ORGANIZATIONAL STORYTELLING REVIEW

Journal of the True Storytelling Institute

Organizational Storytelling Review

Organizational Storytelling Review Description and Scope

Organizational Storytelling Review is the official journal of the True Storytelling Institute. As the journal of the philosophy, art, and science of business and organizational storytelling, OSR is committed to advancing storytelling scholarship. Our journal is a scholar-practitioner journal, intended to provide not only peer-reviewed publications on the advancement of storytelling methodologies for the purpose of research, but also storytelling methods that may be used in the field, for business and organizational purposes. We also publish works on ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, and pedagogy of storytelling. OSR accepts research articles, review articles, case studies, theoretical and conceptual scholarly papers, and thought leadership pieces. The content is intended to reach those in business, applied social sciences, applied behavioral sciences, and organization sciences, among others.

Advancing Storytelling Art, Science, Methodology, and Pedagogy

Call for Papers
Organizational Storytelling Review Vol. 2 No. 1
(May 30, 2024)

This is a call for submissions for the first issue of the second volume of the *Organizational Storytelling Review* (OSR). We are calling on storytelling scholars and practitioners to bring forward their work surrounding storytelling and storylistening science, art, and methodological and pedagogical approaches.

As many of us understand, storytelling is not new but exists in and through time immemorial. It is a natural occurrence in our lives no matter whether we are engaging in entertainment, passing knowledge to our followers, telling stories to our children, or teaching students or journal readers. That said, we also engage, purposefully and intentionally, in storytelling science, building nuance and methodology atop long-standing traditions so that we can be and become better researchers, educators, entrepreneurs, managers, parents, colleagues, and citizens. Storytelling methodologies have increased in popularity and use in organizations, whether they are corporations, social service agencies, governmental organizations, institutes of research and learning, or living communities. These methods are used for employee motivation, marketing, corporate loyalty, self-assessment, classroom pedagogy, therapy, and organizational dynamics research, among numerous other reasons. Storytelling can be simultaneously wonderful and practical.

As many have experienced in the Quantum Storytelling Conference, there are a wide array of topics, professions, fields, communities, and organizations within which this *storytelling science* emerges, lives, and thrives. Stories and storytelling research in the conference has been generated and presented on topics ranging from organizational group interactions to analyses of bigotries to teaching methodologies to the works and philosophies of Marquis de Sade. In short, there is no limitation in which we find storytelling to be not only useful and necessary, but vital. It is fitting, therefore, that the second overall issue of OSR is an open-themed issue, accepting storytelling research, theory, case study, and other work focused on any number of topics, not accentuating a particular theme or focus.

Submissions Deadline: February 1, 2024.

For any questions regarding submissions to the journal or this specific issue, please contact the Editor or one of the Associate Editors.

Visit www.storytellingreview.com for submission guidelines and criteria.

Storytelling Followership

Bridging Leadership and Followership Research and Practice Through Storytelling

Call for Papers
Organizational Storytelling Review Vol. 2 No. 2
(August 2024)

This special journal issue calls on storytelling scholars and practitioners to accelerate our efforts in bridging and expanding our inquiries surrounding leadership and followership through quantum and other storytelling methodologies and approaches.

This special issue of *Organizational Storytelling Review* (OSR) focuses attention on the topics of leadership and followership, specifically examining the the relationship between leaders and followers in organizations, whether they are corporations, public healthcare facilities, universities, public and private schools, non-profit organizations, government agencies, community organizations, professional associations, neighborhoods, or other organizations.

The field of organizational leadership continues to evolve, as well as the relevant research being conducted in the field, and amid the corporate and community challenges currently ongoing across industries and types of institutions, the topic of leadership and definitions of leadership and leaders are hot topics across industries and professional fields.

Perhaps because leadership and leaders are a sought-after commodity in businesses and other organizations, there appears to be an endless abundance of "leadership experts," consultants, advisors, coined leadership styles, and publications opining on the meaning of leadership (Shufutinsky et al., 2020a).

There are numerous operationalized definitions for leadership and yet most of them are limited in the context of everything that leadership encompasses and everyone that uses, undertakes, assumes, and performs leadership roles, behaviors, and tasks. Based on generations of literature and research on the topic of leadership, it is likely a safe position that there is no definitive guide or or single definition for the characteristics that yield a "good" leader. Likewise, it is safe to say that the topic of organizational leadership is a dialogue that is considerably more complex than trying to understand what a good or bad leader is.

There is no shortage of stories to be examined and told on the topics related to leadership, and research is being conducted on numerous related topics, including "dark sides" of leadership, power dynamics, conscious leadership, humanistic leadership, emergent leadership, crisis leadership, virtual leadership, distributed or shared authority, and thought leadership, among many others. Another main area relevant to leadership that has recently gained steam in research attention is followership and the relationships between leaders, followers, and their roles in organizations. We may live an a leader-centric world, but the practice of

leadership is not exclusive to positional leaders, and the study and understanding of leadership-followership co-existence in individuals may yield interesting and practically useful phenomena. Followership is not a monolithic epistemology and ontology, and analyzing the reciprocal nature of leadership and followership can open our eyes and practices to understanding the operations, functions, and relationships in organizations more thoroughly. Although inherently linked to leadership, followership pedagogy is distinct. We should broadly explore through storytelling science.

The True Storytelling Institute, and the OSR, recognize that it is essential to periodically hone our attention on topics that are immediately relevant and require updates over time to ensure that our scholar practitioners are able to remain abreast of the dynamics that exist in the organizations and communities that we may serve, and to make sure that we are able to provide the much-needed methodological storytelling input, as well as the stories, into the literature and public arena, potentially impacting society. Followership, relative to leadership, is one of those topics, and therefore, this special issue provides an opportunity for an examination, from scholar practitioners in the organizational, social, behavioral, and other sciences, a collection of nuanced epistemological, ontological, methodological, and axiological stories and perspectives surrounding novel concepts, theories, and thought on the topic.

It is fitting, therefore, that we visit the topic of followership through a storytelling lens in a special issue. Some interesting areas to explore regarding this topic include, but are not limited to the following.

1. Stories regarding followers across contexts
2. Examining followership experiences in different sectors and/or industries
3. The utility of storytelling techniques for organizational followership
4. Examination of relationships of leaders and followers in organizations
5. How are values and beliefs operating paradoxically in terms of followership?
6. In-depth analysis on the reciprocal nature of leading and following
7. Exploring styles, attributes, behaviors, and practices of followers relative to leaders
8. The international, global, indigenous, and other perspectives regarding followership
9. Negative and other connotations of the term "followership,"
10. Followership development methods and processes
11. Methodological storytelling nuances for studying followers and the leader-follower relationship.
12. Other relevant perspectives regarding followers and leader-follower relationships
13. Followership antenarratives

We invite you to submit manuscripts for publication in this special issue.

Submissions Deadline: May 1, 2024.

For any questions regarding submissions to the journal or this specific issue, please contact the Editor or one of the Associate Editors.

Visit www.storytellingreview.com for submission guidelines and criteria.

Letter from the Editor

Storytelling: The Era Everlasting

Anton Shufutinsky

School of Business and Professional Studies, Cabrini University

Abstract

We are surrounded by stories, and we should be. This editorial opens the door to the first volume of the *Organizational Storytelling Review* journal. This brief discussion surrounds both the wonder and utility of storytelling, including the conceptual frameworks of storytelling as art and science. This art and science has existed throughout human history, and it can be expected that storytelling, both the familiar and methodological, while increasingly trendy in the current era of scholarship and practice, will extend its temporality throughout conscious eternity.

Keywords: Storytelling, Quantum Storytelling, Business Storytelling, Charlie Morecraft, True Storytelling, Organizational Storytelling Review, Storytelling Science

Introduction

There is an old Jewish proverb passed down for millennia made famous by acclaimed author and storyteller Elie Wiesel. The proverb states that G_d created humankind because He loves stories (Roth, 1978; Wiesel, 2017). So do many of us. Therefore, as editor of a scholarly publication focused on the topic of storytelling, it is fitting that this journal starts off with a brief story.

Charlie: Industrial Storytelling for the Sea

In my mid-twenties and early thirties, I had the pleasure of hosting Charlie Morecraft two times, once in heavy industry, at a shipbuilding company's shipyard, and the second time aboard a US Navy nuclear-powered aircraft carrier while it was undergoing a lengthy industrial overhaul with thousands of strategically-scheduled, highly hazardous jobs to be completed.

Charlie Morecraft is a motivational speaker on the topic of workplace safety. You can find summaries and reviews of his story online, but, in brief, Charlie travels worldwide to tell the story of his experience in a nearly-fatal workplace accident that left him burned over a large percentage of his body, requiring many surgeries throughout his life (Cotten & Jenkins, 1997; Workman, 2016). The story he tells, as he strolls back and forth on stage is riveting, scary, and highly relatable especially to those who work in high-hazard environments, such as mines, refineries, and shipyards. His accounts of near-death and excruciating pain are not extremely graphic, but Charlie holds nothing back as he talks about his ordeal, and exhibits his necessity for modified personal behaviors today as a result of his

accident-related injuries from many years ago.

Charlie Morecraft's clients rave about his ability to impact organizational safety cultures, and I had the pleasure of observing his performance twice. It was, no doubt, in the way Charlie delivered his story that impacted the hearts and minds of his audience. I witnessed the wonder and the power of his story, watching and listening, as the host, as Charlie had hundreds of maritime industrial workers and sailors on the edges of their seats as he spoke, all while a large rotating metal fan blew air in his direction to accommodate his inability to perspire from much of his body. The story was the same, but the presentation and his engagement with the story, and with the audience, had some variation each of the two times I observed it, and each time, Charlie hit the nail on the head. The story was powerful, the truth of it was profound, the rhetorical and actual questions that emerged during his talk were provocative. The engagement was wrapped not just in what he was telling us, but in the fact that he lived it and he appeared to be present, both in the moment and in the incident, simultaneously, as he continued his living story through lived storytelling. It was no secret that what we were witnessing was not something any typical safety training was able to accomplish. This story was one that workers may remember and reflect on for the rest of their lives, pausing before deciding to take shortcuts in their hazardous workplaces. I found myself, over time, trying to understand what truly worked in Charlie's talk, and I came to a few substantive conclusions that I later

employed, sometimes successfully, as I worked with pilots, ship drivers, ordnance handlers, welders, explosive ordnance technicians, SEALs, laboratory scientists, emergency responders, and others. But what did Charlie do that made his motivational speech—his story—so effective? I will return to answer this question, shortly.

Why Storytelling and Storytelling Research?

Why do we love stories? The neuroscience of storytelling exhibits numerous physiological and psychological reactions, including changes in oxytocin development, cognition, and neuroplasticity. This science behind storytelling shows that stories can alter feelings, motivations, behavior, and thinking, both at the individual and the group levels, and is therefore relevant for individual and organizational development (Zak, 2014). There are reasons that we may not remember what we ate for breakfast on Monday, but we can remember entire sections of dialogues from books, movies, or songs, and a great deal of that is rooted in stories. But not all storytelling is equal.

There are several articles in business journals that ask the question, "what makes research interesting?" (Davis, 1971; Bartunek et al., 2006). These are answered in numerous ways, but often they have to do with challenges to status quo, challenges to existing theories, paradoxical findings, novel methodologies, and new topics, as examples. Stories are similar, in a way. The question of what makes a story interesting arises. But also, there is the fundamental question of what makes a story "Good." One definition

for good states that something is good to the degree to which that something meets its stated or intended purpose (Demarest, 2011). Although there is considerably more to a story than whether it meets its intended purpose, there is an application of this definition to storytelling, and it urges us to ask the question of why. Why do we tell stories?

Storytelling is no new concept or practice. It is inherent in life, and it is what we do naturally in many parts of our lives, whether we are describing why we were late to work, the best burger we ever ate for lunch, why our favorite vacation was in Hawaii, or what an incredible and rewarding experience we had at a particular storytelling conference. We use stories naturally and practically in these ways to communicate, and we use stories more intentionally in different aspects of our work and home lives. We all engage in storytelling for communication, entertainment, teaching, transferring knowledge, and for self-understanding (Drake, 2002; Kowalewski and Waukau-Villagomez, 2011; Polkinghorne, 1988; Shufutinsky, 2019; Shufutinsky et al., 2024; Walker, 2017). We use stories to communicate knowledge, to communicate art, and to communicate messages. We use stories to engage and to build relationships. We also use stories for the purpose of business and organizational work.

Stories are used for visual, literary, and musical art, and we are aware of master artist storytellers including J. R. R. Tolkien, Steven King, Maya Angelou, Tom Clancy, N. Scott Momaday, Elie Wiesel, Leo Tolstoy, Paulo Coelho, Walter Mosley, J. K.

Rowling, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Amy Tan, Wallace Terry II, Johnny Cash, Tupac Shakur, Dolly Parton, Anthony Kiedis, Dave Grohl, Marc Chagall, Broken Fingaz, and Jojo Ohayon, among many, many other. Art or business, some use stories for competitive advantage in the workplace, or social advantage in family and community structures (Shufutinsky et al., 2024).

Steve jobs, for example, is often heralded as one of the greatest business storytellers in modern times, along with other well-known business moguls including Sheryl Sandberg, Richard Branson, and Steven Wynn. Many of us have witnessed these individuals use stories in their own ways to connect to their audiences and manifest wonder as their listeners marvel over what they shared (Shufutinsky et al., 2024). In business storytelling, as much of the non-scholarly world may assume it to be, storytelling is often about using stories for charisma and to try to align followers with leaders' visions for their organizations. Often, storytelling is used in such ways to foster corporate loyalty, corporate citizenship, and creation of culture or climate for retention and complicity (Choy, 2017, Gallo, 2016). This can be successful, but may also fail to be transformative. This is because we live in complex environments within a complex world, and in this surface-level storytelling way, there are realities, truths, experiences, and physical and quantum data that are missed, ignored, or intentionally excluded. Superficial or cursory storytelling methods serve to simplify a complex world (Choy, 2017), but that creates a simplification of reality and can be exclusive and marginalizing. In

leadership terminology, this can perhaps be termed laissez faire storytelling or toxic storytelling. This type of storytelling may fail to meet, only partially meet, or fail to complete any of the principles of storytelling (Boje, 2024; Larsen et al., 2020; Sibel, 2024). That said, storytelling can be explicitly, intentionally, and purposefully planned and used in order to help drive change to create the conditions necessary in organizations, in communities, and in life (Shufutinsky et al., 2024). At the beginning of this article, I use the business-related storytelling case of Charlie Morecraft, an untrained, 'natural' storyteller. So, what was it that made Charlie's story so powerful and so effective?

Back to Charlie

As I tried, over weeks, months, and perhaps even years to understand what truly worked in Charlie's talk, I came to a few substantive conclusions that I can better explain today. To begin with, Charlie's story was historical, discussing what he experienced, and referencing where the incident could be found in the online news media. Some had already heard of or remembered seeing the incident in the news many years earlier. Not only was this story historic, but it was personal. The storyteller told a story about himself, about something that he experienced, and he expanded this personalization when he made connections of his experience to the workers in the audience who were also workers in heavy industry. Charlie was there, present, and speaking directly to the people in the audience. He laid out his experience and trauma, being emotionally vulnerable, and

continued to emphasize the social aspect of his story by describing what the experience meant not only to him, but how it affected his friends, co-workers, family, and the organization. When I analyze these elements of his delivery, it becomes clear that Charlie aligned with the first three principles of True Storytelling—being true, respecting present stories, and providing direction and prioritization of his plot relative to the current plot (Sibel, 2024) happening in the industrial setting that he was standing in. As Charlie had engaged with the audience, he asked about their challenges with safety, their high hazards, and about what precludes any of them from being safe. This storytelling practice also aligned with the seven principles (Sibel, 2024), both because the timing was right, as it practically always is in busy heavy industry settings, and because it helped the existing new story along, with the participants in the audience thinking, discussing, and making connections of their jobs and their stories to his. Finally, the visuals, intentional or unintentional, were pivotal to his story. Charlie rolled up his sleeves, exposing a great amount of scarring from having been on fire, while the large, loud rotating fan blew air over his body. This provided an aesthetic property, creating an artifact-rich scene that was expertly staged for effectiveness that supplemented the almost literary, poetic verbal delivery of his own thoughts about what could have happened, what he could have done, and what he could have avoided. Without knowing it, in the mid 2000s, Charlie Morecraft had exhibited the 7 Principles of True Storytelling (Larsen et al., 2020; Sibel, 2024).

Regardless of what we wish to call his presentation approach, we can certainly understand it as storytelling method. Even though not planned through a research mindset, the methodology in Charlie's delivery cannot be missed or dismissed because it was apparent that there were considerations on timing, volume and emotion, word emphasis, dramatic visuals, non-verbals, and world-building, among other elements. These aspects gave the story power, and interactions with the audience during and after the talk opened the opportunity for self-empowerment and discovery for the audience participants.

This is important and relevant, because, in motivational speaking, while meant to communicate, motivate, inspire, influence, and teach, Charlie was able to make sense of the heavy industry life relative to safety. His talk espoused the commonalities of high-hazard culture, and the safety culture that often persists in companies and worksites similar to a shipyard or a ship. Stories are used to make sense of our lives and of our worlds. It would make sense then that the better we are at storytelling and storylistening, and the more complete we are in the storytelling process, the better we make meaning of our environments and ourselves in them, including our interpersonal connections as well as our paths and directionality. Incomplete storytelling can potentiate a degradation in sensemaking our patterns and connections, and if we are unable to see our patterns, our themes, or our passions in our lives, then perhaps we lose our way. Storytelling methodologies, such as those exhibited in Quantum approaches including

4th Wave Grounded Theory, Conversational Storytelling Interviews, True Storytelling, antenarrative and antecognitive, among other approaches can be vital in preventing this. Thus, methodology can be vital for effective organizational storytelling.

Storytelling as Method

Stories can be both wonderful and practical. They are, in their best form, ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological, simultaneously. They can include varying temporal distance, temporal proximity, temporal depth, and richness. They can be diagnostic, dialogic, embodied, and strategic. Stories can and do inhabit every thread of our lives (Shufutinsky, 2019; Shufutinsky et al., 2024) and beyond, and we can engage with them wonderfully and practically. The way that we engage with them and the way we explore and tell our stories matters, whether they are the stories of our creation, our recreation, or our work in the business setting.

But storytelling does not stop there. It has shown to be useful in numerous facets of our work lives, including its effectiveness in organizational research and practice (Boje, 2018; Boje et al., 2006; Boje & Rana, 2021; Rhodes & Brown, 2005; Shufutinsky, 2019; B. Shufutinsky, 2021; Sibel, 2019). Storytelling research methodology work, particularly quantum storytelling methodology, has been focused on increasing authenticity, voice, richness, depth, diverse ontology, accuracy, and verifiability with the intention of enabling improved grounding and more substantive theory in capturing and representing the

stories of research participants (Shufutinsky et al., 2024).

The movement towards better qualitative research methods lies in improvement of storytelling methodology (Boje, 2018; Boje & Rosile, 2020; Brown & Humphreys, 2003; Kleiner, 2019; Parisi-Knup, 2022; Rhodes & Brown, 2005; Saraceno, 2021; Shufutinsky, 2019; Sibel, 2019) through the strength of storytelling science. This scientific approach has steered research methods in organizations towards an ontological turn by exploration of *being* in addition to *doing* and *knowing*, including not only the materiality but also the ecology of existence (Boje, 2018). These storytelling science methodologies close the gap that exists in other qualitative inquiry methods by addressing numerous aspects missing in traditional versions, such as the need for verification, falsification, transparency, and removal of the linearity barriers referred to as inductive positivism (Boje, 2018; Shufutinsky et al., 2024). Although we all engage in storytelling, storytelling is also unique to each of us, and yet there are aspects of storytelling science that are necessary for certain purposes and types of storytelling even amongst our uniqueness. This journal aims to help in detailing the specifics and nuances of storytelling science in the scholar practitioner space.

An Era Everlasting

We live in the era in which we have witnessed this increase in the popularity of storytelling. Although the number of books, and fields with published storytelling research continues to climb, and LinkedIn profiles boasting their professional identities

as master storytellers are skyrocketing, the trend is bound to calm as many will no doubt jump onto the next business trends in organizational leadership and management." Nevertheless, the art and science of storytelling will survive, and the methodologies will remain and continue to strengthen and evolve. Storytelling has been vital to humanity in time immemorial, and it will remain an important life practice and research skill. Storytelling is not a fleeting era of trendy happenstance, but rather an era everlasting.

The Journal

This journal is dedicated to the art and science of storytelling—to the epistemology, ontology, and methodology of telling stories and using stories purposefully. It lends scholars, practitioners, and scholar practitioners the opportunity to study, discover, try, and establish storytelling. This first volume of *OSR* addresses varying uses and methods of storytelling, opening another journal window into the world of quantum storytelling as organizational practice and research methodologies, providing numerous exemplars of work in this storytelling science that has disrupted qualitative inquiry only with the intention to provide expanded, improved, generative ways of understanding, knowing, and sharing the narratives that emerge from our work and our lives. The first issue exemplifies this movement with a diverse collection of articles ranging in topic, focus, and type.

Organizational researchers in the first article use a novel LAMPS 4th Wave Storytelling methodology to explore and

examine the lived and living stories of Black American men in their lifelong encounters with law enforcement and the US justice system, with particular emphasis on experiences of brutality and abuse of power. The second article addresses organizational romances. Marie-Claude Natalie Rabeau takes a Ricoeurian approach for in-depth study of people involved in workplace romances with an aim to uncover how these relationships shape self-identity. Next, David Trafimow introduces us to his work on scientific storytelling, specifically surrounding statistics. His article explains some inaccuracies and inadequacies with commonly accepted and performed quantitative methods and argues that researchers wishing to tell stories with maximum verisimilitude should address distribution shapes as a focus. Duncan Pelly and David Boje return us to the concepts and philosophies of earlier Bojean storytelling work. In *Return to Tamara-Land,"* Pelly and Boje posit that what happens on 'the yellow brick road' is under-theorized as they jump into a *Wizard of Oz* illustration of the systems theories of Mary Parker Follett and Marquis de Sade, exploring complex power dynamics of entrepreneurship and urging that scholars and practitioners should tell open-ended stories. In the fifth article in this issue, James R. Sibel presents work that addresses implicit biases, racism, and prejudice as malleable concepts, explaining how storytelling, and particularly the True Storytelling methodology, can be used as a personal change management instrument. Next, OSR presents the work of Hope Witmer and Eva Ritter who introduce an alternative approach to develop and teach sustainability in business administration programs by using storytelling methods that provide ways for non-linear solutions and collaborative meaning-making, creating momentum for sustainable transformation. Finally, Stephanie Rossi caps off the first issue with her work focused on the experiential stories of female leaders in organizations. Her study explores the stories of two women surrounding the phenomena that potentially drive female leaders to opt out of executive roles.

