narratives that mirror the kinds of accounts we engage as we go about the business of living" (p. 243). A great example in this line of work is W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's (1918) The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, which illustrated how immigrants' lived experiences were narrated in the letters they sent back home. Through these letters, one gains an understanding of "who they were and what they have become as they describe a world left behind in relation to a world being currently lived" (p. 244). Another example is Clifford R. Shaw's (1930) The Jack Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story, which narrates how the protagonist's "subjective contours of a shared environment" are revealed through situated and relational stories (p. 244). Most importantly, the boy's story in this study illustrates "how inner life relates to distinctive social worlds" (p. 244).

The examples provided, though dated, underscore the importance of reclaiming nearly forgotten stories and intellectual histories. I turn to these early accounts of narrative inquiry—however residualized they may be today (WILLIAMS, 1977), to disentangle the social sciences from formalism and to reclaim the relational intellectual work of the past. Turner (1980) argues that "Dismembering [a discourse] may be a prelude to remembering, which is not merely restoring some past intact but seeing it in living relationship to the present" (p. 166-167). Thus, this performative act of remembrance complexifies narrative inquiry's intellectual past. To enrich the plot, I decided to add the missing sociological chapter to this story. In the spirit of C. Wright Mills (1959), a sociologically imaginative narrative inquiry as a way to understand the interconnectedness of history, biography, and society was reclaimed.

Narrative Crisis

When the breach of a narrative appears, a crisis emerges out of the foundational fissures. Through these epistemological cracks, critical thought permeates, contaminates, and mixes the genre that was supposed to remain uncontaminated at all costs. Melissa Freeman (2017) allows critical thought in through the cracks to problematize the relationship between narrative coherence and the politics of culture. She posits that "Since what counts as coherence is not only determined by linguistic conventions, but is also at the mercy of cultural, social, and disciplinary norms, the stories that get circulated and accepted are more often those that reinforce, rather than resist, the status quo" (p. 43). As we originally mentioned, the creation and telling of a particular story usually involves the destruction and subjugation of another. Destruction implies complete erasure while subjugation conceptualizes the mechanisms that aim to destroy. As subjugation reveals an incomplete process, we hence turn to the insurrection of subjugated knowledges and stories being told around clandestine campfires.

To disrupt the status quo, legal studies critical race theorist Richard Delgado (1989) proposed, along with other narrative inquirers at the time, a "counter-storytelling" praxis that could challenge oppressive discursive practices, on the one hand, and build community on the other (p. 2416). He argued for the use of "divergent stories" because stories carry "reality-creating potential" (p. 2418). Potential encompasses the ways in which subversive stories are articulated and canalized in various communities. Rather than "giving the other voice" as Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 4) proposed, Delgado (1989) sought to amplify the counternarratives emerging from places of radical alterity.

Counterstories do not only depart from negativity—that is, from negative philosophy—but are more constructive than deconstructive, for knowledge-practices and stories affirm the existence of a collective experience, history, and cultural memory that reclaims and reshapes a collective identity. Those who write counterstories, furthermore, "focus on its community-building functions...and deeper, more vital ethics," and those willing to tell them strive to disrupt the "received wisdom" by "showing us that there are possibilities for life other than the ones we live (Delgado, 1989, p. 2414). Along a similar philosophical and theoretical vein, Stuart Hall (1996) sustained that collective identities and memories,

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actual identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation.... They arise from the narrativization of the self, but the necessarily fictional nature of this process in no way undermines its discursive, material or political effectivity, even if the belongingness, the 'suturing into the story' through which identities arise is, partly, in the imaginary. (p. 4)

The collectively constructed narrative thus allows for the possibility for politically aware fictions to emerge. Fictions, as Geertz (1973) poetically described, are fashioned metaphors that are constructed through imaginative acts aimed at suturing the past with the lived present and possible future. Most importantly, they are expressive acts of resilience, resistance, and creation told by the other who speaks from alterity.