It is the pleasure of our editorial team to offer this first issue to you.

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Anton Shufutinsky, PhD, DSc, MSPH, REHS, RODC is a retired military Officer with a breadth of leadership, management, and organization development (OD) experience. He is faculty of OD and Leadership at Cabrini University, the Chief Innovation & Experience Officer at the I-ILEAD Institute, and is an active scholar-practitioner member of the NTL Institute. Anton is the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the OD Network (ODN) and is a Board Member for the International Society for Organization Development and Change (ISODC).He is Associate Editor for *Organization Development* Review and Editor for *Organizational Storytelling Review*. His research foci include organizational culture, diversity, inclusion, & equity, leadership development, organization design, strategic OD, crisis leadership, followership, and organizational storytelling. He holds graduate and doctoral degrees in public health and a PhD in OD. He can be reached at antonshufu@gmail.com.

Storytelling Brutality: The Lived Experiences of Black Men in the Face of Police Harassment, Excess Use of Force, and Abuse of Power

Anton Shufutinsky
School of Business and Professional Studies, Cabrini University

Brandy B. Shufutinsky
Jewish Institute of Liberal Values

Toni L. Johnson
School of Business and Professional Studies, Cabrini University

David Johnson
Howard University

Abstract

Told from multiple narrative accounts, this study used a novel qualitative storytelling research method to examine and report the lived experiences of eleven Black men facing anti-Black racism in the United States, particularly from the lens of harassment and excessive force during interactions with law enforcement personnel. The stories were collected through qualitative interviews and analyzed and reported using a novel abductive-inductive-deductive storytelling research method, the Lifespan Aggregate Multi-Participant Storytelling (LAMPS) methodology. In this pivotal time during which the killing of Black men by police officers have been repeatedly exposed in the media, and the world calls for social change, this study brings light to Black men's day-to-day lived experiences over a lifespan with excessive force, abuse of power, and racial injustice at the hands of police—interactions that have not been displayed in the public media.

Keywords: Police Brutality, Abuse of Power, Community Policing, Criminal Justice Inequity, Storytelling, LAMPS Methodology, TRAAM Method, 4th Wave Storytelling, Terryan Restorying

Introduction

There is little question of late that the US cannot be portrayed as a post-racial society that many had claimed it to be over the last two decades. This is not only visible in the existing race-based disparities in education, industry, economics, and politics, among other demographic factors, but is considerably transparent and emphasized in the context of disparate contact with the criminal justice system (Bobo, 2011; Burrell et al., 2019; Hackman, 2005; Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; Shufutinsky et al., 2018; Teasley & Ikard, 2010; West, 2015; Wingfield & Feagin, 2012).

George Floyd has become a household name in the United States (US), and around the world, as have the discussion and debates on the terms and topics of police brutality, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, the BLM organization, systemic racism, institutionalized racism, inequality, inequity, and allyship, among others, no matter which flavor of partisanship the household sides with. Although the recent brutal killing of Mr. Floyd and the subsequent protests and civil unrest have made our population hyperaware of inequity and the disparate behavior and abuse of power at the hands of the US criminal justice infrastructure, many, and particularly Black Americans, are well aware that this horrid incident was not an isolated occurrence. There has been an exhibition of evidence regarding the consistent trend in which Black people, regardless of innocence or guilt of any criminal involvement, have been unjustly harassed, arrested, or injured, often resulting in no justice, or inadequate penal consequence against the perpetrators, including law enforcement professionals who exercised abuse of power, excess force, or both. These incidents are not a new phenomenon and have persisted in American society for generations (Holmes & Smith, 2008).

One of the most well-known incidents of police brutality and law enforcement injustice in the modern era is the decades-old brutal beating of Black motorist Rodney King and the unjust acquittal of the perpetrators despite video evidence. Regardless of the protests, civil unrest, and long strain in community relations that occurred in the aftermath, it appears that our justice and political systems have learned little from that incident (Cannon, 1997). Since then, our population has experienced and witnessed numerous cases of injustice against Black people at the hands of the criminal justice systems across the nation. These cases include the caught-on-video execution-style murder of Oscar Grant III at the Fruitvale Station train platform in Oakland, California in 2009, the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the murder of Trayvon Martin in Florida (Koplowitz, 2012; Lee, 2012; Williams, 2013), the killing of an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, who was shot by police in Ferguson, Missouri (Bonilla & Rosa, 2014; Mirzoeff, 2014) with his hands raised while pleading *"don't shoot,"* and the strangulation killing of Eric Garner by New York City police. We've also read or watched the story of the November 2014 shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, gunned down almost immediately upon police arrival while playing with an airsoft toy pistol in Cleveland, Ohio (Stone & Socia, 2019). Seattle was witness to the death of Charleena Lyles, a Black pregnant woman shot by police after she called 911 for help due to a suspected burglary. These were followed by numerous other headlines of Black American deaths at the hands of law enforcement as a result of judicial decisions, abuse of power, or use of excess force, such as the death of Stephon Clark, shot in the back six times in his grandmother's back yard while brandishing a mobile phone, and Breonna Taylor, emergency medical technician who was not a suspect in a crime but was shot eight times while in bed during a no-knock warrant (Burrell et al., 2019; Duncan, 2017; Flores, 2017; Lipscomb et al., 2019; Oppel & Taylor, 2020; Vaughan & Amonoo, 2020).

We are in complete denial, as a nation, if we take the position that race is not a factor in the harassment, assault, battery, and murder of unarmed Black boys, girls, men, and women during law enforcement interactions (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017). The statistics clearly

indicate the continued existence of anti-Black racism in our criminal justice system, as substantially evidenced by the reality that Black Americans are at considerably greater risk for experiencing contact with the criminal justice system, including police-involved harm, than are their White counterparts. For young men of color, police use of force is a leading cause of death, with some studies indicating that Black males facing the highest levels of inequality in mortality risk, exceeding 200% higher likelihood to be killed by law enforcement than White males (Edwards et al., 2019). While the studies and statistics regarding death by law enforcement have been challenged and debated, the aforementioned incidents provide sufficient examples of the unjust context and brutality of the killings.

The media coverage has exposed many of the recent, and some not-so-recent incidents to the general public. Stories of dialogue, debate, protest, denial, political opinion, agendizing, and unrest have plastered the news media, social media, and the city blocks around the United States and much of the rest of the world. Nevertheless, the majority of the stories being exhibited on television and social media virulence are only those that ended in fatal or near-fatal tragedies. Police brutality is a broader issue, however. It involves acts of excessive physical force as well as psychological intimidation, forceful threats, and verbal assault (Walker, 2011). Through a novel qualitative storytelling research method, our research acknowledges the stories that are front-and-center in the media while simultaneously exploring the day-to-day experiences of abuse of power and excess force that is not generally reported in the news media.

Background

The existing research literature indicates a clear racial disparity regarding criminal justice contact, particularly exhibiting the statistics that Black-American men are at considerably greater risk for experiencing police-involved harm when compared with their White counterparts. Criminal justice statistics show that police force is a leading cause of death for Black men (Edwards et al., 2019; Knox et al., 2019; Smith & Holmes, 2003; Swaine and McCarthy, 2015). The statistics regarding the racial divide surrounding police violence, however, do not stop with deaths alone (Graham et al., 2020). Numerous studies indicate that Black-Americans are more likely to be accosted by police while operating a motor vehicle ("Driving While Black"), more likely to be hassled and harassed by police without cause, file more complaints about police brutality, and are more likely to experience police than any other race, with the highest disparity for Black men (Browning et al., 1994; Chaney et al., 2013; Knox et al., 2019; Smith & Holmes, 2003; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2006; Walker, 2011).

Health scientists and scholars have acknowledged that police contact is a key vector of health inequality, a cause of early mortality, and a public health threat for Black Americans (Edwards et al., 2019). Aside from the fatal injuries that increase population-specific mortality rates, current research indicates that there are psychological and social impacts of police induced trauma on the psyches of Black men, and the Black American population (Lipscomb et al., 2019), increasing morbidity. This includes onset of stress from direct police interaction, but also involves factors such as stress from related racist public reactions, witnessing of police brutality

live and on television, and experiencing legal structures that cause systematic disempowerment (Alang et al., 2017). Black Americans worry about police violence over five times more than Whites. Black men have disproportionally been affected by race-based traumatic stress stemming from "living while Black" (Aymer, 2016; Graham et al., 2020). Although these statistics and reports are publicly available, and recent media coverage of the lethal and near-fatal incidents of police violence have made a larger portion of the population aware of the injustice and racism that has historically plagues the US, many people still do not have an understanding or knowledge of the expanse or severity of this problem, nor the understanding of how these incidents psychosocially affect members of the at-risk population.

The exploration of the lived experiences of victims of excessive use of force by police is limited in the peer-reviewed literature. Experiential stories are a powerful form of communication and an effective means of preserving the past, instilling values, informing others, and influencing social action to help shoulder hardships and correct injustices (Shufutinsky, 2019; Underkofler et al., 2020). The purpose of this study, and the research manuscript, was not to list or discuss all of the unfortunate and unjust incidents that have occurred, nor to debate the topics of inequity, systemic and systematic racism, politicization of race, peaceful and violent protest, defunding of police organizations, co-opting of Black struggles by other groups, the BLM movement or organization, or any single incident of proven or alleged abuse of power. Instead, the purpose of this article is to report the findings of a qualitative inquiry that explored the lived and living stories and related socio-behavioral dynamics of Black Americans exposed to violent interactions with law enforcement, and to exhibit the essences of those experiences through a powerful collective account, potentially informing the work of government agencies, academics, non-profit organizations, the general public, and organizational scholar-practitioners that engage in social change, social action, and social research.

Authors' Reasons for Undertaking the Study

The researchers of this study and authors of the paper are all scientists and all have experience in performing basic, social, and behavioral science research. Each of the authors have experienced the United States criminal justice system in different ways, and each has either experienced harassment or brutality by law enforcement, have family that have experienced harassment or brutality by law enforcement, or both. All of the authors are or have Black men or children in their lives, and desire a society in which people are not treated with suspicion or hatred, and are not harassed based on the color of their skin, their culture, their language, and other categories under which discrimination often persists. Further, the authors acknowledge that there are stories of everyday interactions that are not commonly told, and they intended to be able to capture a few of those stories and make them available to other researchers and to the public.

Methods and Procedures

Research Question

What are the lived experiences and living stories of American Black men regarding their interactions with law enforcement throughout their lives?

Figure 1.

LAMPS 4th Wave Storytelling Research Design
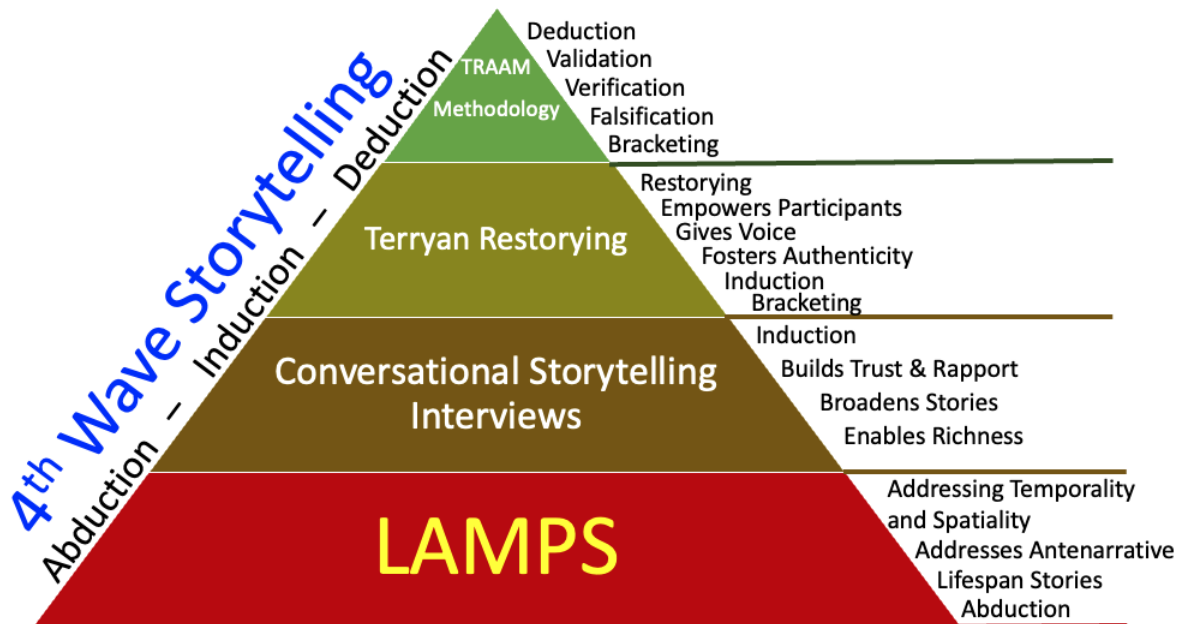
Research Design

The study design was qualitative, and was performed through the Lifespan Aggregate Multi-Person Storytelling (LAMPS) approach, a 4th Wave Storytelling methodology incorporating conversational storytelling interviews, Terryan Restorying, and abductive-inductive-deductive analysis (Figure 1).

Participants Sampling

Participant selection was achieved through purposive, non-probability sampling using convenience and snowball sampling approaches. At the time of the interviews, all participants were educated, professional, Black American adult men between the ages of 20 and 50. Six of the eleven participants were veterans of the US Armed Forces.

Data Collection and Analysis

All participants were interviewed individually using low-structure semi-structured conversational storytelling interviews (Boje & Rosile, 2019), with a triplicate iterative approach,

including coded story verification and quasi-Peircean self-correcting abductive testing (Figure 2). Initial coding was performed for data relevance and story chronology. The stories were deconstructed (Boje, 2019; Sibel, 2019) and re-assembled during initial coding, chronologically, for restorying using a novel Lifespan Aggregated Multi-Person Storytelling (LAMPS) approach, while simultaneously employing the Terryan narrative method to remove the researchers' voices from the story (Shufutinsky, 2019) and focus on the essence of the participants' accounts. In the journalistic work of Wallace Terry (1984) in his novel entitled *Bloods*, the narrative accounts of Vietnam veterans are told in the verbatim transcribed text of the interviewed veterans, and the journalist's interaction is separated from the transcription of the interviews. The Terryan approach to restorying intentionally removes the researchers' voices from the story (Parisi-Knup, 2022; Shufutinsky, 2019) to focus on the essence of the participants' accounts. This is a method of researcher self-exclusion in order to empower the participants and hear the accounts through their authentic voices without interpretive interference, also serving as an approach to bracketing. When deconstructed, the stories are only edited for chronological sensemaking and relevance of information to the topic (Shufutinsky, 2019), and, like Terry's journalistic approach, the researcher's voice is withdrawn from the narrative text. This not only works to maximize the transcendental essence of the participant, it also empowers the participant making for a powerful, more authentic story.

Figure 2.
4th Wave Peircean Iterative Interview Schema (Shufutinsky, 2019).
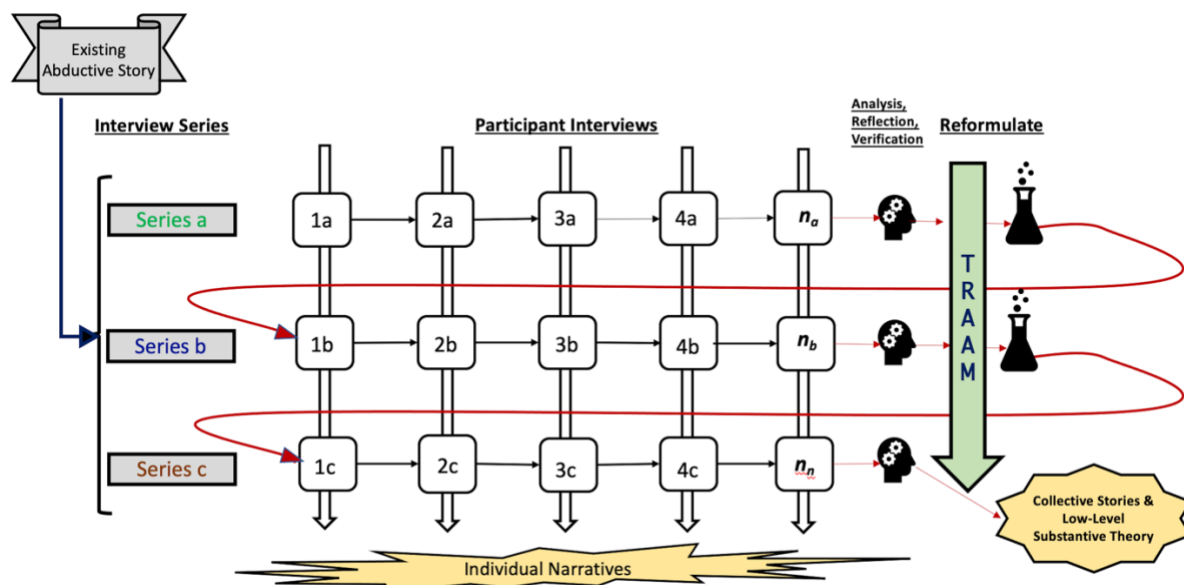
Data verification was performed using the Tabular Reflection and Analysis of Alternate Meanings (TRAAM) methodology (Parisi-Knup, 2022; Shufutinsky, 2020) for both validation of interviewee meanings and for the bracketing of potential researcher biases (Figure 3). The
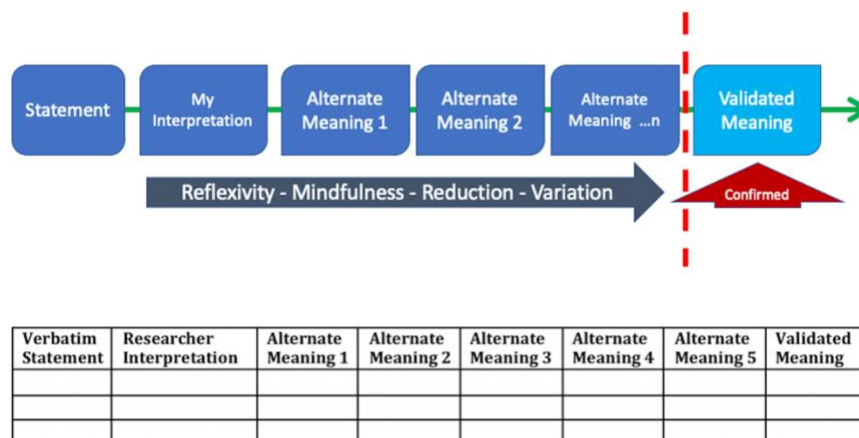
TRAAM methodology affords the requisite verification-falsification stipulated in Bojean quantum storytelling methods and self-correcting grounding methodology (Boje, 2018).

The LAMPS method aggregates lived experience narrative stories told by multiple individuals into a single chronological summated story, with emphasis placed on lifespan of the aggregate group of participants, to provide and account for the voices of the individuals while simultaneously exhibiting the experiential themes occurring throughout the lifespans of the participant group, across age groups and geographies (Figure 4). It is not intended to equate each story or to manipulate the reader into believing that the complete narrative is derived from an individual participant, but rather to harness the power of storytelling for reader engagement and social, organizational, and community learning instead of using the compartmented and segregated logistical approaches of traditional narrative and phenomenological inquiry. Likewise, the method explores and exhibits the distribution of the experiences over spatial and temporal location. The intention of the study is the exploration and provision of lived experiences through a powerful aggregated storytelling approach, thus interpretive theoretical examination is purposefully limited. The power is in the stories.

Figure 3.

The Tabular Reflection and Analysis on Alternate Meanings Instrument (Shufutinsky, 2019).

Verbatim Statement	Researcher Interpretation	Alternate Meaning 1	Alternate Meaning 2	Alternate Meaning 3	Alternate Meaning 4	Alternate Meaning 5	Validated Meaning

Results

The results are provided in full paragraph form, through a Terryan approach, with the removal of the researcher's voice, to capture the direct essence of the experience of the participants, showing their lifespan accounts, and the geographical distribution of the reported incidents of harassment, abuse of power, and brutality.

The LAMPS Accounts

These stories were shared by the participants, and all of the participants indicated that they do not have an inherent hatred towards law enforcement, sharing that they wished to make an honest statement through their stories in order to contribute to making impactful change.

Collectively, their commentary was represented by one participant's quote, as follows. "…I don't have blanket animosity against the police in general, you know. I've got a great deal of respect for good police. But this is a tiring reality, man. This happens all the time. I've been harassed by police my whole life it seems, since I was a kid." Agreement of representation by this quote was verified by all participants.

Figure 4.
LAMPS Excess Force Incident Map of Locations and Ages of Participants

❌ Indicates U.S. State where story incident occurred. All recorded incidents occurred on the mainland of the United States.
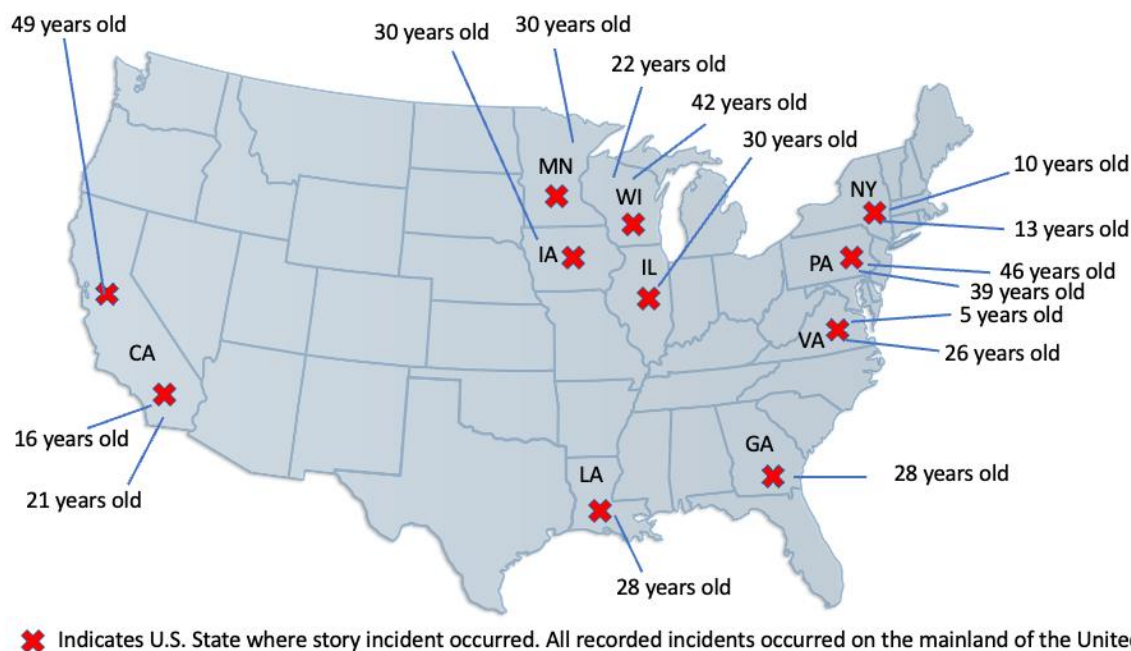
Childhood, Virginia

I was five years old when I first experienced it [police brutality] first hand. You know, it wasn't like I hadn't heard about it before. It sounds ridiculous, right? I mean, I was five. But like I said, my parents had already talked to me about this. They may not even remember it, but I was real young when they spoke to me and my older brother about how we were going to be treated differently because we're Black. They talked to us about police harassment and about unequal treatment in the eyes of the law, especially around police. I don't know to what degree I understood it, but I came to learn very quickly, when I was five, what they meant. We'd been in a car accident and there were plenty of witnesses. The guy in the other car ran a red light and smashed right into the side of our car when mom was in the middle of a left turn. I remember seeing him coming in the window. I remember my heart sprinting as soon as it was happening. But that was nothing compared to what happened after. The car was undriveable and was still in the

middle of the road. Luckily, we were all okay, you know. It took the police forever to get there. The fire department came first. There was an ambulance too. We were in the middle of downtown of this small southern city. The courthouse and the police station were like three or four blocks away, but it took forever. A lot of people had already come to check on us to see if we were okay. Small crowds gathered to observe. I don't remember exactly what happened but I remember the officer trying to give my mom a ticket and she refused to sign it until he told her what he was citing her for. I mean, the guy wasn't even there to see the accident, but he was trying to give my mom the ticket. He got loud with her, and was definitely trying to intimidate her, you know? My dad tried to calm the situation and just asked the Officer what he was issuing the citation for and trying to explain why my mom didn't want to sign it, since the cop didn't witness any of what happened. My dad was real calm, but it looked like the police officer was getting angry. Suddenly, he told my dad to back up and put his hands behind his back, as he reached and pulled handcuffs from his belt. I was five, so naturally I didn't know what was going on. I thought…I was nervous, I didn't understand what was going on and why my dad was being put into handcuffs. The rules that I knew at five were that bad people get arrested for doing bad things, and I knew my dad didn't do anything bad. So, naturally, I was confused about what was happening, and scared. I was worried he was going to take my dad to jail. I remember watching, and my dad was listening, complying, and just asking questions, but

the cop was being extra forceful. I remember him pushing my dad towards the cop car and pushing him into the cop car. He was pushing him even though he was not at all resisting. Then he was trying to say he was resisting arrest. He struck my dad in the ribs with the end of his night stick, for no reason. I remember watching my dad, sitting there in the car, trying to yell to my mom to call the police department and get a supervisor out there. My older brother was scared too, and was getting protective and angry. I remember him trying to plan with me to throw stuff we had from our car at the cop car to break the window to try to get my dad out. It sounds funny, but we were kids and we were obviously traumatized. The cop though, he continued on with trying to harass my mom and trying to make her to sign the citation. He even threated to have me and my brother taken away and put in the system. I didn't know what that means, exactly, but it was a threat no doubt. It was crazy. Eventually, the police supervisor did get there, and they let my dad out of the car with a ticket and a court date for disorderly conduct. I remember afterwards, how my dad complained about the cuts on his wrists from the extra tight handcuffing, and the bruises on his ribs and back. After that, I've always been anxious or nervous around police. I mean, I was a little kid…I was five when I'd experienced this, and it's hard to get over that kind of thing. We still talk about it a lot, and I understand all that happened better as an adult, but I still remember it like it was just yesterday. So, since then, even if there was no good reason in the moment, I've always been anxious around cops. It's a combination of

experiencing this incident as a child and the vigilance my dad and mom always told me about, about police, and about avoiding them. I'm nervous now every time I pass a police car when I'm driving. How's that for a way to live? That's what my ancestors have experienced here for generations, and it still exists. It's not just genetic memory, it's current reality. That incident was the first, and it set a precedent. My parents are good people. My dad was in the military, serving our country, and I was so proud of him and wanted to follow in his footsteps. He didn't deserve that. My mom didn't deserve that. Anyway, we moved around a lot because of it, but I've felt the same anxiety around the police everywhere we've lived.

Adolescence, New York

I remember when I was ten, when we lived in Brooklyn, the police stopped me when I was walking from the candy store. First thing he asked me is what I had in the bag. I said it was candy, and he asked to see it. I was scared, but I knew I didn't do anything wrong. I showed it to him, and he asked me where I got it and if I stole it. The candy store was two blocks away. I know he knew that, so he was just harassing me. I answered him though, and told him where I bought it. He took out a jolly rancher and said "I'm taking this one in for questioning." I said "no, I paid a nickel for that." He turned my bag over and dumped my candy on the ground and stepped on it. Then he told me I was lucky he wasn't' arresting me for stealing it. He got in his car and drove off. I remember I was mad, and scared, and my whole body was shaking. I cried, even though I was trying my hardest not to. My

mom took me to the store and bought me all new candy, then she called the police department, but I didn't think to look at his name tag or anything. This wasn't the first or the last incident though. A lot of us have experienced this as kids. Police harassing children, what kind of thing is that? Three years later, when I was in eighth grade, I was walking back to school at the end of lunch. We could leave school for lunch if our parents signed a permission slip. It was December. I remember 'cause it was before Christmas break, and there was snow on the ground. I had the duckdown [coat] on 'cause it was cold. There were three of us walking together, 'cause we always walked either to the pizza shop or the hot dog stand. Two cruisers pulled up on us. We weren't doing anything but walking and laughing trying to get back to school. They asked us why we weren't in school and kept repeating that they can arrest us for truancy. Then they put us up against the wall of this brick house. My friend said something like, "hey, we didn't do nothing," and one cop smashed his face hard against the bricks. It was hard too. It made a loud thud, I remember that, and my friend yelled in pain. He was all scraped up after that. When the cop did that, I said "stop, he didn't do nothing," and the cop that was frisking me pulled me down onto the dirty wet ground, with my face up against the dirty gray ice that had been shoveled off the driveway. He had his foot on my upper back, then put his knee on my back and he cuffed me. It took four grown police officers to come harass three kids walking back to school. We were all good kids too. All the crime in New York, and they couldn't find something better to do?

They kept us there for about 10 minutes, as the people walking by began stopping and observing and store owners and home owners started coming outside to see what was going on. Then they just uncuffed us and told us we better get back to school, and to stay out of trouble or next time we wouldn't be so lucky. We ended up getting back to school late and got in trouble for that too. My mom and dad had to go talk to the principal about that.

Teenage Years, California

In the 90s, I lived between San Diego and Long Beach, and that's where I was for high school. You know, gangs were everywhere in SoCal, from LA on down. I wasn't in a gang though. I grew up with these dudes, so you know I was friends with a lot of them, but I was an athlete, man. I played football and basketball, and I was good at both. But it was normal to get harassed by police those days, and I was already used to it. By that time, I'd learned to avoid them as much as possible, but you couldn't all the time. They'd just pull up and stop and frisk, especially if you were Black or Mexican. Everybody said they can't do that, but they always did, for no good reason, so we just started to learn where not to be during different parts of the day. It wasn't necessarily because anybody was afraid of being arrested for doin' dirt, it was just that every time five-oh [police] were around, we knew there was some chance you'd get beaten, or get a record for something. Nobody wanted that, so we avoided them like the plague.

When I was sixteen, I got my license and my grandma gave me the keys to her

Regal. She had that car for years, so she went out and bought a new one, another Regal, first new car she ever had. So she gave me the keys to her old one. It was my first car. "Keep up the good work," she said, "and it'll keep paying off." She'd planned it with my mom. My parents were divorced now, but they still had a good relationship, very civil to each other. Anyway, they chipped in to make sure the car had a full mechanical inspection and all that, so that I had a safe car. Everyone was there when grandma gave me the keys. Man, you should've seen the smiles on their faces. They were smiling more than me. Anyway, that was about a week before the playoffs started. We had a great season, but we were the underdog. We were playing this team from LA that was always in the top 3 or 4, you know. I played half back, and I was real good, but probably not like USC caliber running back at that point. But we had a real good season and I was hype. That night, the night of the game, man, I drove up to the game with my brother, and my girlfriend at the time, and my best friend who was a lineman. He ended up playing D1 ball in college. It had been a great week, new car and all, and now it was great night. Man, you should've seen me. I could do anything that night. I had a strong game, man. A real strong game. It was my best game of the season. I scored two touchdowns, and no one expected me to get that many yards. I just kept breaking through tackles. We won the game and I felt like I was on top of the world.

It didn't take much to end that [feeling] though. We were driving back, and probably about 10 or 15 minutes from home,

after we'd already got off the freeway, I saw the police car coming from the opposite direction. My eyes followed him in the rearview, of course. It was a natural anxiety around them now. Sure enough, he turned around, and put his siren on. I knew I didn't do anything, and I remember praying that he was coming after someone else. But he wasn't, he pulled up right behind me so I pulled over. His spotlights came on, and we heard him say over the loudspeaker to put our hands up where he can see them through the window. My little brother was nervous and was stuttering and asking what was going on. They told me to pull the keys out of the ignition and throw them out the window, and then to keep my arm extended out of the window. It felt like a lifetime that we were just sitting there. Then I saw another cop car pull behind him. Eventually they got out of their cars and two of them approached from behind us, opposite sides of the car. From a few feet behind the car, with his hand on his pistol, one cop asked if we had any weapons. We all said no. Then he asked one at a time. We each said no. Then he asked me to roll down the rear window. I did. Then he asked my little brother where we were coming from. He told him. He asked me to step out of the car. By that time, two more officers were on the other side of the Regal. They asked my girl and my best friend to get out too. After I got out, I was pushed up against the car and patted down, and a fourth officer approached and took my little brother, who was now shaking vigorously in fear, out of the car and told him to sit on the curb with his hands on his head. They said the same to my girl. He told me to stay where I was, as

they searched the car. I told him, very calmly, "sir, we have nothing. We're just coming from the playoff game. The only thing you're going to find is our football equipment." He told me to shut up. After they searched the car, he came back and said that my car fits the description of a crime committed in the immediate area. It was a gold Regal with a baby blue hood that my grandma got from a body shop after an accident and never got it painted. There was no way my car can fit the description of a car used for a crime. There's no way there was another one like it. I probably should've kept my mouth shut, but I asked, sarcastically, "another gold Regal with a baby blue hood?" He slammed me onto the hood of the car. My girlfriend stood up frantically, and one of the other cops pushed her back down to the curb and told her to shut up or she was next. "What position you play?" He asked me, as he patted me down again. I told him. "So, you're pretty fast, are you?" he said, like that. "Think you can outrun a bullet?" He pulled out his pistol and put it to my cheek. "Do you?" I just stayed quiet. I could hear my little brother crying. Then he said, "yeah, I didn't think so." Then he put his gun away, backed up, and told me we were free to go. I couldn't stop shaking for the rest of the night. They ruined the whole night. They ruined the whole week. My little brother talks about that incident regularly [even today]. He'd heard these stories before, and I and my folks had told him about our experiences, and at 12 years old, he thought we were all gonna die that night.

Twenties, California and Wisconsin

You know, now that I think about it, it happened a lot when I was a teenager, in the 90s. But then I joined the military, you know. I was in the military, and, you know, on leave I visited my grandmother when I was in my 20s. I was on leave in LA, visiting family, and there were plenty of incidents there, especially when I was in Beverly Hills. I was in LA for just a few weeks, and got pulled over and searched three times in Beverly Hills and once in West LA. I've had my share of run-ins with the Beverly Hills Police Department, and had a number of times when they harassed me before, but this was redundant. Once, it was the same cop. I think it's just because they didn't recognize me so it was like I didn't belong and they wanted me to know it.

Non-Black people don't understand it the same. I'm sure some do, to some degree, but not the same way. They haven't experienced it in the same way, not to the same degree. You know, [many] don't get it, so they try to say it's fake and all that. There's nothing fake about getting beaten with a night stick when you're in your teens and twenties, just because you're in Mount Mary or Downer Woods…or Brentwood or Beverly Hills…or any rich part of any city, and are tired of being stopped and interrogated and defending your reason for being there. There's nothing fake about that. There's nothing fake about being cuffed on the ground for *walking while Black* in an affluent neighborhood, and being kicked multiple times just for saying you didn't do anything and there's no reason for being stopped. There's nothing fake about that. That's exactly what happened to

me. I didn't even get the 'you fit the description' routine. I just got straight up assaulted by police, for nothing except being Black and walking alone in the evening in a predominantly White Wisconsin neighborhood. We can't even visit friends and family without being roughed up. That's the experience, and most Black people I grew up with experienced something like that too. It's not a one off.

Mid-Twenties, Virginia

Because of my work in the Navy, and the positions I've held, I had to participate in the auxiliary security forces and took a billet as an MAA [Military Police] before too. So, I've got a lot of respect for people that put their own lives on the line in order to serve and protect others, whether it's in the military, the police, firefighters, Peace Corps, or whatever. I think for the most of them, it's honorable and noble and people do this selflessly, you know. But I'd say that, it's that percentage that are dirty that cause the problem for all law enforcement. As I said, I've had many run-ins with the police in my life, from childhood.

During my second to last tour [on active duty], I was in uniform, in my BDUs [camouflage working uniform], I got pulled over on my way home. I lived like 3 miles from the base, and I got pulled over right outside my apartment building, so I stopped at the curb, and parked. I mean like, right outside my building. I had my uniform and my badge on, it was when I was an MAA, and I stepped outside the car. I didn't really think about it, especially since I was in uniform, but as soon as I stepped out, the

two Officers who were already outside of their cars drew on me. Both of them. I had nothing in my hands except my car keys, and I was moving slowly. I was no threat, I had my badge on too. I even told them I'm Military Police and had my hands up. They kept their guns drawn and told me to lay down on the ground and put my hands on the back of my head. I asked for what, but I couldn't even finish before they yelled and cursed an told me "get on the [expletive] ground." I guess I should've known better, because this wasn't the first time. I should've learned my lesson years before that. I was having a great day before that all went down, and I guess I just didn't expect this. I got on the ground and repeated that I was an MAA and that I pose no threat, and asked why they pulled me over, and I remember the response very clearly. I can still hear his voice with that country accent when he told me "you should know better than to get out your car, boy." One of them kicked my feet apart and began to pat me down, while the other put his knee on my neck and one of them cuffed me. In uniform, with my badge on, I was on the ground, handcuffed. They were yelling, asking me if I had any weapons on me. I couldn't believe what was happening, although I don't know why I couldn't believe it. The other guy stood there with his sidearm drawn the entire time while I was being frisked, and told me not to eyeball him. They said they pulled me over because I failed to signal for long enough before changing lanes. Mind you there wasn't another car in sight. I was in uniform, with my badge on, on the concrete street, handcuffed, because I didn't signal for long enough. He told me to get up

and go over and sit on the curb. Have you ever tried to get up from a being down on the ground while handcuffed? Anyway, he told me to get up and go over and sit on the curb, and then proceeded with the series of questions about where I was going, who I was, where I live, why I had California plates on my car, and all of the rest of that jazz. They searched my car, and kept me there for about an hour, sitting there with the cuffs cutting into my wrists. For what? They were bored, I guess, and decided to harass a Black man, and a Black man in uniform. I guess they did think I was some kind of threat to them, maybe not in the moment maybe, but maybe to their accustomed way of life I guess. Then one of them uncuffed me and said they were letting me off with a warning, and to make sure I follow traffic laws in the future. One of them said to me that maybe when I get out of the service I could go back home and become a real police officer. I almost said something, but I decided it wasn't worth the headache. Besides, I had to go to the bathroom before they ever pulled me over. I reported them, but I never heard anything of it. Like always, they're protected, and allowing this kind of behavior just allows it to go on forever. These kind of people shouldn't be allowed to serve in any kind of uniform, except maybe a prison uniform.

Late Twenties, Georgia

Shortly after [leaving] the service, I was still a young man, you know. One night we went to the club, and I rode with my friend. We got to the club and were having a good time, and my friend got very drunk. I didn't drink at that time though, so I was the

designated driver and drove him home, and on the way, we got pulled over by the police. When they pulled me over, my friend told me that his tags were expired. Man, that made me nervous, but at least I could explain that I was a designated driver, and it wasn't my car. When the police pulled up, it was one white and one black cop, and they asked for my ID and said they pulled me over because of the expired tags. I told them the entire situation, and I was driving him just to prevent drunk driving. The cops left for a moment to run my license, and then came back. At this point, they asked me to step out of the car. I asked why. I'm an upstanding citizen, a veteran, no criminal record. Everything was good. He said that he called it in and that his supervisor had told him to bring the driver in. I asked why, and then he started getting loud, "step out of the car." I said I didn't do anything illegal, and if anything, I was trying to prevent an accident. I thought and even said out loud that I can't get a record. "Step out of the car," is all he kept saying. When I did, he said, "I didn't know you were that big." I was real fit at that time, and you know I'm tall. He grabbed me, pulled my arm hard around my back, and cuffed me really rough, and really tight, and stuffed me hard into the police car. I didn't resist at all. I didn't want to escalate the situation. In the midst of all of this, I was talking to him and begging him to call the supervisor. Finally, he did, and I could here it, and the supervisor asked him "so you're going to tow the car and bring him in?" It was obvious the supervisor didn't tell him to bring me in in the first place. They ended up towing the car. I know why they pulled me

over, but I thought that, you know, with the badge, the fact that I had a veteran ID card and no record, that there was some level respect, to at least take me at my word, especially since I had no argument or resistance. I was calm. But despite all that, they threw me all on my car, excessively bending my right arm. Ultimately, maybe he was intimidated by my size, you know? There was no need for all that though.

I do get anxiety when the police are behind me. I don't know if it's because of any specific incident or just in general, but it's not like the kind my friends that aren't Black tell me about. It's a much deeper worry, I know that. For them it's a passing feeling. For me, it takes me minutes or maybe even hours to recover physically after a cop has been driving behind me. Just driving behind me, that's all. I drive a large Ford F-150, so now I make sure my seat is raised so they can see my size, and get a good visual, so there's no unnecessary fear. I shouldn't have to do that, but I feel like I have to protect myself. They should be trained for this, I shouldn't have to train them, and I shouldn't have to be trained or to train my kids for this. I shouldn't have to always add the handles, you know, the veteran status, my education, or any of that. I don't know how to feel about it. You don't even know how to feel, to be honest. It's like they say in the movies about the system, that "they don't know, don't show, or don't care about what's going on in the hood." It's not just in the hood though, it's anywhere with Black people, no matter how affluent we are. So now, as you know, you have to educate your kids on everything they need to do. This shouldn't be a reality. Why should

we have to tell our children that? We're all supposed to be treated as human beings. White people get away with spitting on police officers, yelling at them, and cursing at them. Why is this ok? They shouldn't put up with that, but we don't do any of that, and see how we get treated? How can I respect police when from the jump they're coming in and disrespecting me and threatening me.

Late Twenties, Louisiana

When I was in college in the South, a little after I got out of the Navy, I was going to the store to pick up a few things to have in the dorm. I had some money from the Navy, so I bought this green '86 big body Caprice, so I was driving that. I guess 'cause I was in the South, it was automatically perceived as a dope boy car by the police, you know? Really, way back in the day, this was like grandma's car. Anyway, I had just left the dorms and the police pulled me over. I was still on campus, right in front of the campus library, matter fact. I know I didn't do nothing. As soon as he pulled me over, this time, I stepped out of the car and walked with my hands visible toward the trunk of my car. At that time in my life, I'd made it a point to do this to take advantage of the dashboard cameras. Anyway, when the officer approached me, I automatically asked him what he pulled me over for, and he said that my tags didn't match up with the car, and that they were supposedly associated with a 1984 Datsun truck. I knew that wasn't true 'cause I always keep everything legal and updated. It's always some nonsense about tags when they pull us over, as an excuse. It's either that or we fit

the description of something or another. Anyway, I knew this wasn't true, so I said so, but the conversation quickly became heated, and I could see him becoming upset. He started stepping closer and closer to me, crowding my space, making me move back, trying to intimidate me, until he was practically leaning on me and forcing me to lean back. I could see also that he had his hand on his gun. I put my hand out in front of me and said "I didn't do nothing, don't push me."