Renato Rosaldo (1989), who is well-known for his anthropological and ethnographic work,

was also inspired by narrative ways of inquiring about the world. In the writing of his seminal book, however, he remained doubtful of the presuppositions narrative inquirers make regarding narrative structures. Plot structures, as he expresses, are often incommensurable with others. What this means is that even within the 'same' culture, "different actors often use quite different narrative forms" (p. 142). If differences exist within what is considered the "same" culture, then one can only imagine the implications this has for the narration of the lived experiences of others. Juxtaposing the narration of the social analysts with that of the protagonist other, he maintains, allows for the necessary "creative tension" between researcher and participant. It echoes, though for different reasons, an "ethic of incommensurability" that challenges the "moves toward innocence" Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012, p. 1) speak of. It, additionally, positions other stories as a subversive possibility of knowledge production. As Rosaldo (1989) describes,

> Narrative analysis told or written from divergent perspectives…will not fit together into a unified master summation. A source at once of insight and discomfort, the dilemma of 'incommensurability,' or lack of fit among diverse narratives, makes it imperative to attend with care to what other people are saying, especially if they are unfamiliar idioms and speak to us from socially subordinate positions. Taking account subordinate[d] forms of knowledge provides an opportunity to learn and productively change 'our' forms of social analysis. It should broaden, complicate, and perhaps, revise, but in no way inhibit, 'our' own ethical, political, and analytical insights. (p. 148)

Rosaldo (1989) suggests, therefore, that a social analyst must learn from those enacting and telling other stories, and should simultaneously be transparent in the process of telling a tale that is likely to be incommensurable with that of the other's own telling.

Narrative Redress

In order to prevent the "contagious spread" of the breach and crisis from diffusing even further, "certain adjustive and *redressive* mechanisms, informal and formal, are brought into operation by leading members of the disturbed (TURNER, 1980, p. 150). To redress the "disturbed group," Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) map the field of narrative inquiry to demarcate the ontological and epistemological borders shared with post-positivist, Marxist, and post-structuralist thought. Creating a shared conceptual space, they admit, can be problematic in that it has the potential to reterritorialize a field of research. They assure, however, that to "sharpen distinctions" between various methodological traditions and the philosophies undergirding them may serve to highlight the conceptual spaces of convergence and divergence. Their nuanced understanding of different theoretical perspectives, understood more philosophically than formalistically enclosed in a theoretical framework, thus redress the tensions which initiated the breach.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) further propose that narrative inquiry is the methodological armature of a Deweyan pragmatist philosophy.

> Dewey's ontology is not transcendental, it is transactional. The epistemological implications of this view are nothing short of revolutionary. It implies that the regulative ideal for inquiry is not to generate an exclusively faithful representation of a reality independent of the knower. The regulative ideal for inquiry is to generate a new relation between a human being and her environment—her life, community, world—one that 'makes possible a new way of dealing with them, and thus eventually creates a new kind of experienced objects, not more real than those which preceded but more significant, and less overwhelming and oppressive' (Dewey, 1981b, p. 175). In this pragmatic view of knowledge, our representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation. (p. 39)

Social reality, understood as transactional and relational, is not to be represented by narrative inquiry objectively. Instead, narrative inquiry is a pragmatic intervention that makes social reality "less overwhelming and oppressive" where ethical human relations are formed and where new experiences, as lived and told by our participants, are given a space to emerge.