I had the college sticker on my rear window and I had noticed that he'd looked at it. He asked me where I went to school. Seriously? We were right there on campus! I told him, and told him I was majoring in engineering, and he said "oh, you're one of them smart ones. Go ahead, tell me something smart." He was taunting me, and then he was quiet for a second, waiting for me to reply. So I did, I told him how a radar system worked. I admit it, I was being a bit of a smart ass, and I escalated the situation with my remark, but I was trying to figure out what he was trying to accomplish with this. Maybe I shouldn't have, but I was fed up with this, you know? But he got more upset. He became louder, and the language was real ugly at this point, if you know what I mean. Then he said that he was gonna to have to bring me in because my tags didn't match. I told him that wasn't true, and I made sure that I told him that I was in a criminal law class taught by the Assistant DA, and I said his name and told him that I had a really good relationship with him. Mind you, this was a small town—a small college town, and pretty much everyone knows each other. I could see it in his face

now, and his tone quickly changed. Suddenly he distanced himself, and said he'd be right back and walked back to his car. A minute later he came back and said that he ran the tags again and it must be a glitch in their system, and apologized. When it was all said and done, I honestly believe that the only thing that prevented me from being arrested, beaten, or shot that night was the conversation about me knowing the DA, and it being a small enough town that he knew who I was talking about.

Early Thirties, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota

I been there too, the Twin Cities. I've been all around Minnesota, and Illinois and even Iowa when I was stationed at Great Lakes. You get tired of Chicago being stationed there, so you venture out to see the country. In Iowa, I was tailed on the highway for like 30 minutes. I even got off the highway and pulled in to get gas, and they pulled up right behind me and just sat there and stared at me. Then, when I pulled off and got back on the interstate, they got back on right behind me. So I got off again at the next rest stop to buy some lunch at the fast food joint at the truck stop. They got off again and parked on the parking lot. I sat there eating and it was about before 20 minutes before they left. I probably sat there for about another half hour after that just to give it more time hoping they weren't out there waiting for me on the shoulder somewhere.

I've been harassed, cuffed, insulted, threatened, and hit by police in all three of them states—Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. I know exactly where that spot's at in Minnesota where it [murder of George Floyd] happened. I've been through that area before. It wasn't too far from there that a cop punched me dead in my face because he said my attitude was flippant. I remember it like yesterday, in those exact words, I can still hear his voice. Right in front of my wife, married two months, I got punched in the face. I was thirty, and I got punched in the face by a guy probably about 50 and out of shape, and I had to stop myself from reacting. It was embarrassing. It made me feel emasculated. That's not easy for a man. I had to go to the clinic because my eyes were tearing real heavily. He broke my nose. Look, I have the clinic records with the physician notes on what happened. Then I had to explain that to my Department Head on Monday. But it's not just the police. It was a coffee shop owner that called the police on me because he said we were sitting around too long drinking coffee and loitering. It's the shop owners and clerks too, and they're not all White either. He wasn't. They always follow us around and assume the worst. They don't follow their own kind around, but they follow us around and harass us. It was like that when I was coming up, and it's like that still. Sure, they don't pull the trigger or put their knee on our necks, but George Floyd didn't call the police on himself. We still haven't seen a counterfeit twenty on the news, but everybody gives that liquor store owner a pass, like he shouldn't have any responsibility in it. I've been around there, I know. The community there knows. They know that's how the shop treats Black people all the time. They said it, people talked about it, but the media doesn't want

to cover that. Racism is racism, police or not.

Late Thirties, Pennsylvania

I grew up in probably what would be seen today as a rough neighborhood in Philly, but to me it was just home. We got in a lot of fights, and I remember some people's siblings being killed, but generally speaking, I still feel it was a good place to grow up. But I grew up with the feeling that the police were our enemies. They weren't to be trusted. Even if we thought we needed them, we didn't call on them because the story was that it's always going to end bad if you get the cops involved. I've heard stories from many of my friends about being harassed by police throughout their entire lives. I've been pulled up on by Police in West Oak Lane several times growing up, especially in the nineties and early two-thousands, and they used to harass us all the time at the Cheltenham Mall. So growing up, my whole life, I had this fear of Police. Not just fear, but this animosity, but this like deep fear. Like a deep anxiety. And I've carried that with me my whole life and passed that on to my kids. But I'll tell you this other story, from the other side. My son and his girlfriend were driving back from King of Prussia and I got a phone call. My son was freaking out because the police were following him. Then, right after I got on the phone with him, I could hear the sirens. I told him what my wife and I always tell him. Get your license and registration out and put them on the dashboard right in front of you. Put the car in park, and turn the radio off. Both you and [girlfriend] put your hands where they can be clearly seen on the dashboard. Speak clearly and audibly and do not say anything unless you are asked. But when the office walked up, he was calm. He asked my son his name, and then addressed him, repeatedly by his name. The Officer told my kid that he appreciates his behavior and he understands why they were doing what they were, and apologized that they felt that they have to do that. He told them they can take their hands off the dashboard and sit back. He told them he pulled them over because my son ran through the stop sign. He then asked whether he saw the sign, and acknowledged that the tree near the sign was overgrown. Then he told my son just to keep a lookout for those kind of things, because that's common here and as a young driver you can miss those, and sometimes that can cause fatal accidents. And he let them go. He was freaking out, and I was freaking out praying that nothing happens to him, and nothing did. In fact, I was shocked, because I actually believe that this officer genuinely cared about his well-being as a driver. It took me for a spin, you know. It made me have to second-guess my own biases and opinions about police. I'd grown up and felt my entire life that nothing good can ever come out of a Black man's encounter with cops, except maybe if the Black man's a cop. Probably deep down I knew that not to be totally true, but this thing with my kid still took me for a loop. But that's the thing though, right? It's these lifelong things, all the times people we know get beaten and bullied and arrested…it's all those times that get us to think this way, and that's hard to overcome.

Early Forties, Wisconsin

After college, I couldn't figure out what to do because I was older, so I ended up in grad school for healthcare. I've had a lot of jobs in my life, but I always wanted to be able to help people in my community. I'm a PA [Physician Assistant], and I was going in to work one day for the late shift I worked at that time, just a couple years ago, in both ER [Emergency Room] and in urgent care. I provide primary care, especially for urgent or emergency medical issues, and this was a late shift that started in the evening on a weekend. I worked in a large medical center at the time. For me, it was morning, because I alternate my sleep schedule, you know, to adjust for the different shifts. I had night shifts that week, so I woke up around six in the evening, got ready and went to pick up my breakfast [laughs] at the deli and bagel shop down the road. I always park my car in the large lot across from the bagel shop and walk over…it's about a hundred yards or so. Anyway, I was running a few minutes later than I like, so I jogged across the street to the bagel shop, and the sirens came on right in front of me. They were unexpected, and I was shocked. The bullhorn came on, telling me to stay where I was. I proceeded to the curb, but he said again to stay where I'm at, so here I was, in the middle of the road, standing there. I could see people turning and looking. The officer told me to put my hands on my head, to turn around, and to get on my knees. I knew I didn't do anything, but that never stops them. I complied quietly. I heard the door shut behind me and heard another squad car pull up and turn his siren off. I felt like my heartbeat was about to jump out of my chest, it was beating so hard. I'd been in these situations before when I was younger, but now I was in my forties, and a professional, you know, and I've got a family. I had 11 years of college, and a high paying honest job, and here I was dealing with this again. The thought was rushing through my mind repeatedly. The thought crossed my mind that I was going to die tonight, and somebody at my own hospital's going to diagnose me DOA. I wanted so bad to call my wife and kids, you know, but I wasn't going to do anything that would make them think I was making a move for something. I just said out loud that I was on my way to work and I'm going to get a bagel. I looked around desperately, looking for witnesses that would stop and watch. I scanned the few people on the sidewalk in front of me, searching for another Black face, and I prayed that someone would be streaming this and that the police would see them doing it. He came up behind me, grabbed me by my interlocked hands, cuffed one wrist, and pulled my arm hard behind my back. I remember it hurt, bro. It was like he was purposely trying to dislocate my shoulder or something. Then he grabbed the other arm and tugged it back behind me and cuffed it. The cuffs were really tight—painful. Then he told me to get up and walk over to the squad car. I asked him what this was all about and, and told him that I was just on my way to work. He just ignored me and then pushed me, face first, against the car and began check me for weapons or drugs or something. I was in my scrubs, and I only had one pocket, where my wallet had been. I could see two other officers standing there

with their coffee cups just talking. One was Black, the others all looked White, there were four altogether. Once he finished patting me down, he pulled me up and told me to turn around. He had my wallet and my car keys on the roof of his car, and he told me he was going to search my wallet for my ID. I saw the police camera on his uniform. He proceeded to ask me a whole bunch of questions about who I was, where I live, why I was there, where I was going, where I parked, why I was running across the street, where I work, and probably any other question he could think of at the time. My mind was racing. He told me that there was a robbery nearby and that I fit the description of the perpetrator. I knew that can't be true. A middle-aged, forty-something Black man in scrubs with his hospital ID around his neck? This made no sense to me. He told me he would have to take me down to the precinct for an ID. Right then, I heard someone approach from behind and start talking to the police. It was the owner of the bagel shop, and he was asking them what I did. This old man was here arguing with the police, vouching for me. He told them that I stop in every day to get a bagel and coffee or sandwich on my way to the hospital, and when they asked him, he told them my name. I thanked God that I speak to the people that work in the place, enough for him to know my name. I turned and saw a Black girl, probably in her late teens begin to record the incident with her phone as the police argued with the shop owner, and I thanked God again that there were cameras now. The officer told me to stay put and not to think about trying to run. Then he went over to speak to the other

officers. He then came back and asked me some of the same series of questions again. After I answered them, he apologized to me for holding me up, handed me back my wallet and keys, and told me to have a nice day. The café owner asked me to come in, poured me a hot cup of coffee and took my order. He told me to sit down and take some deep breaths, and said it was on the house. I thanked him, and dropped a fifty in the tip jar. Until this day, I don't know if he understood that I was thanking him for so much more than just the free coffee and bagel.

Mid-Forties, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa

As I said, I've had run-ins with police from childhood until even just a few weeks ago, being harassed about not wearing a mask when I was out for a jog. I had it in my pocket, and showed it to them, but they threatened to ticket me if I didn't put it on. I was in open air, and there was barely anyone around. And the one person that was [around], was a White lady walking her dog, and she didn't have a mask on either. They didn't bother her though. I mentioned it to them, and they told me not to worry about what they tell other people. Then they wanted to see my ID. I didn't take it with me because I was out for a run, and just decided not to take it because I had not pockets and already had my phone in my hand. They kept me there for like 10 minutes standing around, until finally I started streaming and said that I was, recorded the lady with the dog and all. Once I did that, then they just let me go, but they followed me for like three of four blocks

while I kept jogging, so I just stopped and stood there stretching until they drove off.

I shouldn't have to deal with this as an adult and an American. I served this country, and I've been a good citizen. I'm educated, live a quiet life, help people, pay my taxes, vote, and stay out of trouble, I've experienced enough of this crap in my life. I shouldn't have had to teach my kids on how they need to behave any time they encounter law enforcement in fear that they might get killed. But I do—we do, we worry about it all the time.

I called the police about a robbery of some items from my yard one time, and then found out the police snatched up a bunch of Black kids in the neighborhood and took them to the police station for questioning. One of those kids that they snatched up was my own kid who happened to be walking home when I called the police. He was sixteen at the time, about a year ago. I gave a description of a couple of guys running from my yard, and my kid didn't even come close to fitting the description I gave. Who knows who else they grabbed that evening? That's no way to police, and that's no way to treat your community. That's just blanket racism. They just grabbed up a bunch of Black kids and hoped for the best. That's not what should happen in this country, but it does, all over the country. That's why we teach our kids these things. My hope's that at least these lessons we teach will keep 'em from being beaten or killed. This shouldn't be the case. For the most part, you don't see this kind of police brutality in England or Spain, or Israel, or Japan, Singapore or even just up the road in Canada, but it continues here, day-in and day-out, month-after-

month, year-after-year, and it's like it never ends. Makes one wonder why we stay here, doesn't it?

We do, we worry about [the kids] all the time. Not just about the police, but even about their behavior in stores and in the mall and all. We're held to a different standard, so it's like we always have to do things to prove who we are and that we're not doing anything wrong. I always have to talk to my kids because I'm worried about them. We live in a fairly diverse area, with a high percentage of Black, Brown, and other people, probably 50% are people of color here. We've got churches and synagogues and mosques all over, and people of all kinds around here, not just White people. But the cops in my area are almost all White, and even in this diverse community of educated people, I still have to be afraid every time we let our kids go out somewhere. We've spent our entire adult lives teaching our kids to make sure they always keep their hands out of their pockets in stores, or when walking in the street. We've told them over and over again to always ask for a receipt when they buy something, and to always ask for a plastic bag to carry it in. We always have to tell our kids to make sure that they're not wearing a beanie or a ballcap when they're driving, and to always have both hands on the wheel. We always tell them that if they're getting pulled over, to pull over immediately, unbuckle so that they're not perceived to be reaching for a weapon when asked to get out, to immediately start recording what's going on with their phones, and to put the phones on the dashboard, and to keep their hands up on the dashboard too. We tell them

to have their wallets out on the dashboard too, make sure insurance and registration are up in the visor, not in the glove compartment. We always have to remind them to try, no matter what, to speak respectfully to the police and try not to let things escalate. This isn't from paranoia or just out of extreme caution, this is from experience.

Late Forties, Northern California

I don't know how else to tell it, to explain it. It happens. I bet if you ask 50 of us that are over 40, 'least 45 of 'em would say it's happened to them. You know, I don't even know how many times I've been harassed by police. The last time was a few years ago, like maybe six months before the pandemic maybe. You see my house [shows the interviewer a photo on his smartphone]? Do you know where this is? You know what properties cost out here? So if you know where I live, you know there's no issue with me driving a Bentley. I'm not the only one either. There's plenty of Black men out here with top tech jobs and Bentleys and McLarens. But still, I get pulled over. That last time, I got pulled over in my own neighborhood driving my car. I'm damn near 50, so you know I'm not out here roaming through neighborhoods stealing cars. I was in a suit too, driving home from work. I had stopped by the store to pick up a nice bottle of Cabernet. The cruiser gets right behind me and he followed me for probably a mile. I turned left into my neighborhood and he followed me. So I was driving into my neighborhood, not out of it. I got pulled over, and both of the officers came out of there cruiser and approached me

from both sides of my car. As soon as I pulled over, I dialed my wife so she can hear everything over the Bluetooth. I don't know why they do that, why they come around on both sides. I guess it has something to do with keeping them safe, but I think it's for intimidation. After I showed him my license and registration, first he wouldn't let me show him my insurance. It was in the glove compartment in the stack of papers, and he didn't want me to sift through them. I didn't even think they can ask you for that anymore unless you were in an accident. Then he asked me if I had any drugs. I was like, "what? No I don't have any drugs. Why are you even asking me that?" Then he asked me to get out of the car. I asked why, and that I didn't feel safe getting out of my car, and he backed up and raised his voice and told me to exit the vehicle or he'd have to cuff me and take me to the station. I was upset, but it's not my first rodeo. When I got out and turned around, he pushed me up against my car and told me not to turn around. After he patted me down, he asked me where I lived. I can almost see my house down the street, so I told him. Meanwhile, the other one was peering through my windows trying to find something incriminating. He told me dispatch got a call from the store and that the clerk said he thought I'd stolen a bottle of whisky. I couldn't believe it. I'd just paid this fool about $90 for a bottle of wine, I'm driving a Bentley in this neighborhood. I'm in a suit. I'm loaded. Why would I steal a bottle of anything? What kind of sense does it make? And where would I put it? I had to think about for a while. It's this generation of entitled young men, I think. They're out

here running around the streets with their Keffiyehs calling for some kind of revolution and don't like seeing hard-working wealthy men. Plus, it's no secret they don't like Black men out here. So, I think he called the police just to have me harassed, and assumed they would. It's not always the police, there's a problem in general out here with this anarchy or whatever. But come on, have some common sense. You know they knew damn well that I didn't steal any whisky, but they pulled me over to harass me anyway. It's not just the police though. Sometimes, it's like it's an accidental partnership, like we heard about Minnesota. They want to tell us about White supremacy, and that's a problem no doubt, but it's not the only kind of supremacist behavior out there. Many of us experience it, we just don't say it.

Conclusion

For many, the on-camera killing of George Floyd at the hands of Officer Chauvin was difficult to watch, and after many similar incidents of police brutality have been exposed, the public, even amid a viral pandemic, expressed their outrage over the US epidemic of racism and police brutality through nation-wide protest. And yet, despite the video evidence right in front of them—evidence in the excess force killing of George Floyd and numerous other Black Americans, many people continue to excuse or justify unjust police behavior, deny the existence of persistent bigotry, and even engage in the use of school records, criminal records, histories of police encounters, and other information as excuses, blaming deceased victims for the

incidents. Such acts of character assassination may have led to the acquittal or inadequate punishment of police officers, such as witnessed with the case of Oscar Grant III (Armaline, et al., 2014; Blaisdell et al., 2015; Bonilla & Rosa, 2014; Taylor, 2013).

Our study employed a novel qualitative research methodology to exhibit the collective lived experiences of eleven Black men in a summation of their narratives told through one aggregate story of their encounters with police harassment and brutality. The LAMPS qualitative research method was able to exhibit the detailed common experiences among numerous Black men, exemplifying and verifying that these incidents occur not only to the stereotypical teenager in big-city high crime areas, but to Black men of different ages, different economic and educational demographics, different parts of the U.S. geography, at different stages of the lifespan, and in all structural levels of society. The LAMPS 4th Wave Storytelling method was used to effectively capture the power of storytelling for garnering voice, expression, learning, understanding, and driving of change. Furthermore, through this study's resulting aggregate story, the researchers were able to not only provide a vehicle for the participants to tell their accounts of police harassment and brutality, but also to express the antenarratives (Boje, 2019) related to the story—the things that happen between the lines and beneath the obvious, including participant memories, emotions, thoughts, fears, hesitancies, attitudes, behaviors, and the toll of some of the underpinnings of their stories and their

internal, familial psychological contracts related to the US justice system and the stories that they have witnessed on television, such as the brutal killing of George Floyd and shooting of Jacob Blake.

Implications and Significance

Today's social and community development are fields grounded in the behavioral, social, and basic sciences that engages human systems in communities to develop system-wide capacity, effectiveness, and well-being (Shufutinsky et al., 2020). This includes doing the work to transform organizations, revitalize communities, develop human potential, and increase system-wide well-being and wellness. As applied behavioral science (ABS) professionals and researchers rooted in humanistic work, organizational storytelling, whether we are studying businesses, non-profits, government agencies, community organizations, or communities, is a critical methodological stratagem. We must stay true to those foundations and undertake action to study and respond to issues that challenge our society. Telling the stories and highlighting the voices of the individuals in this manuscript, among many others with similar experiences, can bring increased understanding of these complex dynamics to communities, law enforcement organizations, and the public, potentially advancing the dialogue, discourse, and functional relationships.

Although our research does not examine policing and criminal justice policy, as this was not the intent, it is evident in the already-existing research that attitudes of austerity regarding social welfare programs has led to policing, prisons, and the criminal justice system in-general becoming catch-all responses to pervasive social problems, sometimes creating structural problems based on the historical institutionalization of racial inequality (Edwards et al., 2019) that has symptoms and side-effects that persist today. Working to facilitate dialogue, learning and training, development of community-based services, and public engagement with policing regulations could likely reduce the volume of police harassment, abuse of power, and brutality, as well as the psychological, emotional, and social traumas that impact Black life in American society (Edwards et al., 2019; Lipscombe et al., 2019). Likewise, such conversations can lead to deep reflection, analysis, and understanding of the historic and current relationships and conflicts in and among communities and organizations.

Our ABS fields, such as organization development, have a parallel history with that of the civil rights movement, (Miller & Katz, 2013; 2014) with an overlapping lens dedicated to ensuring that all people are able to fully participate in their places of work and communities. Thus, as ABS scientists, we must continue the honest and productive dialogue surrounding the topic of racial justice, not as a solution to a particular case or to these particular stories, but with overall societal improvement in mind. Through this dialogic work, we can help influence and facilitate change initiatives, including collaborative work with law enforcement organizations, court systems, social services agencies, communities, and other

organizations for improved interactions and relationships, and toward the abatement of incidents of harassment and excess force.

Study limitations

Although this study exhibits great power through the rich accounts of eleven Black men, this sample size is too small for quantitative analysis and cannot be assumed to be representative of the experiences of the broader population, and is not generalizable. That said, the purpose of the study was not intended for generalization, but to capture the stories of a subgroup of the population and examine the deeper, more detailed specificity of the experiences of victims of police harassment, brutality, and abuse of power—specificity and richness that has not been captured in existing quantitative studies. A second limitation is the manuscript size and space limitations prescribed by most peer-reviewed journals, resulting in the participants' additional stories of police harassment and brutality being edited out and not reported for purpose of space. Additionally, there was no attempt to corroborate the interactions with law enforcement. That being considered, this was not only not possible, but was not the purpose and intention of the research, as the study undertook a post-constructivist and post-comparative design specifically to understand the stories of those exposed to these types of scenarios.

Concluding Remarks

Baldwin and Mead (1971) remarked that it is pivotal to focus on the changes we must make because of our collective responsibility for our children, understanding that it is what we do this week that matters. We need to grasp the notion that we have work to do and that this work is not just about helping a specific population (Huntley, Moore, & Pierce, 2017), but rather about bringing transformative change to co-create a more fair and sustainable culture in our society. With that in mind, one of the most powerful and continually relevant statements made by Mead & Baldwin, is that "…we've got to be as clear-headed about human beings as possible, because we are still each other's only hope (Baldwin & Mead, 1971)." We must hear and understand the stories of experience and courageously engage in honest, authentic conversations and collaborative action that can lead to improving our relationships and usher in socially just and reject socially vengeful and unjust environments in our organizations and communities.

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Anton Shufutinsky, PhD, DSc, MSPH, REHS, RODC is a retired military Officer with a breadth of leadership, management, and organization development (OD) experience. He is faculty of OD and Leadership at Cabrini University, the Chief Innovation & Experience Officer at the I-ILEAD Institute, and is an active scholar-practitioner member of the NTL Institute. His research foci include organizational culture, diversity, inclusion, & equity, leadership development, organization design, strategic OD, and organizational storytelling. He holds graduate and doctoral degrees in public health and a PhD in OD. He can be reached at antonshufu@gmail.com.

Brandy B. Shufutinsky, EdD(c), MSW, LSW, MS, MA is a social worker with a diversity of social services experiences focused on topics including, social work in business, diversity, inclusion, & equity, school counseling, sexual assault prevention, domestic violence victim advocacy, & conflict resolution, among others. Brandy is a Director of the Jewish Institute for Liberal Values, is a member numerous boards, and is an independent education, social services, and social initiatives consultant. Her research focus is in multicultural education and on combatting antisemitism and anti-Black racism. She holds a Master of Social Work from the University of Southern California, an MA in International Relations from the University of San Diego, a MS in Criminal Justice Administration from Chaminade University, and the EdD degree in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco. She can be reached at brandyshufutinsky@gmail.com.

W. David Johnson, **PhD** is a Medical Service Corps Officer in the U.S. Army with a diversity of research experience in the basic and social sciences. He is also a research affiliate of the Institute of Interdisciplinary Leadership Education and Development (I-ILEAD). Dr. Johnson holds a PhD from Howard University, and has research foci in diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism, applied behavioral science, and in the biological and laboratory sciences.

Toni L. Johnson, MBA, SHRM-SCP is a human resource professional with a diverse portfolio developing programs for a wide range of audiences from executive leadership teams to frontline employees, focusing on employee engagement, DEI, and talent acquisitions. Toni currently consults independently through her firm Archer Organizational Development Consultants, LLC. Her research interests focus on the psychological contract and on entrepreneurial scaling. She holds an MBA from Saint Joseph's University and is a doctoral candidate at Cabrini University. She can be reached at toni@archerodconsultants.com.

Changing the Narrative on Organizational Romances Through Storytelling

Marie-Claude Natalie Rabeau
HEC Montreal

Abstract

Since Quinn's (1977) seminal paper, the narrative about organizational romances has been somehow stagnant. Indeed, research on organizational romance has been rather uniform, whether it is about the issues it discusses, its conclusions, as well the methodologies it relies on. It also is often biased towards taken-for-granted assumptions and long-lasting stereotypes. I argue that there is a need to change the current grand narrative about organizational romance. To do so, I come up with a novel understanding of the phenomena by investigating in-depth how people involved in such relationships "experience" them. My aim is to situate workplace romances in one's overall love life and to uncover how such love relationships shape one's self-identity. I take on a narrative perspective to self-identity using a Ricoeurian approach (Ricoeur 1984, 1986, 1990, 1991). The love life narratives of ten individuals involved in workplace romances were gathered and analyzed using Rolland Barthes (1966) structural analysis methodology. My results demonstrate that the effect of a love relationship that starts and develops at work on one's construction of self-identity depends on its relative importance in one's love life trajectory. I debunk the myth about organizational romances being disruptive and a liability to organizations. Finally, Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity allows me to reach a deeper and more thorough understanding of the phenomena, thus responding to the literature and extending the current knowledge. In doing so, I hope to initiate a change in the prevailing narrative about organizational romances.

Keywords: Organizational Romances, Storytelling, Ricoeurian Approach, Narrative Identity

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Introduction

From widely known scandals in the press, to pop culture depictions in movies, television series, and more, organizational romances have been visible for quite a while. The first academic work in organization theory focusing on organizational romances is found in Quinn's 1977 seminal paper, which formed the basis for most of the unfolding research. One noticeable point is that to date, research on organizational romance has been rather uniform, whether about the issues they discuss, their conclusions, as well the methodology they rely on. This existing pool of research is often biased towards taken-for-granted assumptions and long-lasting stereotypes, the chief one being a workplace romance involving a man of higher status with his

female subordinate, where the woman is portrayed as seeking career advancement. Also prevalent is the idea that most workplace romances are one-night stands that can turn into sexual harassment cases (C. J. Anderson & Fisher, 1991; Appelbaum, et al., 2007; Chan-Serafin, et al., 2017; L. A. Mainiero & Jones, 2013; Pierce & Aguinis, 1997; Pierce, et al., 2004; Williams, Giuffre, & Dellinger, 1999). One can observe that existing research revolves around a small group of academics that have been reinforcing each other's arguments over the past 40 years or so. The narrative about organizational romances has been stagnant, as it can be observed in most recent research (Balaban, 2019; Bilyk, 2021; Chory and Hoke, 2020; Chory, et al., 2022; Jung and Yoon, 2020; Khalilzadeh and Pizam, 2021; L. Mainiero, 2020; Murray, 2022). I argue that there is a need to challenge the dominant narrative about organizational romance. I propose doing so by relying on an interpretative, exploratory, and holistic approach, namely storytelling, to explore how such relationships are experienced hands-on. I take on a Ricoeurian framework to uncover the role they play in one's self-identity construction. I also debunk the pervasive myth about organizational romances being disruptive and a liability to organizations.

Literature review: The Dominant Narrative on Organizational Romance

Quinn's (1977) paper laid the foundation for academic research on organizational romances. The author first defined workplace romances as "a relationship between two members of the same organization that is perceived by a third party to be characterized by sexual attraction" (Quinn, 1977, p. 30) and then established typologies of workplace romances based on employees' primary motives to get into such a relationships. Since then, the definition of workplace romance evolved and is now conceived as "a non-platonic relationship between two members of an organization in which sexual attraction is present, affection is communicated, and both members recognize the relationship to be something more than just professional and platonic" (Horan & Chory, 2011, p. 565). Also, Mainiero (1986), Dillard (1987), Karl and Sutton (2000) and, Pierce et al.(1996) further refined Quinn's initial typology. They established typologies based on the types of relationships involved, including (a) lateral workplace romances between peers of the same hierarchical level, (b) hierarchical workplace romances between a superior a subordinate, as well as (c) based on the partners' ultimate goals for entering such a relationship (i.e. true love, ego valorization, or seeking job advancement).

It is worth noting that early literature assumed that hierarchical organizational romances systematically involved men of higher hierarchy with a subordinate woman where the woman is seen as seeking career advancement or better working condition (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985; Powell & Mainiero, 1990; Anderson & Fisher, 1991; Devine & Markiewicz, 1990; Powell, 2001; Quinn, 1977). This belief still prevails nowadays despite the fact that some researchers have established that a sizeable proportion of organizational romances are sincere long-term love relationship that often ends up in marriage (Boyd, 2010; Pierce &

Aguinis, 2009).

Once typologies of organizational romances were established, researchers went on to circumvent the antecedents in the organization that lead way to such relationships, the consequences of such relationships on the parterns involved, as well on the colleagues witnessing them and on the organization's overall productivity.

Antecedents to Organizational Romances

Researchers identified factors in the organization that favor the development of organizational romances. Proximity and propinquity, recurrent interactions and business trips as well as having a positive evaluation of a colleague physical features and demeanor where the first factors identified as conducive to interpersonal attraction and potential triggers of workplace romances (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985; Anderson & Fisher, 1991; Appelbaum et al., 2007; Collins, 1983; Cowan & Horan, 2014b; Dillard & Witteman, 1985; Horan & Chory, 2011; Mainiero, 1986, 1989; Pierce & Aguinis, 2009; Pierce et al., 1996; Quinn, 1977; Quinn & Judge, 1978; Quinn & Lees, 1984; Riach & Wilson, 2007). Sharing the same organizational culture and putting forth the same attitudes were also said to favor interpersonal attraction (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985; Anderson & Fisher, 1991; Collins, 1983; Cowan & Horan, 2014a; Dillard & Witteman, 1985; Pierce et al., 1996; Quinn, 1977; Riach & Wilson, 2007) and so was receiving a positive evaluation from one's superior (Pierce et al., 1996).

Management's and peers' attitude towards organizational romances further condition the probability of such relationships actually materializing (Doll &

Rosopa, 2015; Pierce et al., 1996). Organizational culture and climate are also factors that influence the formation of organizational romances, a liberal and dynamic culture and warm climate favoring them while a conservative culture and cold climate being deterrents (Jung & Yoon, 2020; Khalilzadeh & Pizam, 2021; Mainiero, 1986; Mano & Gabriel, 2006; Salvaggio, Hopper, Streich, & Pierce, 2011). Employee's level of autonomy is another organizational factor at play. The greater employees' level of autonomy, the higher the probability of organizational romances' occurrence (Pierce et al., 1996; Riach & Wilson, 2007). Also, employees' overall perception of organizational romances influences their probability to actually develop. It happens that this perception differs from one generation to another. Indeed, millennials consider their personal and professional lives as intertwined domain and as such do not see organizational romances as problematic. Hence they are more inclined to get involved in such love relationships (Chory & Hoke, 2019).

Consequences of Organizational Romances

The consequences of organizational romances were also inquired about, the focus being on their impact on the relationship partners' productivity and motivation at work, as well as on that of colleagues witnessing such relations, and that of the overall organization.
According to Mainiero (1989) the impact of an organizational romance on the productivity of the employees involved depends on the stage of their relationship. In the early stage of their relation, partners' productivity tends to somehow diminish, as

they are distracted by their new love. Yet as their relationship stabilizes, their productivity level is restored (Pierce et al., 1996; Westhoff, 1986). Dillard and Broetzmann (1989) maintain that the effect on the partners' productivity and motivation at work depends the underlying motive of their relation. In the case of sincere true love motives, partners tend to fear a negative perception from their superiors and increase their productivity to please them and avoid possible sanctions (Chory & Hoke, 2019; Dillard, 1987; Jung & Yoon, 2020; Riach & Wilson, 2007).

Colleagues witnessing a workplace romance tend to perceive hierarchical workplace romances much more negatively than lateral workplace romances (Baratt & Nordstrom, 2011; Biggs et al., 2012; Pierce et al., 1996). They might be jealous of the partners involved and mistrust them, as they fear this could lead to favoritism and in justices (Appelbaum et al., 2007; Baratt & Nordstrom, 2011; Biggs et al., 2012; Mainiero, 1989; Riach & Wilson, 2007). This is not without consequences on the reputation of partners involved in a hierarchical workplace romance. Indeed, both partners to a hierarchical workplace romance are perceived as less credible than partners in a lateral workplace romance and this is even more the case for women (Horan & Chory, 2011). A superior involved in a romance with their subordinate risks loosing the respect of their other subordinates who may think that judgment will be biased in favor of their partner (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985). Subordinates involved in hierarchical workplace romances may see their reputations tarnished as colleagues may think they seek job and career advancement

(Biggs et al., 2012; Malachowski et al., 2012). This can have a negative impact on the subordinate's self-esteem (Wilson, 2014). Also, it is said that colleagues do not consider such subordinates to be as trustworthy as their other colleagues (Malachowski et al., 2012), are less prone to recommend them for promotion (Baratt & Nordstrom, 2011), and are likely to engage in deceptive behavior with them (Horan & Chory, 2009; Malachowski et al., 2012). As such, Chan-Serafin et al. (2017) state that hierarchical workplace romances have a negative impact on the partners career advancement.

The sexual orientation of partners of a workplace romance also impacts how colleagues perceive the relationship and the partners involved. Managers and colleagues show more hostility and distrust towards peers involved in a homosexual workplace romance than towards peers involved in a heterosexual workplace romance (Baratt & Nordstrom, 2011). Therefore, partners involved in a homosexual workplace romance will try to keep their relationship secret especially if the organizational culture is homophobic (Lickey & Whelan-Berry, 2009). Not surprisingly organizational romances are source of gossips amongst colleagues especially so if they believe the partners have job advancement motives (Chory & Hoke, 2019; Cowan & Horan, 2014b; Quinn & Judge, 1978; Wilson, 2014).

It is said that organizational romances can be a source of employee turnover in the event of a nasty relationship breakup where one of the ex-partners feels miserable at work and decides to leave the organization (Chory & Hoke, 2019; Lickey

et al., 2009). Such a breakup can be a source of workplace environment disruption (Pierce & Aguinis, 2009). Also, there is an enduring belief in the literature that organizational romances present a high risk of leading to sexual harassment cases, especially following a breakup (Lickey et al., 2009; Mainiero, 2020; Pierce & Aguinis, 2009; Wilson, 2014). In fact, numerous researchers consider that the risk of ensuing sexual harassment cases is the highest threat such relationships poses to the organization (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2021; Pierce & Aguinis, 1997; 2001; 2005; Pierce, et al., 2008). According to Pierce and Aguinis (2009), human resources managers also share this concern. Williams et al. (1999) stress that organizational romances can possibly have a negative impact on an organization's image and reputation in the case of highly publicized organizational romance involving public figures. All in all, Lickey et al. (2009) maintain that such relationships can result in indirect costs for the organization as human resource departments and direct superiors have to manage the employees involved. Furthermore, considering the prevalence of communication over social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, blogs, Instagram, Foursquare), in the context of an organizational romance, there can be a thin line between healthy communications between parterns and persistent invasive communications that can be felt as harassment and/or a lack of judgment on the part of one of the partners in publicly sharing personal and intimate information (Cowan & Horan, 2021; Mainiero & Jones, 2013).

Also, partners in workplace romances find themselves in position where their work-life boundaries are blurred. This can eventually be detrimental to them and it put stress on their love relationship (Chory & Hoke, 2019).

Yet, organizational romances do not have only negative consequences on the work environment and the organization. It is said that partners involved in a happy workplace romance demonstrated greater work satisfaction and implication and are more loyal to their employers. Also, such relationships promote a more agreeable and relaxed work environment (Biggs et al., 2012).

Management policies

Lastly, most of the literature about workplace romances also addresses that they should be managed (Balaban, 2019; Bilyk, 2021; Boyd, 2010; Cavico & Mujtaba, 2021; Collins, 1983; Crary, 1987; Jones, 1999; Karl & Sutton, 2000; Lickey et al., 2009; Mainiero, 1986; Michelson et al., 2010; Pierce & Aguinis, 2001; 2009; Pierce, et al., 2000; Pierce et al., 1996; Powell, 2001; Powell & Mainiero, 1990; Quinn & Judge, 1978; St-Onge & Ritory, 2015; Westhoff, 1986). To date, workplace romance management policies put forth in the literature stand at two opposite ends of a spectrum as to recommended interventions' stringency and the extent of their intrusiveness in the employee's private life (Kolesnikova & Analoui, 2013; Michelson et al., 2010; Schaefer & Tudor, 2001). On the one hand, some scholars bluntly recommend banishing organizational romance as per a formal written policy in the organization code of ethics (Collins, 1983; Schaefer & Tudor, 2001; Scott, 2008; Tyler, 2008). The most intransigent policies go as far as to lay-off one of the partners involved in the

relationship (Anderson & Hunsaker, 1985; Lickey et al., 2009; Schaefer & Tudor, 2001; Tyler, 2008). On the other hand, some scholars advocate that organizational romances are an inevitable reality of organizational life (Boyd, 2010; Schultz, 2003) and that they concern the private life of employees. As such, managers intervening in them is unfair, detrimental, and lack ethics on the part of the organization (Biggs et al., 2012; Chory et al., 2022; Kolesnikova & Analoui, 2013; Schaefer & Tudor, 2001). Schultz (2003) maintains such interventionist measures are the legacy of a Taylorist control over employees—measures that do not have a place in our contemporary society. Kolesnikova and Analoui (2013) further argue the normative and generic management policies to be applied to each organizational romance regardless of its particular context that prevails in the literature are unrealistic considering the complexity of the phenomena. Scholars of that camp suggest adopting an indulgent approach, such as coaching the partners on how to manage their relationship in the work context (Boyd, 2010; Schultz, 2003).

Methodology Used to Inquire About Workplace Romances

Most researchers have been relying on vignette methodology or closed-ended questionnaires to gather quantitative data about particular aspects of organizational romances with data analysis relying mostly on quantitative methods (Baratt & Nordstrom, 2011; Chan-Serafin et al., 2017; Chory & Hoke, 2020; Cole, 2009; Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Dillard et al., 1994; Dillard & Witteman, 1985; Doll & Rosopa,

2015; Horan & Chory, 2009; 2011; 2013; Jones, 1999; Karl & Sutton, 2000; Malachowski et al., 2012; Pierce & Aguinis, 2003; Pierce et al., 2000; Pierce et al., 2004; Powell, 2001; Salvaggio et al., 2011). Researchers use hypothetical-deductive methods aimed at verifying statistical correlations and testing hypotheses and linear causality models (Chan-Serafin et al., 2017; Chory & Hoke, 2020; Chory et al., 2022; Dillard & Broetzmann, 1989; Dillard et al., 1994; Dillard & Witteman, 1985; Doll & Rosopa, 2015; Foley & Powell, 1999; Horan & Chory, 2009, 2011, 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2020; Khalilzadeh & Pizam, 2021; Malachowski et al., 2012; Pierce et al., 2000; Pierce et al., 2004; Powell, 2001; Salvaggio et al., 2011). Ultimately, those endeavors are aimed mostly at gathering the perceptions and opinions of third parties witnessing organizational romances (Chory & Hoke, 2020; Doll & Rosopa, 2015; Horan & Chory, 2009; 2011; 2013; Malachowski et al., 2012; Pierce & Aguinis, 2001; Pierce et al., 2000; Pierce et al., 2004; Powell, 2001), leading to partial and somewhat superficial conclusions.

In light of this literature review, one can see that existing research on organizational romances is firmly grounded in a positivist and functionalist paradigm characterized by a objectivist epistemology and a realist ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). While existing research does give us a certain understanding of organizational romances, the grand narrative about the phenomena has been rather uniform since Quinn's (1977) seminal paper. Findings pertain solely to elements directly related to the organization and say very little about how individuals experience such

relationships. Even more so, existing research considers those individuals as rational and strategic actors devoid of feelings and emotions, and whose intentions in getting into workplace romance are purely utilitarian. Last but not least, existing research relies essentially on data collected from third parties via vignette methodology by which they are exposed to diverse scenarios highlighting some issues and/or elements of organizational romance and asked about their perceptions of such issues and elements. Merely no data has been gathered directly from individuals who experienced such a love relationship.

I argue that there is a need to challenge the grand narrative prevailing over the past 40 years about organizational romances. I propose doing so by giving voice to individuals that actually experienced organization romances through the telling of their love life stories. More specifically, my aim is to situate workplace romances in one's overall love life and to uncover how this love life and such love relationships shape one's self-identity. In order to do so, I take on a narrative perspective to self-identity using a Ricoeurian approach where the self is to be defined as a narrative construction (Ricoeur, 1984; 1986; 1990; 1991).

Conceptual Framework

Ricoeur (1983; 1984; 1990; 1991) conceptualizes self-identity as constructed through the narration or emplotment of one's life story. Hence, one's identity is constructed through the ongoing and continuous interaction of the stories and fragments of stories one tells one self and others about one's entire life and/or parts of

that life, and shaped around the things and events one considers the most important. It is through the telling of one's stories about self that one gives sense to one's life path and structures one's self-identity. In fact, Ricoeur further pushes this assertion stating that self-identity is itself a narrative. It is the narrative and the emplotment of one's life that builds an individual's self-identity, this individual being at once the character of this story as well as its teller (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 175).

The Narrative Construction of the Self: Emplotment and Mimesis

More precisely, according to Ricoeur (1984), the construction of self-identity through the narration of one's life is an ongoing, continuous, and recursive process that follows three recurring steps or unfolding representative stages. This process is one of *Mimesis* (Figure 1), an act of re-presenting reality that produces the emplotment (Taïeb et al., 2005, p. 757), in this case, that of an individual's life path. It is through this emplotment that one can make sense of all of the diverse and discrepant events of one's life, combining them in order to transform them in a story. As such, emplotment mediates those events and the story (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 16). It is through this very emplotment that disparate elements and factors such as circumstances of action, unforeseen events, character's dispositions and motives for action, and odds and contingencies inherent to one's life path are transformed in a coherent story (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 25).
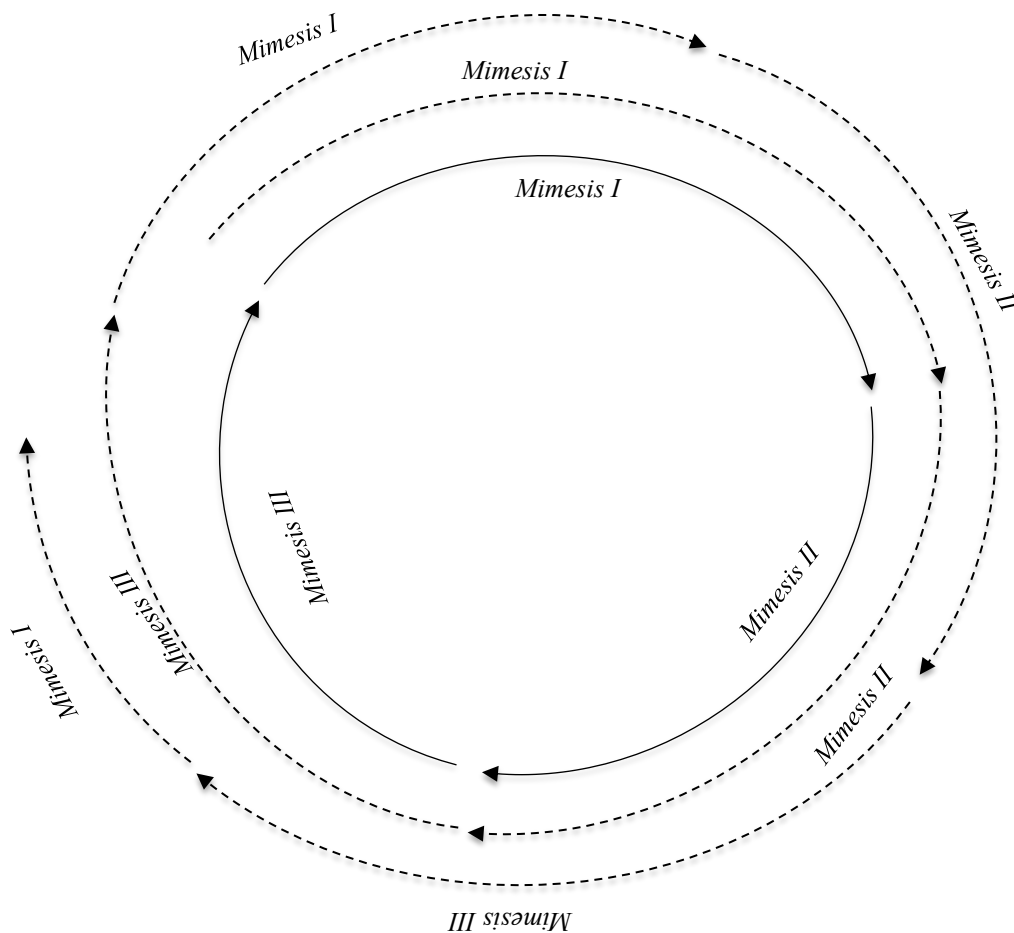
Mimesis I. The first stage of the *Mimesis* process, *Mimesis II* (Figure 1), or

"pre-figuration", refers to the pre-narrative structure of human experience, that is, the need for one to first "pre-understand what human acting is in its semantics, its symbolic system, its temporality" (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 64) before one is capable of constructing the emplotment of his/her life path. As such, one needs to realize that human action takes place in circumstances that one did not produce but that are yet inherent to it and, that human action is characterized by one's goals and motivations that explain its "why" and "how." It also involves that one is to be held responsible for the consequences of one's actions. Finally for one to construct the narrative of one's life path, one needs to grasp that human action is embedded in temporal structures. Hence, motives for one's action refer to the past, while plans of action concern the future. As Ricoeur (1984, p. 60, *apud* Boje, 2001, p. 114) puts it, narrative time implies a "threefold present, a present of future things, a present of past things, and a present of present things."