We can extrapolate that critical theory and narrative inquiry share ontological boundaries when thinking about historically oppressed and minoritized peoples. As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) acknowledge, they both "share an interest in analyzing the way large institutions dehumanize, anesthetize, and alienate the people living and working within them" (p. 47). Thinking of institutions in such a way presupposes a critical way of perceiving the world (an ontological commitment as previously stated). The narrative inquirer's role hence becomes more engaged and committed to social, political, and economic injustices. Epistemologically, however, the purpose of inquiring over such matters differs immensely. While critical theory, according to them, starts from a macro perspective aimed at transforming social structures and ideological apparatuses, a pragmatist-informed narrative inquiry sustains that the disavowal of "lived experience is particularly egregious when applied to communities who have been historically silenced by processes of colonialism, patriarchy, homophobia, and other forms of oppression" (51). The historical silence and erasure they rightfully point to is a valuable gesture aimed at rectifying the academic drama. It sutures the breach slightly and reduces the contagion gradually, thereby appeasing and luring in some detractors while leaving many unconvinced.

In their redressive action against the unfolding crisis, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) take it one step further. They declare that it is nec-

essary to consider the criticism narrative inquiry has received by critical scholars. They admonish that because narrative inquirers usually narrate the storied lived experience of participants, "the risk of slipping into self-insulating habits of attention and analysis is high" (51). They enumerate the following recommendation to eschew said risks:

> (1) educating narrative inquirers for whom the promotion of social justice is a central commitment, (2) the increased inclusion of voices examining experiences of oppression in the narrative inquiry literature, and (3) regular dialogue with scholars in other disciplines who can provide constructive political critique of narrative inquiry practices and texts. (p. 51)

By emphasizing social justice, inclusion, oppression, and a transdisciplinary sensitivity, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) make reintegration possible. While their redress eases some of the tension, the academic drama continues, nonetheless, and additional redressive actions are taken by other leading scholars.

Tom Borone (2007) provides a masterful account to rectify the erasure of the political context. The political climate at the time, he states, "may signal the need for examination of the current status of this narrative approach to educational research and reflecting on its future course" (p. 456). A decade later one ought to ask whether the political climate today also impacts the ways we think of narrative inquiry. Borone considers "the inherently political character of education stories", "intended audiences of narrative research", "the ultimate purposes for which narrative research in education is conducted and for which educational narratives are constructed"; and "the retrogressive political realities of educational research" crucial to rethink and reconsider the political implications of narrative inquiry (p. 456-457). Reflecting on the ethical and political dilemmas narrative inquirers encounter, he contin-

ues to question whether conventional forms of narrative inquiry can reconcile with more critical approaches. He asks, "What forms of negotiation between these two points of view are possible? What new forms of politically aware narratives can we imagine?" (p. 458). The tensions we pointed to earlier also emerge in his writing when he queries, "How do we reconcile the opposing tendencies of political substance and aesthetic form in emancipatory-minded storytelling" (p.458). This last question leads us to the last stage of our academic drama: the recognition of a rupture.

Recognition of Rupture

After redressive actions are offered by the dominant group, Turner (1980) suggests that "The final phase [of a social drama] consists either in the reintegration of the disturbed social group...or the social *recognition* of irreparable breach between the contesting parties, sometimes leading to their spatial separation" (151). Counter-storytellers, therefore, can either reintegrate with the disturbed party or break away to pave a new intellectual path. In more poetic words, they have the choice to continue to construct with others in a path of uncertainty, one that is less travelled (FROST, 1962) and one that the Spanish poet Antonio Machado (1982) beautifully depicted as the path that is only made by the lonely wanderer brave enough to walk it.

I admonish, once again, that this estrangement does not mean rivalry as it may be perceived at first glance. What this rupture creates instead is an(other) option that does not find its own continuity of experience within the dominant academic storyline. To a great extent, the counternarrative inquirer underscores discontinuity, that which does not align with the dominant storyline. She parts ways, says goodbye, makes the road

while walking it, and finds other lonely wanderers like her along the way. Conceived this way, counter-storytelling becomes more than an individual act. It is imperative, therefore, to reconfigure narrative inquiry as a research praxis that allows oppositional stories to be told collectively.