Figure 1
Mimesis

Mimesis II. The second stage of the *Mimesis* process, *Mimesis II*, refers to the emplotment by which the events of one's life path are transformed in a story. Not only are those events recounted in terms of cause and effect, but even more so in terms of the intentionality of the human praxis they involve. As such, *Mimesis II* operates three mediations. Firstly, it allows for the mediation between each and every single events of a narrator's life path and the story of that path such that it becomes meaningfully whole. Indeed one single particular event only has meaning in its relation to other events and incidents: the narrator's life story is more than a mere chronology of events in a serial order (Boje, 2001, p. 114). Secondly, *Mimesis II* mediates heterogeneous factors and contingencies such as the characters, interactions, circumstances, and unexpected results that populates one's life path, through the emplotment and embellishment that unfolds from the narrator's telling of one's life story. Thirdly, *Mimesis II* operates a synthesis of the heterogeneous: by reaching a conclusion to one's story, the narrator forms a holistic understanding of all those contingencies, factors and events that populated one's life path. Doing so, one reveals how they all lead to the inescapable conclusion of his/her life story (Boje, 2001, p. 115). It is important to note that for *Mimesis II* to happen, that is, for one to be able to produce the emplotment of the story of his/her life path, one needs to be able to distance self from living experience in such a way that this very living experience becomes exterior to oneself (Gilbert, 2001, p. 73). In essence, the narrator becomes distanciated – implicitly or explicitly – from the story he/she produces.

Mimesis III. The third and last stage of the *Mimesis* process, *Mimesis III*, is where the narrator embraces own narrative and gives sense to his/her life story and living experience. This entails an appropriation by the narrator of his/her own life story.

By its very essence, *Mimesis III* has a cathartic power in that it allows one to reflexively and consciously make sense of one's life story and to pierce the temporal dimension of one's existence. Indeed, through the repetition of this appropriation stage, one acquires such a deep understanding of his/her life story that one can see its end in its beginning and its beginning in its end. One becomes "*present in the past, in the present and in the future*" all at the same time (Boje, 2001, p. 114; Gilbert, 2001, p. 87).

It is important to recognize that there is a dialectic at play between the *Mimesis II* and *Mimesis III* stages. It is from this very dialectic that the production of self-identity emerges. Ricoeur qualifies this dialectic as one of discordant-concordance.

Finally *Mimesis III* does not end the *Mimesis* process. *Mimesis III* grants one with a new understanding of his/her life story and new insights as to the events he/she shall encounter in the future. Therefore, because it allows one to acquire a better grasp of human praxis, *Mimesis III* leads back to prefiguration, the very first step of the *Mimesis* loop. Indeed, the process of emplotment of one's life follows a never-ending loop, which implies that narrative self-identity is in constant flux and evolution (see figure 1).

The Three Fundamental Constituents of Narrative Self-Identity: Selfhood, Sameness and Otherness

Ricoeur's narrative identity framework accounts for the fact that one's self-identity is never set permanently but is rather in constant movement, one referring to his/her past while projecting self in the future and adapting to the contingencies of the present moment. Narrative identity therefore integrates an understanding of the past and a vision of the future (Marion & Nairn, 2011, p. 30). Yet, Ricoeur's narrative identity framework also involves a dimension of permanence across time and further accounts for inter-subjectivity, that is the trace left by one's interaction with others on one's self-identity.

As such there are three essential constituents of narrative self-identity according to Ricoeur. *Selfhood* is the self-identity constituent that is in perpetual flux and evolution. It results from the contextual experiences one goes through and reveals the multiple facets of self-identity. *Sameness* is one's self-identity component that remains permanent over time. It reflects one's fundamental traits and character. *Otherness* accounts for the trace that one's encounters and interactions with others leaves on one's self-identity. It depicts how one's life story is inherently intertwined with the stories of others.

Crucial to Ricoeur's framework of narrative self-identity is the dialectic of *Sameness* and *Selfhood*, whereby self-identity results from a perpetual tension between permanence, as per *Sameness*, and flux, as per *Selfhood*.

Methods

Study Design

The aim of my research being to change the grand narrative about organizational romances by giving voice to individuals that actually experienced such love relationships through the telling of their love life stories; it occurs that the choice of collecting data using a life story methodology was an obvious one. It is even more so the case that I want to situate workplace romances in one's overall love life and to uncover how one's love life and such love relationships shape one's self-identity, using a conceptual framework grounded on a narrative approach to self-identity.

Purposive Participant Sampling

I sampled 5 couples (Table 1) involved in an organizational romance that led to a serious long-term love relationship. Those individuals were in their late-20s to mid-40s and held mid-management or top-management positions. Pseudonyms were used for participants for privacy.

Data Collection Methodology

Both partners were interviewed separately three times for a total 30 in depth interviews of 90 minutes each. I gathered the complete love life narrative of those individuals following their love-life path from their very first sweet-sixteen love story to the workplace romance love relationship they were involved in.

Table 1
Study Participants

Couple	Names
Couple A	Agnes
	André
Couple B	Brigitte
	Bastien
Couple C	Catherine
	Christian
Couple D	Dominique
	Denis
Couple E	Elena
	Eric

Data Analysis Methodology

In order to analyze the love life narratives collected, I relied on Rolland Barthes (1966)'s structural analysis.

The Fundamentals of Structural Analysis

Structural analysis takes an analytical and reconstitutive positioning with respect to narratives, whereby the meaning of a narrator's story resides in its very construction and wording. Hence, narratives are nor transparent, nor completely obscure; their meaning is to be uncovered in their architectural logic. Hence, over and above the linguistic grammar of a narrative a syntax of a higher level of abstraction is superimposed, to which the architectural logic that structures its meaning and gives sense to the narrator's voice corresponds. This syntax of higher level of abstraction is made up of units, or narrative categories, and of the relationships the narrator establishes, though implicitly, between those categories. This is what constitutes the narrative's code. In a tangible way, a unit corresponds to an expression, a group of words, or fragments of sentences to be found in the narrative and that the narrator repeatedly refers to.

The narrative code is the narrative's architectural logic. It is what structural analysis aims to uncover. It structures the narrative's plot and reveals the narrator's ideology. Considering the narrative here at stake is the narrator's own life story, the narrator's ideology is the scheme of reference whereby he makes sense of situations and contexts he faces in order to act and propel himself in the future. Furthermore, the narrative code unlocks the narrator's self-identity construction.

The Architectural Logic of a Narrative

Structural analysis requires one to assume that the structure of a narrative's code is built on two types of relations that the narrator establishes between those recurring units: distributional relations and integrative relations. The units of a narrative, those recurring expressions and fragments of sentences that are pulled-out of the narrative, will oppose themselves to one-another, forming distributional relations. Those distributional relations are at the core of a narrative's meaning. Yet, this meaning is located at a higher level of abstraction, a common denominator that binds those two units and in doing so, generates an integrative relation. Integrative relations straddle those two units and form the above-mentioned narrative's categories. The totality of those categories forms the narrative's code structuring the narrative's plot.

The Coding of a Narrative Using Structural Analysis

Up and foremost, the coding of data – in this case life story narratives – entails a data coding method that is very different from the ones usually relied on in organizational theory. One key difference is that each and every single word has its place and must be coded: each and every word belongs to a unit.

Also, it is necessary to rely upon criterion to distinguish units from one another. I relied on that posited by Barthes (1966) as it was the most relevant and promising avenue to uncover how one constructs self-identity through the recounting of one's life story, or more precisely, love life story.

According to Barthes (1966), there are three straddling levels of abstraction in a narrative and those levels are precisely the criterion that distinguishes units. The first level is that of functions, those units or bits of sentences which pertain to events, actions, and situations as experienced and recounted by the narrator. Basically, it is the objective chronological course of events the narrator went through, or plainly, "what happened." The second level of abstraction is that of actants: the characters or group of characters that play a part in the narrative and what the narrator says or thinks about them. The level of actants captures the relational system nested within the narrative. In terms of the conceptual framework – Ricoeur's narrative identity – actants correspond to the *Otherness* constituent identity. It accounts for the narrator's encounters with the *Other* and how these encounters shaped self-

identity. The third and highest abstraction is that of narration. It corresponds to the units that pertain to what the narrator says and thinks about the events of his/her narrative, as well as about the relationships with narrative's characters. This is where the narrator's subjectivity comes into play. Indeed, this level of abstraction reveals the narrator's opinions, values, and beliefs, the way the narrator lived and experienced the events and situations that marked his/her life trajectory and the arguments the narrator provides to justify actions and decisions. It follows that structural analysis entails to project the plane axis of narrative flow on a vertical axis, the three levels of abstraction straddling each other.

I coded and analyzed all of the 10 love life narratives, the 10 individuals I interviewed relying on this process.

Findings

Gathering and making of sense the love life narrative through structural analysis first allowed me to explore the subjective and emotional dynamics experienced by the 10 individuals involved in a workplace romance as their relationship developed. As those individuals recounted their whole love life path, I was able to situate their workplace romance in their overall love life trajectory and how it fitted in this very trajectory, as well as how it contributed to their self-identity construction.

It emerges from the analysis of those 10 love life narratives that for any given individual, each one of their love relationships, whether it started at work or

not, is fundamentally unique and so is the way it is experienced.

Each of the five workplace romances that were under inquiry forms an entity of its own, with its own story and its own relational experience and dynamic. Yet this very same relation is still experienced and perceived differently on a personal basis by each of the two partners involved. This accounts for the subjective, unique, and distinctive experience of each individual. Its effect on one's construction of self-identity depends essentially on its relative importance in one's love life trajectory.

Love Life Story and Narrative Construction of Self-Identity
The Mimesis Process

Going back to my conceptual framework, Ricoeur's model of narrative identity, it is clear that not all of the partners of the couples I interviewed stand at the same place when it comes to the narrative construction of their identities. Each and every one of the love story narratives I analyzed lent me to assess where each individual stood implicitly in terms of the iterations of the *Mimesis* hermeneutic circle they may, more or less, have completed on their own. This chiefly depends on their respective introspection and reflexive capabilities as well as where they stood in their life trajectory at the point in time where I collected their love life narrative (Figure 2).

Some demonstrated impressive acute reflexivity and self-awareness, leading me to conclude they had gone through several iterations of the *Mimesis* loop on their own. Such were the cases of Agnes and Brigitte. Others, while showing some reflexivity and proof they had completed some iterations of the Mimesis process, were not as grounded in terms of the narrative construction of their self-identity. Such was the case of Andre, Catherine, Christian, Dominique and Eric. The three other individuals I interviewed—Bastien, Denis and Elena—clearly did not show much reflexivity and self-inquiry. Actually, the fact that I had them recounting to me their love life story propelled them, whether they wanted it or not, into the *Mimesis* process. As a reflexive researcher, I was well aware of the fact that, in responding to my invite, I had triggered a self-inquiry that most likely continued well after the interview.

Sameness, Selfhood and Otherness

The importance of Ricoeur's model of self-identity's constituents, namely *Sameness*, *Selfhood* and *Otherness,* is unique to every individual I interviewed (Figure 3). It occurs that *Selfhood* is central to Agnes's self-identity construction. Indeed, identity change and evolution is the thread of her love life narrative. Andre's love life story narrative reveals that his self-identity construction revolves around his interactions with others. In this case, *Otherness* plays a key role in the construction of self-identity. In fact, to some extent, the trace left by others seems to be inflicted on him in the sense that *others* places Andre in contingent situations that clearly bother him. Yet he shows awareness of this and of the fact it results in part from the account that throughout his love life path, he passively let others dictate the rules.

Figure 2
Collected Love life narratives and life trajectories
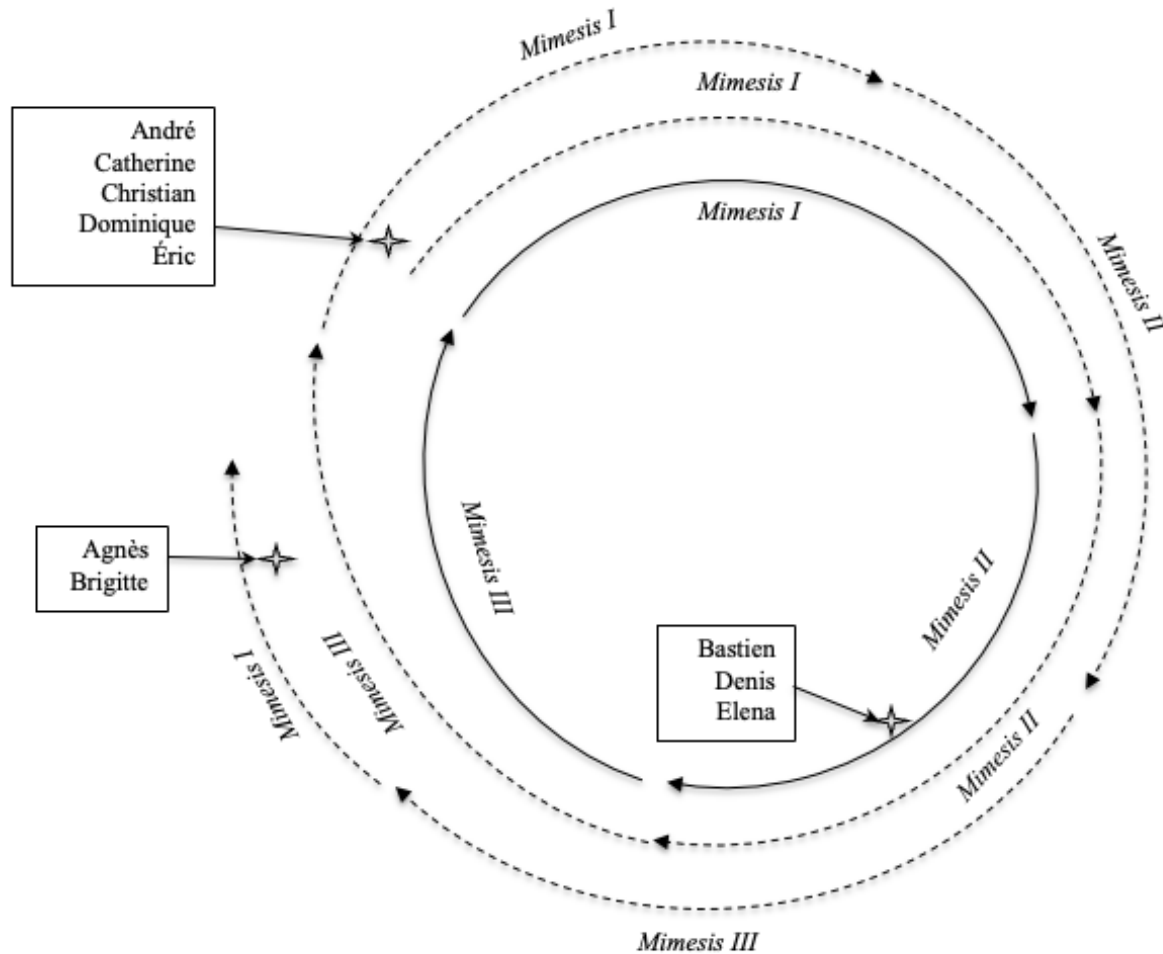
Otherness is also crucial to Brigitte's self-identity construction, which again, revolves mainly around the trace her love partners left on her. Her love life narrative also puts forth the dialectic at play between *Sameness* and *Selfhood*, that is, the tension between permanence and flux. Bastien's narrative is rather dichotomous. His love life path presents two clearly separate phases: the first one is marked by permanence, that is, *Sameness*. The second phase is strongly characterized by *Selfhood* as flux and accelerated change occupy all of his narrative.

Catherine's narrative self-identity is built on *Sameness* and *Otherness*, more specifically around the reproduction of the values that she inherited from her family. As for Christian, the three constituents of Ricoeur's narrative self-identity framework are at play in his love life story.

As it is with the case of Brigitte, Dominique's narrative self-identity construction is grounded on *Otherness*, chiefly her love partners. Denis's narrative self-identity is a special case. As a matter of fact, by accepting to participate in my interview process, Denis was somewhat

forced into the *Mimesis* process for the first time. As such, he had not yet had time to distance himself from his own narration. Here, the dialectic at play between the *Mimesis II* and *Mimesis III* still remained to be done. Since it is from this dialectic that emerges the production of narrative self-identity, it was nearly impossible to uncover Denis's narrative self-identity.

Elena's love life narrative presents a dynamic that is very like that of Bastien. The first stage of her love life path and narrative self-identity revolves around *Sameness* while the second stage is grounded on *Selfhood*. However, Elena's narrative self-identity is peculiar in that she seems impermeable to the passing of the *Other* through her life path. Eric's narrative is all about *Selfhood*. There is very little place for permanence, if any at all, in the construction of his self-identity. Eric seems to have very little agency on his love life path and even less so on his interactions with the *Other*.

A fact that clearly stems out of my data is that organizational romances are love relationships that individuals live and experience as any other love relationship stemming from other social contexts. As such, its impact on one's self-identity constructions depends on its importance, relative to the other love relationships characterizing one's life course. If it has indeed an incidence on one's identity structuration, it has to be found in the tension between each of the partner's need for personal versus spousal intimacy. Indeed, this tension, often an issue in any love relationship, is exacerbated in the case of organizational romance, the line between private and work life being blurred. This puts some pressure on the relationship's equilibrium. Yet, while it is indeed an issue for some couples, others deal with this dynamic seamlessly.

Figure 3
Ricoeur's model constituents relative to participants
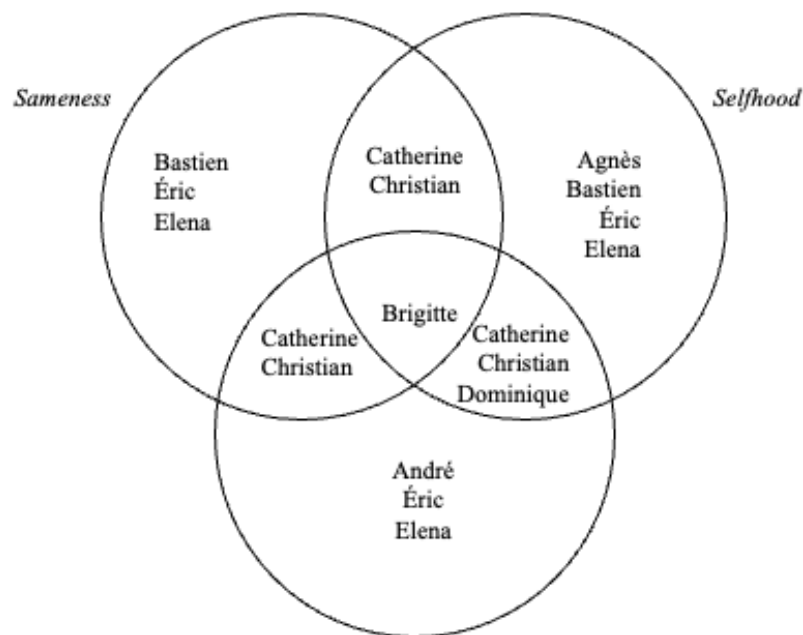
In Response to the Dominant Discourse About Organizational Romances

My data corroborates some of the arguments put forth in existing research. For instance, it is indeed a fact that physical proximity and propinquity favors organizational romances. Of the five couples I interviewed, there has been one instance of colleagues of the partners showing some mistrust and jealousy towards individuals involved. Also, workplace romance and, to a greater extent, their breakup, can result in some organizational gossip.

However, according to my data, workplace romances did not result in disruption of the workplace environment and did not have any impact on the partners' and the colleagues' productivity and the organization efficiency, nor did the breakup of a workplace romance. This leads me to question why organizational romances are so frowned upon in the existing literature and the prevailing management discourse. One cannot but think about the prevalent control organizations still want to have on their employees. Even more so, it points to the fact that organizations expect their employees to value their job and career over and above any other life projects they might have, their love life being one of them. Hence, organizational romances are perhaps a double insult to organizations and management: not only could employees favor their love life project over their job and career, the organization itself could be the grounds where such a life project could emerge.

Conclusion

Relying on storytelling, I aimed at changing the prevalent grand narrative on organizational romance by giving voice to individuals who where living such love relationships, asking them to recount their very experience of them. I was able to gather the individual, unique and true story of their workplace romances, something the literature up to date has completely by-passed. Furthermore, I situated their workplace romance in their overall love life path. Relying on Ricoeur's narrative self-identity framework led me to an understanding of how such love relationships inscribed themselves in one's self-identity construction. It appears that workplace romances are above all experienced as any other love relationship that would have emerged from other social context. Its relative impact on self-identity depends on its relative importance in one's love life. Although some prevailing assertions found in the dominant discourse on organizational romance do seem substantiated, its chief one, namely organizational romances being disruptive and a liability to organizations, seems to be unfounded.

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Marie-Claude Natalie Rabeau owns a PhD in Management and Organizational Theory from HEC Montréal. She currently is a sessional lecturer in Management and a researcher at HEC Montreal. Her main research projects revolve around narrative identity and qualitative research methods, more precisely life story interviews and structural discourse analysis. She also has strong interests for DEI issues and their impact on self-identity.

Scientific Storytelling: Distribution Shapes Matter

David Trafimow

Department of Psychology, New Mexico State University

Abstract

Most scientific stories are causal, and researchers wish to distinguish true stories from false ones. Furthering this aim, researchers often comply with the "gold standard," an experiment featuring random assignment of participants to experimental and control conditions. The hope is to obtain a difference in means across the two conditions, in a direction consistent with the causal story, to support that it is true. However, it is not clear that researchers ought to be using means; an alternative is to use locations. It is possible for differences in means and differences in locations to be in opposite directions, thereby supporting contradictory scientific stories. In turn, whether to use means or locations depends on assumptions about distribution shapes. Therefore, researchers wishing to tell stories with maximum verisimilitude ought to attend to distribution shapes. Furthermore, this admonition, to carefully consider distribution shapes, extends to applied scientific stories as well as basic scientific stories.

Introduction

There is a long, and even prehistoric, tradition whereby humans have told stories to attempt to understand the world. This tradition is exemplified by the Paleolithic cave paintings in Lascaux, France, estimated to be approximately 20,000 years old. Then, too, there are Mesopotamian myths and Egyptian myths, dating back to the dawn of written history approximately 5000 years ago, that explain, among other things, how the world came into existence. In modern times, scientific stories, sometimes called theories or hypotheses, are better grounded in evidence, and some have led to impressive technologies, but they nevertheless remain stories.

Most scientific stories appear to be causal. They explain why matters are how they are, though this is no guarantee the stories are true. Why do some people have blood cell deficiencies? One reason might be a lack of vitamin B. Put another way, having

a lack of vitamin B *causes* blood cell deficiencies. Why is the sky blue? It is because the atmosphere scatters short wavelengths (blue light) more than other wavelengths; such scattering *causes* us to perceive the sky as blue.

The social sciences, that are of special concern here, are no exception. Consider the following liste of causal stories that might or might not be true.

- Threat causes prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).
- Incongruency causes a deeper level of processing (Srull et al., 1985).
- Priming science identity in females causes increased performance (Wang et al., 2022).
- Priming perceived variability causes a decrease in prejudice (Hsieh et al., 2021), but Hsieh et al., 2022 provide contrary evidence.
- Psychological inoculation causes self-disclosure among people with AIDS (Olaseni & Olley, 2022).
- Violating perfect duties causes negative affect (Trafimow et al., 2005).
- Nudging causes better online class attendance (Weijers et al., 2022).

Are such scientific stories true? To find out, researchers often perform experiments, where participants are randomly assigned to an experimental condition or a control condition. Let us take the threat-and-prejudice story, the first aforementioned listed one, as an example. The idea here is that people can be made to feel threatened by an outgroup. Upon feeling threatened, they become more prejudiced against that outgroup. To perform an experiment, we might imagine that researchers create an essay designed to convince participants that immigrants are coming to steal their jobs. Participants could be randomly assigned to read that essay, the experimental condition, or not to read that essay, the control condition. Prejudice could be measured on a prejudice thermometer from extreme prejudice (100) to extreme anti-prejudice (-100). To support the threat-and-prejudice story, the prediction would be that the mean in the experimental condition exceeds the mean in the control condition. Suppose that the researcher finds this, and the finding is statistically significant. In that case, the researcher would conclude that the evidence supports the story: threat causes prejudice.

Of course, there are potential problems here. One of them is that statistical significance is invalid, but that is not the issue of present concern because it has been covered elsewhere (e.g., Trafimow & Marks, 2015; Trafimow, Haley, & Boje, 2022; also see the special 2019 issue of *The American Statistician* with 43 articles on the topic). Rather, the issue of present concern is whether, even under the generous concession that the sample statistics can be taken at face-value, it is appropriate to draw causal conclusions about the truth of scientific stories from differences in means. To engage this issue, it is necessary to briefly discuss distribution shapes.

Normal and skew normal distributions

The reason social science researchers prefer means and standard deviations is they assume that the populations from which they sample are normally distributed. This is an

extremely convenient assumption because normal distributions are easy to understand, the computations are easy, and there are only two parameters: mean and standard deviation. To say that there are two parameters, mean and standard deviation, implies that if one knows the mean and standard deviation, one knows everything there is to know about that normal distribution. Let us return to the threat-and-prejudice story and experiment. Assuming the experimental and control samples come from normally distributed populations, if we know the means and standard deviations in each condition, we know everything about the two distributions. Thus, scientists are in the happy position of being able to convey concisely, with two values for each condition of the experiment, everything there is to know about each of them. However, all the foregoing assumes that the distributions are normal. But are they?

In fact, normal distributions are uncommon; most distributions are skewed (Blanca et al., 2013; Ho & Yu, 2015; Micceri, 1989). In his famous review, Micceri (1989) likened normal distributions to improbable creatures such as unicorns. Most distributions that researchers pretend are normal are skew normal; they have a tail on the left or on the right side of the distribution; they are left-skewed or right-skewed. And there are many other distributions too, though I will simplify the present discussion by remaining with skew normal distributions. Skew normal distributions are particularly convenient for present purposes because normal distributions are a subset of skew normal distributions, thereby rendering comparison

and contrast especially clear. Azzalani (2014; Azzalini & Capitanio, 1999) provides the mathematical details pertaining to skew normal distributions, but these are unimportant for present purposes. What is important is to consider how skew normal parameters relate to normal parameters.

Unlike normal distributions, skew normal distributions have three parameters: location, scale, and shape. The location replaces the mean, the scale replaces the standard deviation, and there is a third parameter, the shape parameter. When the shape parameter equals 0, the distribution is normal. In that case, the location equals the mean, and the scale equals the standard deviation. Hence, the convenience of assuming normality. However, when the shape parameter does not equal 0, and it almost never does, then the location does not equal the mean, nor does the scale equal the standard deviation. In this case, the mean and standard deviation are not very informative about the distribution; one is very far from knowing everything there is to know about the distribution. In contrast, if one knows the location, scale, and shape, then that is equivalent to knowing everything there is to know about the distribution. But what does all this have to do with scientific storytelling?

Contradictory Stories

Let us return to the threat-and-prejudice story, and our experiment with random assignment of participants to experimental and control conditions and consider some hypothetical values. Suppose that mean prejudice in the experimental and control conditions is 2.0 and 1.0,

respectively, and the standard deviation is 2.0 in both conditions. In this case, the effect size, expressed in standard deviation units, is $\frac{2-1}{2} = 0.50$, traditionally considered a medium and perfectly respectable effect size (Cohen, 1988). The data seem to provide unambiguous support for the threat-and-prejudice story.

Consider further information. Suppose that the researcher computes skews in the two conditions; these are 0.10 in the experimental condition and -0.10 in the control condition. These skews are so close to 0 that practically any statistician would declare that the data can be considered normal. Moreover, under typical sample sizes, a significance test for normality would return a verdict of not significant, which researchers generally take as supporting that the data are normally distributed.[1] Therefore, the addition of information about skews in the two conditions does not change our story that threat causes prejudice. Arguably, the story is on even stronger grounds now because the extremely small skews support normality and the use of means and standard deviations.

But wait! We have not yet considered estimates of skew normal parameters. These can be obtained by mathematical equations from information about mean, standard deviation, and skew (e.g., Trafimow, Wang, & Wang, 2019).[2] Remaining with the foregoing values, the locations in the experimental and control conditions are 0.77 and 2.23, respectively. Note that these locations are in the opposite direction of the means in the two conditions; the mean is greater in the experimental than control condition whereas the location is less in the experimental than control condition. In addition, the scale is 2.35 in both conditions. Finally, the shape is 0.87 and -0.87 in the experimental and control conditions, respectively.[3] It is possible to convert to an effect size. As we saw in the previous paragraph, to obtain a normal effect size, in standard deviation units, we merely divide the difference in means by the standard deviation. In a skew normal context, the goal is to obtain a skew normal effect size, in scale units, and so we divide the difference in locations by the scale. Performing the calculation renders the following: $\frac{0.77-2.23}{2.35} = -0.622$. The negative effect size indicates that prejudice is lower, not higher, in the experimental condition than in the control condition.

To summarize, we have the following.

- According to the normal effect size (0.50), threat is a positive cause of prejudice.
- According to the skew normal effect size (-0.622), threat is a negative cause of prejudice.

We have support for contradictory stories, depending on what we assume about distribution shapes!

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[1] Researchers should not do this, but that is a different matter not to be taken up here.

[2] The present author has made an Excel calculator and is willing to share upon request.

[3] Although statisticians refer to distribution shapes other than 0 as indicating skewness, shapes are not the same thing as skews. However, shapes can be estimated easily from skews though estimating an intervening delta value.

Applied scientific stories

Let us switch to an applied goal. Suppose we wish to use the scientific story to reduce prejudice. If we assume the scientific story true, so that threat is a positive cause of prejudice, then reducing threat should decrease prejudice, thereby accomplishing the applied goal. Keeping the applied goal in mind, imagine a new experiment, where participants are randomly assigned to an experimental condition, where they receive an intervention designed to decrease feelings of threat, or a control condition, where they do not receive the intervention. The prediction is that participants in the experimental condition should be less prejudiced than participants in the control condition. We could even anticipate that the distributions will be skew normal, as opposed to normal, thereby indicating the use of skew normal statistics rather than normal statistics. Hence, we eliminate the ambiguity that forced contradictory stories in the previous section.

However, there nevertheless remains an ambiguity. There are at least two ways of thinking about differences in the two conditions. One way is to think in terms of distribution shifts, as we have seen, which makes sense for basic research where the goal is to test the truth of theories. In this case, we are interpreting the scientific story as a theory. However, this is not the only possible interpretation. From an applied perspective, it is possible to argue that we do not care about the scientific story as a theory, but rather as an applied hypothesis. From this perspective, it does not matter if the theory—threat is a positive cause of prejudice—is correct or incorrect if the

intervention nevertheless "works" to decrease prejudice. Rather, what matters is a different story—the intervention is a negative cause of prejudice (it decreases prejudice)—and if this story can be supported, that is sufficient. Put another way, an applied psychologist might be quite happy to support that the intervention decreases prejudice even if it were to turn out that the general theoretical story about threat being a positive cause of prejudice were eventually demonstrated false.

When we switch scientific stories, from a focus on the theoretical story to a focus on an applied story, it also might make sense to likewise shift from a focus on distribution locations to a focus on something else. From an applied perspective, it is possible to argue that what we really want to know is whether the intervention decreases the probability that a person randomly chosen from the experimental condition will have less prejudice than a person randomly chosen from the control condition. To put this as an extreme example, suppose that there is no difference in locations between the two conditions, but a randomly selected person from the experimental condition is likely to be less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition. In that case, conventional statistical thinking would indicate that the treatment does not work, because there is no distribution shift, but a probabilistic analysis would suggest that the treatment nevertheless works, after all. Lest this scenario seem impossible, let us move directly to a demonstration.

A probabilistic demonstration

Imagine a new experiment where an experimenter identifies a population of prejudiced people and samples randomly and independently from that population. These participants are then randomly assigned to get the prejudice reduction intervention, the experimental condition, or not, the control condition. The location in both conditions is 20, the scale in both conditions is 2, and the shapes (estimated from the skews) are -0.3 and +0.3, respectively. Thus, the effect size is as follows: $\frac{20-20}{2} = 0$. Because the effect size equals zero, the applied story is not supported, and the research has failed. The grant used to test the intervention was simply a waste of taxpayer money.

However, if we think probabilistically, we need not come to this pessimistic conclusion. Suppose that we instead consider the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will have less prejudice than a randomly selected person from the control condition. Although the mathematics behind such calculations are complex (Tong et al, 2022; Trafimow et al., 2022), these researchers have provided a free and user-friendly program (see Appendix in Trafimow et al., for directions on how to use the program). Here is the link: https://probab.shinyapps.io/inde_prob/.
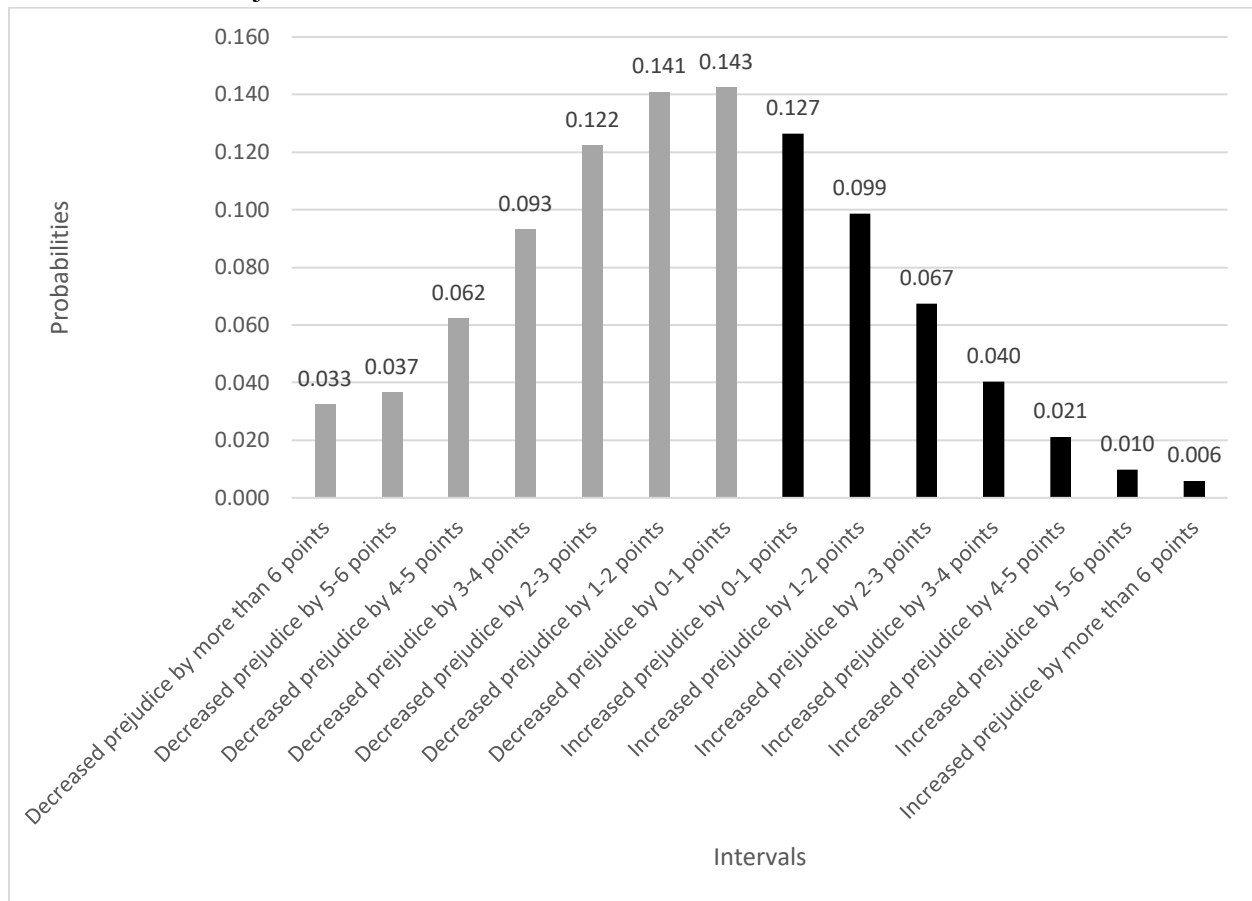
Using the program, we find that the probability that a person randomly selected from the experimental condition will have less prejudice than a person randomly selected from the control condition is 0.63. Thus, the probabilistic calculation provides an impressive case for the efficacy of the treatment, despite the lack of a conventional effect size. Switching to a probabilistic focus strongly supports the applied story where a conventional effect size focus supports pessimism. However, that is not all.

A G-P diagram

Because there are costs associated with the intervention, it might not be sufficient that it provides an increased probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition is less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition. We might require that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition be less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition by some specified amount. To take amounts seriously, as well as probabilities seriously, we need to expand our thinking. That is, we need to ask, for example, what is the probability that a person randomly selected from the experimental condition will be less prejudiced than a person randomly selected from the control condition, by at least 1 scale point? Or 2 scale points, or 3 scale points, and so on? More generally, what is the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will be less (or more) prejudiced than a person from the control condition by various intervals? The way to answer this question is to use the program repeatedly, but for different intervals. The result is illustrated below as a gain-probability (G-P) diagram depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

Probabilities of Prejudice Column Chart

Figure 1. Probabilities that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will have less prejudice, by varying amounts, than a randomly selected person from the control condition (grey bars) or that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will have more prejudice, by varying amounts, than a randomly selected person from the experimental condition (black bars).

To interpret Figure 1, consider the two middle bars, where the probabilities are 0.143 (grey bar) or 0.127 (black bar). Thus, the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will have decreased prejudice relative to a randomly selected person from the control condition is greater than the reverse probability. This difference supports that the treatment is effective with respect to an interval of 0 to 1 point, though the difference is not particularly impressive. If we consider the next grey and black bar, an interval between 1 and 2 prejudice points, we have probabilities of 0.141 and 0.099, respectively, and the intervention seems more impressive. The treatment seems yet more effective considering the interval from

3-4 prejudice points, and so on. More generally, the larger the magnitude of the effect, the greater the disparity between each grey bar and its corresponding black bar. Considered in this way, the treatment seems quite effective. Or to gain an idea of the effectiveness of the treatment at a quick glance, the general asymmetric nature of the G-P diagram, where the grey bars are larger than the black bars, illustrates that the intervention is effective.

On the other hand, we might insist on a criterion to justify the cost. For example, we might require a probability of at least 0.50 that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will be less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition by at least 2 prejudice points. However, summing the grey bars of those intervals, the five left-most grey bars, renders a value of only 0.347. Thus, based on this criterion, although the intervention works, it does not work well enough to justify the cost. An advantage of creating a G-P diagram is that it is possible to evaluate increasingly fine-grained scientific stories. Moreover, the researcher can determine just how fine-grained she or he wants the analysis to be, simply by using more, smaller intervals to be increasingly fine-grained, or fewer, larger intervals to be less fine-grained.

Playing with shapes

The reason it is possible to have an effect size equal to zero, but nevertheless have a probabilistic effect of the intervention, is because we had set the shapes of the distributions in such a way that the experimental condition shape was a negative value, and the control condition shape was a positive value. By letting the extent of the difference between the shapes in the two conditions vary, it is possible to likewise vary the extent of the probabilistic effect. To see this in a simple way, let us again consider the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition has less prejudice than a randomly selected person from the control condition, again assuming the locations in both conditions equal 20 and that the scales equal 2. But now, let the shapes vary, so that these are both 0 (normality in both conditions), -0.3/+0.3, -0.6/+0.6, -0.9/+0.9, -1.2/+1.2, -1.5/+1.5. Thus, the difference in shapes is 0, 0.6, 1.2, 1.8, 2.4, or 3.0. Note that no matter what games we play with the shapes, the effect size remains zero. Nevertheless, letting shapes vary produces astounding effects on the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition will have less prejudice than a randomly selected person from the control condition. Figure 2 illustrates the drama.

Figure 2.
Probability of Prejudice: Line Chart
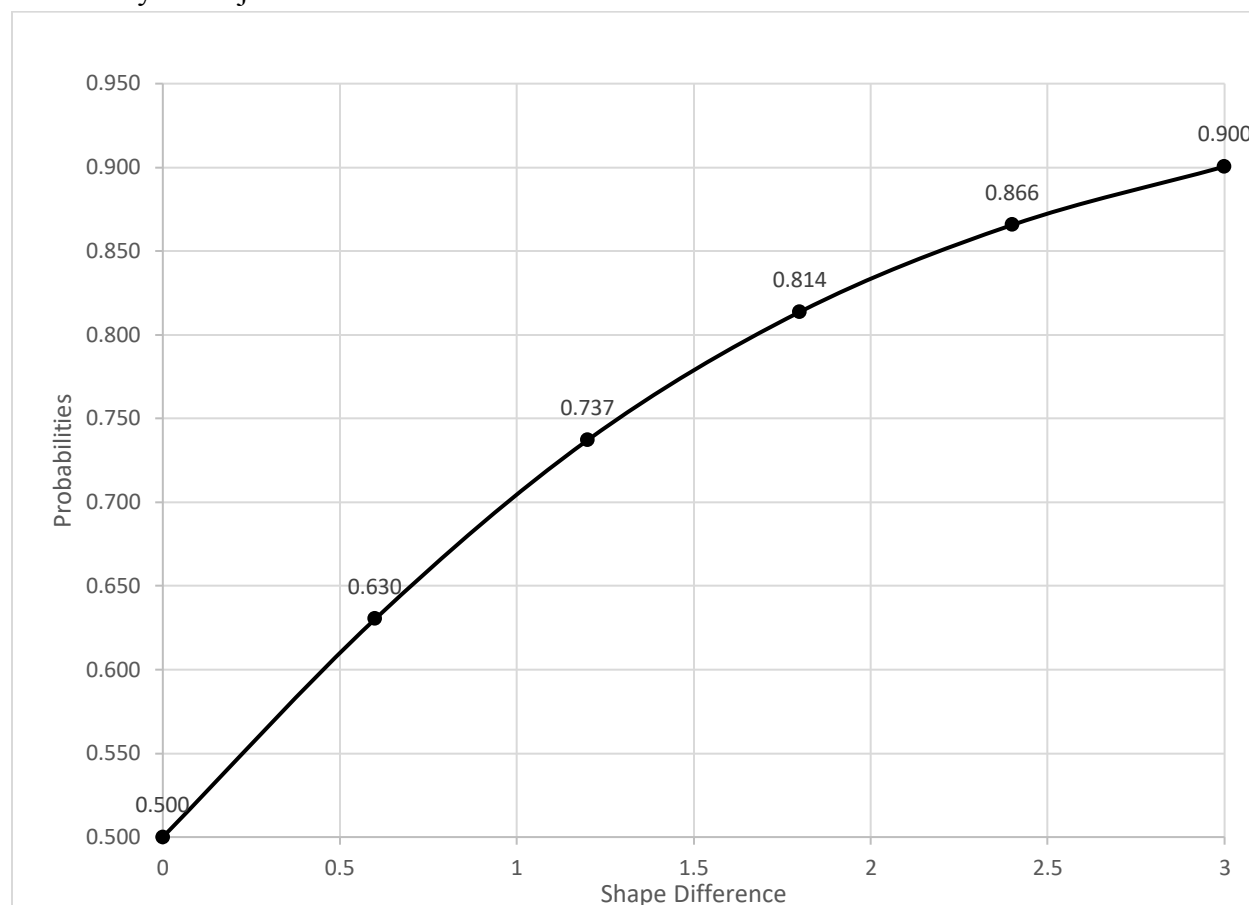
Figure 2. The probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition is less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition is expressed along the vertical axis as a function of the extent of the difference in shapes, expressed along the horizontal axis.