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998), who draws heavily on the work of critical race theorists such as Delgado, situates counternarrative inquiry in education and emphasizes the importance of collective stories. She asks, "Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?" Clearly, "nice" refers to the unproblematized areas of educational research methodologies. As mentioned earlier the dominant form of narrative inquiry recommends we bracket theoretical perspectives, frameworks, and social structures, but is it possible to ask questions about power differences without already having an idea, a concept, a theory, a philosophy, and, most importantly, an experience of how oppressive structures are articulated in schools, and how some voices are silenced by academic discursive practices? Although Ladson-Billings recognizes the value of narrative inquiry's ability to bring forth previously unheard voices, particularly the stories lived and told by teachers, she remains a skeptic. As she states, "just because more people are recognizing and using story as a part of scholarly inquiry does not mean that all stories are judged as legitimate in knowledge construction and the advancement of a discipline" (13). My questioning falls along these lines as well. Whose lived experiences narrative inquirers take up unveils the problematic of privileging certain voices—indeed, certain stories—over others.

A quick search through a database will demonstrate that teachers, 80 percent of whom are white in the United States (US Department

of Education, 2016), are at the center of narrative inquiry. Are these stories more aligned with the researcher's own story? What stories are being silenced in the process of overemphasizing teachers' lived experiences? Non-white students attending public schools now form part of the numerical majority, 52 percent to be exact (US Department of Education, 2016), yet attempts to tell another story as lived by historically oppressed, colonized, and silenced students is marginal at best. How then do we begin to narrate these stories without falling into the dark abyss of colonial representation? How do we tell a narrative of resistance, of rupture, and of emergence? The academic drama in which we find ourselves requires us to query whether it is possible to "reconcile the two worlds" (DELGADO, 1989, p. 2435). Should Rosaldo's argument in favor of an incommensurable approach be taken seriously?

Ladson-Billings (1998) asserts that counter-storytelling is about a "shared history as other" and the way life is storied and lived and performed collectively as an insurgent practice (p. 11). Indeed, another way of doing narrative inquiry begins to form with the invaluable assistance of embodied theory created from below. In more philosophical words, it emerges from ontologically and epistemically subjugated historical subjects. The panoptic formalist theories challenged by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) is a great start, yet room is also left vacant for other critical theories and other ways of thinking and doing narrative inquiry. For the insurrection of subjugated knowledges to emerge, the creative power of collectively told and performed counternarratives must form part of narrative inquiry's praxis.

Concluding Thoughts

A narrative praxis must emphasize the emergence of alternative forms of sociality (which forms part of the three-dimensionality of experience Clandinin and Connelly (2000) support) and of alternative worlds. World-making practices are storytelling practices, whereby different worlds are travelled (Lugones, 1987), experienced, and storied, especially by those who live in cultural spaces of liminality, always "betwixt and between" (Turner, 1967). The stories we tell highly depend on which world one finds oneself at any given moment. Transitioning from one world to another is not a metaphor but an actual lived practice students, teachers, and scholars from other worlds inhabit and constantly navigate. The construction of worlds is not only that which saturates discourse. As Lugones (1987) sustains,

> […] a 'world' can also be such a society given a non-dominant construction, or it can be such a society or a society given an idiosyncratic construction.… Those of us who are 'world' travelers have the distinct experience of being different in different 'worlds' and of having the capacity to remember other 'worlds' and ourselves in them. (10)

Experiencing various worlds hence creates a story of multiplicity, and stories are ways to get a glimpse of other worlds. "Without knowing the other's 'world,' one does not know the other, and without knowing the other one is really alone in the other's presence because the other is only dimly present" (p. 18). In our attempt to bring forth other worlds working with narrative forms of inquiry, we hope others do the same so that the next gathering around the luminous campfire can take place under a starlit sky and in a different world rather than in a dark and stormy night. That way, when we 'huddle closer' together to listen to other stories, we can take them with us to retell them to others, so that these world-making stories become more relentless and more 'unwilling to dissolve into darkness' (LE GUIN, 1980, p. 194, as cited in Huber et al. 2013).

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