To interpret Figure 2, consider the zero-point where both shapes equal 0, and so it is a coin toss whether a randomly selected person from either of the two conditions is less prejudiced than the other. However, as the difference in shapes increases, so does the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition is less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition. When the shapes differ a lot—say by 3—this probability reaches 0.900, despite that the effect size equals 0. Thus, shapes matter for applied stories as well as for theoretical stories.

Conclusion

Scientists, like non-scientists, are highly concerned with stories. The difference, allegedly, is that scientists prove the truth of their stories with convincing statistics whereas non-scientists do not. However, the present goal is to demonstrate that statistics can support, or contradict, even scientific stories depending on which

statistics are used. Using the example of the threat-and-prejudice story, and a hypothetical experiment, we saw that typical normal statistics support the scientific story that threat is a positive cause of prejudice whereas skew-normal statistics support a contradictory scientific story, that threat is a negative cause of prejudice. This intriguing contradiction in scientific stories is generated by the differing shapes of the experimental and control conditions. Shapes matter for scientific stories!

There is an additional point. Because the family of normal distributions is a subset of the family of skew normal distributions, nothing is lost by assuming skew normality even when normality is true. In this special case, the shape is zero, the location equals the mean, the scale equals the standard deviation, and the calculations will be the same as if one assumes normality. However, outside the special case, the calculations can differ dramatically depending on whether one assumes normality or skew normality. Outside the special case, the normality assumption is plain wrong, and we have seen how the wrongness can suggest a seemingly obvious, but nevertheless false, scientific story.

The plot thickens when we move to applied stories. Even under the more generally applicable umbrella of skew normality, it is possible for effect sizes to suggest different conclusions than probabilities. We saw a case where the effect size is zero, thereby suggesting that an intervention does not work, whereas considering probabilities suggests that the intervention nevertheless works. If the goal is applied, what matters is the probability

that a randomly selected person who gets the intervention will be better off, by varying amounts, relative to a randomly selected person who does not get the intervention. We have seen that G-P diagrams are a concise way to express these various probabilities. Another advantage of G-P diagrams is that they can be made as fine-grained or course-grained as desired, merely by shortening or widening the intervals, respectively. Moreover, as we have seen, G-P diagrams can be used to determine whether even an effective intervention is sufficiently effective to justify the cost.

Finally, to dramatically illustrate the importance of distribution shapes, Figure 2 allowed the difference in distribution shapes in the two conditions to vary. The greater the disparity in shapes, the larger the probability that a randomly selected person from the experimental condition would be less prejudiced than a randomly selected person from the control condition, despite the effect size equal to zero. At an extreme, when the shape differential equals 3.0, this probability is 0.900, again despite the effect size equal to zero!

The larger point, then, is that distribution shapes can be crucial for scientific storytelling. Researchers should determine whether their story is a theoretical story, in which case it makes sense to concentrate on distribution shifts, exemplified by skew normal effect sizes. Or if their story is an applied story, distribution shifts might not be important, and focus should be on probabilities of being better or worse off, by varying amounts, depending on whether one gets the intervention. Whether for basic research stories or applied

research stories, distribution shapes can be crucial, though researchers in the social sciences fail to see this cruciality. Therefore, the present hope and expectation is that the foregoing demonstrations will stimulate researchers to consider distribution shapes when drawing conclusions about scientific stories.

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David Trafimow is a Distinguished Achievement Professor of psychology at New Mexico State University, a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science, Executive Editor of the Journal of General Psychology, and for Basic and Applied Social Psychology. He received his PhD in psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1993. His current research interests include attribution, attitudes, cross-cultural research, ethics, morality, philosophy and philosophy of science, methodology, potential performance theory, the a priori procedure, and gain-probability diagrams.

Return to Tamara-Land: '*Plus Zone Challenges*' of Marquis de Sade and Mary Parker Follett Provide New Insight into *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*

R. Duncan M. Pelly (Corresponding Author)
Fisk University

David Boje
New Mexico State University

Abstract

Stories have a remarkable way of illustrating theories of the 'Yellow Brick Road'; however, what happens on the road has been under-theorized. This article will use Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to illustrate the tension between systems theories of Mary Parker Follett's *power with transformation of power over* systems and the Marquis de Sade's *power that gives no quarter to victims*. By resurrecting the Tamara-land metaphor, we have used intertextuality and literary critique to explore the power dynamics of Dorothy, the Strawman, the Tin Woodman, and the Lion vis-à-vis the more powerful characters in Oz: The Wizard of Oz, and the Witches of the North, East, and West. This work is of interest to academics and practitioners who aspire to explore complex power dynamics of entrepreneurship in a simple and elegant fashion. We make several contributions to 'the plus zone challenge in entrepreneurship', a theory which explains why one should tell open-ended stories, leaving the listeners (audience) with opportunities to shape narratives to match their motives and desires.

Keywords: Literary Critique, Follett, de Sade, Tamara-land, Boje, Power, Systems, Entrepreneurship, Storytelling, Systems Theories

Introduction

This paper originated from a conversation with the two co-authors and became the foundation for the research question. We pondered how we could provide an example of "power with" prevailing in the face of overwhelming "power over." We discussed different empirical settings from the "real world" that currently populate management studies, and found these examples excessively grounded in data. We agreed that the focus remained heavily on the authors' attempting to generalize the findings for the reader. We reflected upon what made writing embrace the "plus zone challenge" (Hindle, 2007; Pelly and Fayolle, 2020). In other words, how could we use a story to relate to readers in a way that they could apply the findings in an applicable manner? Restated, we wanted to embrace indigenous ways to tell stories (Rosile,

2016) where the reader is free to generalize. Our role as the story weaver is not to tell a story, but to create an ensemble with the audience (Rosile et al, 2018).

Our principle contribution is to a theory known as 'plus zone challenge in entrepreneurship' (Hindle, 2007; Pelly and Fayolle, 2020). The 'plus zone challenge in entrepreneurship' may be defined as providing space for the audience to take a fragment of narrative to its next level. This is evident in the Tamara-Land article (Boje, 1995; Hitchin, 2015). We use this unusual basis for a conversation among Baum, Boje/Hitching, Follett, and de Sade. It is a theory of choice for Follett and de Sade as they approach systems of complexity from opposing vantage points. On the one hand, Follett used the *homo narrans* (Hjorth, 2005) storytelling technique, as a 'plus zone challenge' in order to *potentialize* text so readers could apply findings of the text to their own ways and for their own reasons. On the other hand, de Sade used 'shock values' for the same effect to infect the imagination. This tension between styles and conceptions of power provides room for the reader to interpret and apply the text in their own ways. The quest is to discern ways that Baum's Oz-stories demonstrate 'plus zone challenge'. We contend that Baum's (1900/2008) *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* has aspects of both Follett's and de Sade's use of 'plus zone challenge in entrepreneurship' that goes beyond instilling enjoyment and excitement in children that have yet to be unleashed. For example, there are character contradictions similar to Tamara-Land where conflicting antenarratives (Boje, 1995) can be dissected and applied for the reader's benefit.

Our second contribution opens an intertextual analysis (Guerin et al, 1992; McMorran, 2007) that provides insight into the plus zone challenge. This paper embraced the concept of a plus zone challenge in a multitude of ways. First of all, Boje tells an emotionally gripping story about Walt Disney's abusive behavior. The reader is immediately drawn into the narrative and begins asking questions such as "what if I was there," and "what would I have done in that situation". Most importantly, there are hints with respect to the research question regarding the dynamics of "power over" versus "power with." Most importantly, this tension between perspectives provides verisimilitude for the reader. Second, near the end of the article, Boje provides several potential theorizations that can be used to aid the reader in understanding the story. This competing perspectives effect is one we wanted to achieve. Third, Tamara-Land's intertextuality (Guerin et al, 1992; McMorran, 2007), allows viewers to interact with the play (joining actors on stage) and, thus, experience it differently each time they watch it from theater seats, with different textual and literary analyses. Therefore, we made a conscious decision to make an intertextual analysis of Frank Baum's (1900/2008) story of The Wizard of Oz which take several characters on a decidedly Sadean turn.

Our primary question is how does the plus zone challenge play a role in the tension between power over and power with, and how does this tension provide room for entrepreneurship? Tamara-Land and the Wizard of Oz both examine systems and their use for maintaining and disrupting systems of power. We examined two systems thinking and power scholars: Mary Parker Follett and Donatien Alphonse Francois, the Marquis de Sade. Follett, although she is considered the mother of modern management (Linden, 1995) and of systems thinking (Mendenhall et al., 2000); she is in actuality a master of using narratives to change and divert power over systems (Pelly and Boje, 2019a, 2019b). In contrast, de Sade is the master of creating systems where the victim has no option other than to suffer at the hands of a lord or master (Pelly, 2020), or a possessor of power over.

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In the methods section, we use literary analysis to illustrate Follett and Baum's concepts in *The Wizard of Oz*. Our goal is to use this story as a metaphor or allegory that can provide hope to those attempting to create their own power with system in the face of overwhelming odds.

Background

Mary Parker Follett's Underappreciated Systems Theories

Mary Parker Follett is oftentimes credited as being the founder of systems theory (Linden, 1995) and as the mother of modern management (Mendenhall et al, 2000). One of her lasting contributions is her exploration of the concept of "power with" (Pelly & Boje, 2019a). Unlike many management and leadership scholars, Follett sees value in difference and in conflict (Follett, 1957). Whereas many would seek compromise or coercion in the face of divergence, Follett proposes the concept of "integration" (Follett, 1919) based upon the relational process ontology (Pelly & Boje, 2019b). The key behind integration is enhancing outcomes for all parties involved with no winners or losers in integration (Follett, 1919, 1957). Instead, the purpose of integration is to accept not only the choices that are given, but also to create new ones that better meet situational demands. It is in this light that Follett and Schumpeter are similar – both are advocating a type of creative destruction that creates new systems and discards old ones.

Unlike Schumpeter, Follett does not prioritize individual success. Instead, the goal of integration is to create more power in "1+1=3" types of situations. She sees conflict as an opportunity for individuals to explore their true interests. Interestingly, the specific discussion styles that she provides are mirrored in indigenous stories (Rosile, 2016). The reciprocal storytelling and story listening she describes can facilitate the elimination of conflicting interests in pursuit of a greater good (Rosile et al, 2018). The key to this style of storytelling is in the fact that Follett does not view individuals as leaders. She sees leadership as embedded in the needs of the situation. By depersonalizing leadership and orders, Follett (1957) creates situations where individuals can contribute to tasks more authentically and for their own ways and reasons (Follett, 1970).

While her theories are key to this paper, her writing style is mirrored in the following pages. Follett uses examples drawn from a multitude of sources to illustrate her points. Very rarely does she directly quote the philosophers from whom she is alluding, but their voices are nonetheless heard in a way that embraces the elegance and simplicity of café conversation. The secret to her success is her intertextuality (Guerin et al, 1992; McMorran, 2007). Follett seamlessly blends personal anecdotes, examples from literature, and (early 1900s) popular culture to demonstrate her points.

A good example of her use of intertextuality is found in Mary Parker Follett's *Dynamic Administration*. In this anthology, Follett uses a petit recit (Lyotard, 1979) style of narration to apply complex philosophical theories to solve common problems in management. These "little narratives" bridge the gap between theory and practice to produce knowledge that, within a specific context, can be adapted as needed (Calas & Smircich, 1999). Each narrative is not only useful, but memorable. Although some of her stories may have been fabulated, plausibility trumps accuracy if it serves as a prod to activity (McKinley et al, 1999). Her small narratives streamline the imagination and serve as the basis for the reader's individual thought experiments (Folger & Truillo, 1999).

An Introduction to the Marquis de Sade

Sadism instills repulsion, disgust, intrigue, and excitement, depending upon one's perspective. When teaching ethics and broaching the subject of Sadism, it is amazing the number of individuals who choose to enlighten the teacher on their experiences with Sadism. Their experiences normally could be described as Sado-Masochism (Connolly, 2006; Bos, 2007). In contrast to this general view of Sadism, this palimpsest builds upon the original ideas of de Sade. Here, Sadism is defined as an ethical orientation that prioritizes personal enjoyment above all else despite the potential detriment to others (Attarian, 2004; de Beauvoir, 1972).Sadism is a philosophical bend that is anti-humanist, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic (Corey, 1966). It relishes in a relationality and advocates that nature is evil, and that it is impossible to commit crimes against nature or society (Trouille, 2004; de Sade, 2016). Unlike circular conversations, de Sade uses imagination in abstraction to guide the reader into the depths of human cruelty and corruption (Greteman, 2016).

Within the sadistic realm, individuals are painted as inherently unequal and as "underlings" who deserve and enjoy being victimized (Attarian, 2004). Moreover, the health of the victim is irrelevant (Corey, 1966), because forcing pain upon others is orgasmic (Trouille, 2004; Stubbs, 2006). Shockingly, de Sade's pornographic illusions are not as alarming as his justifications (Gray, 2013). He extends Sadism beyond simple hedonism into a systemic approach to sexual gratification – transforming it into a coherent ethic to support a practice (Butler, 2003). De Sade considered exploitation acceptable because he was an aristocrat, and his conduct was commonplace in circles of the first and second estates (Heumakers, 1989). In fact, his biography depicts a man of wealth and privilege that transcended through his years of imprisonment (Gray, 2013).

Particularly, de Sade was fascinated with the idea that evil comes from man and not from God (Trouille, 2004), and postulated that cruelty is the first sentiment injected into mankind (Greteman, 2016). It was the all-seeing eye of God that made his depravity so exciting: but, it was imprisonment, excommunication, and punishment that deterred de Sade's conquests (Trouille, 2004). In other words, his actions were thrilling because he knew they were "wrong".

In its purest form, Sadism defames sacrament through sacrilege. De Sade and his writings have long been described as without any "redeeming social importance" (Wyngaard, 2013). Even de Sade scripted in his epitaph that he and his works best be forgotten. He saw his philosophy as non-reproductive, and designed only for the moment (de Sade, 2016; Greteman, 2016). He questions if the point of education is to teach people how to become enslaved by the powerful or if it is to teach them to maximize their own pleasure (de Sade, 2013; Wyngaard, 2013). These ideas parallel those from economics that profess that individual agency is reduced towards ends-seeking behavior, reputational enhancement, the maximization of power, exploitative and transactional relationships, and the pursuit of hedonism (Racko et al., 2017).

The moral hazards of Sadism are well established through literary and philosophical critique. In contrast, the role of space and place in facilitating hedonism are underexplored. De Sade's real-life orgies were enhanced by a physical place, i.e. a brothel or his remote Chateau de Lacoste (Gray, 2013). There is always a secluded fantastical space, or heterotopia, in de Sade's novels – castles, dungeons, or a maison debauchee (Berman, 1999) where the most depraved behavior occurred. In our example, it is in the literary world of Oz.

The emphasis on space is the rationale behind de Sade's advocacy of power over. Unlike Follett who championed destroying old systems to create new ones, de Sade believed in

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reinforcing old systems (Pelly, 2020). In these old systems, the power of individuals was sacrificed for the benefit of the seigneur. The lord of the system benefits maximally, while those under him suffer. De Sade was a terror within his own realm, yet he whimpered at the slightest confrontation (Gray, 2013). This is a theme that will be revisited later.

The Relationship Between Power, Narrative, and Heterotopia

Both Mary Parker Follett and de Sade conceptualize power in very different ways, resulting in fundamentally divergent narratives. Their literature contains the antecedents of heterotopia creation (Boje et al, 2022; Pelly, 2019), which is important because organizations and institutions are a reflection of their underlying stories (Bucher and Langley, 2106; Spinosa, 1995).

A heterotopia is a separate space and a narrative (Winkler, 2014; Foucault, 1967). It can manifest itself as a utopia (the perfect place) or dystopia (the most imperfect place) (Beckett et al., 2017). Whereas utopias and dystopias are prevalent in literature, heterotopias can be real or fictive (Foucault, 1998; Beckett et al., 2017). A heterotopia could be compared to a photocopy because it is internally homogenous but is an imperfect interpretation of the surrounding environment (Winkler, 2014; Johnson, 2006). Heterotopias have been labeled as representing alternative narratives that make order legible (Topinka, 2010).

These alternative narratives mean that heterotopias are an integral piece of the dominant culture and region because they contest its narrative and have different values (Foucault, 1967). As deviant spaces (Foucault, 1998) they permit individuals to behave in significantly different ways (Johnson, 2006). These behaviors evolve into a specific point of view (Johnson, 2006), an iron cage (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) and a series of routines (Gioia, 1992) that socialize (Checkel, 2005) individuals into a accepting the heterotopic narrative – irrespective of the individual's best interest.

Heterotopias arise out of various circumstances. Stone (2013) cites Chernobyl as a heterotopia with a post-apocalyptic space that echoes nightmares of the past. Winkler (2014) describes an assemblage of artifacts as creating alternative narratives. Pelly (2020) and Pelly and Boje (2019b) describe heterotopias as awakening the worst in humanity when the social contract is suspended.

Heterotopias are common in literature, especially in studies of destruction and defiance. Separate spaces such as factories (Parker, 2005) and bureaucracies (Warner, 2007) have been described as having heterotopic qualities. These spaces can also be populated with heroes and antiheroes such as the Eastern European Vampire (Stoker, 1997), the bourgeois (Marx, 2008), and the mad scientist (Shelley, 2012).

The relationship between heterotopias and entrepreneurship has been explored empirically. Hjorth (2005) identified organizational entrepreneurship as the process of heterotopias spawning in an established organization. He explains the discrepancies between strategy and tactics can nurture entrepreneurial potentiality. Pelly (2016, 2017a) contends that heterotopia formation is the result of underlying entrepreneurial processes and narratives. Johannission and Olaison (2007) and Peredo and McLean (2006) describe heterotopias that result from exogenous shocks that encourage emergency based entrepreneurship. Finally, Mendez and Pelly (2021) describe ways in which isolated heterotopias can create an anti-innovation culture that results in the suppression of entrepreneurship.

These cases are devoted to theory development and fall short in the area of the plus zone challenge in entrepreneurship. It is here that literature can reintroduce the playful components of literary analysis to create a story to better understand why a heterotopia is a "space for play" (Hjorth, 2005). To support this journal's special issue call for literary explorations to understanding entrepreneurship, we will engage in literary critique (Guerin et al., 1992) to investigate two of literature's great entrepreneurs (at least with respect to creating heterotopias), Mary Parker Follett and Marquis de Sade, and use the *Wonderful World of Oz* to explore these two competing systems of power, narratives, and heterotopias.

Methodology

Return to Tamara-Land

The three writers aforementioned in the above literature – Boje, de Sade, and Follett, are masters of intertextuality. Intertextuality blends different types of sources – ethnographic data, personal experience, and literary critique into new stories. These stories can be grounded in reality in a more traditional empirical style, or they may be used to create fictional literature that is used to illustrate theory (Guerin et al, 1992; McMorran, 2007). In this paper, Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* (2008) will serve the basis for literary analysis.

Throughout the text we observed how Dorothy, the Tin Woodman, the Lion, and the Strawman engaged in dialogue and processes that mirrored Mary Parker Follett's concepts of integration and achieved *power over* as they walked along the yellow brick road. We will pay special attention to their ability to overcome obstacles imposed upon them by not only the Wizard of Oz, but also the system of the World of Oz.

We will also focus on the actions of the Wizard of Oz and other characters, including the witches, and their ability to create systems that force people to act (even against their will or best interest) in a way that appeases the lead Sadists. It is of interest to note that these dominators fade away in the face of the slightest confrontation.

In order to illustrate our perspectives, we will use the layered account format of writing (Pelly, 2016, 2017) that introduces specific quotes from the Wizard of Oz. These quotes will be broken into a series of vignettes, known as "storytelling vignettes" and will have titles in *italics* after which we will provide theoretical analyses of the text based upon de Sade and Follett writings. These theoretical vignettes will be in bold headings.

A goal of the 'plus zone challenge' is interweaving vignettes to oscillate the attention of the reader in-between theory and practice, which destabilizes the audience/readers, and ultimately creates opportunities for readers to embed themselves in the story (Pelly and Fayolle, 2020). A secondary goal is to enable the reader to comment in the margins of the text (Lyotard, 1979), between-the-lines, and interpret the story to accommodate their own reality, which means that it is the reader and not the author who applies the text (Follett, 1970). Next, we delve into Baum's introduction to *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to determine how far down the Sadean rabbit hole we will go.

Analyses

Down The Yellow Brick Road

Folklore, legends, myths, and fairy tales have engaged children throughout the ages, for every healthy youngster has a wholesome and instinctive love of stories—fantastic, marvelous, and manifestly unreal. The winged fairies of Grimm and Andersen have brought more happiness to childish hearts than any other human creations.

Yet the old-time fairy tale, having served generations, may now be classed as "historical" in the children's library; for the time has come for a series of newer "wonder tales" in which the stereotyped genie, dwarf and fairy are eliminated, together with all the horrible and blood-curdling incidents devised by their authors to point a fearsome moral to each tale. Modern education includes morality; therefore, the modern child only seeks entertainment in its wonder tales and gladly dispenses with all disagreeable incidents.

With this thought in mind, the story of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was written solely to please children of today. It aspires as a modernized fairy tale in which the wonderment and joy are retained and the heartaches and nightmares are left out (Baum, 2008).

Les Jeunes Sadiens

Baum opens the *Wizard of Oz* with a quote that appears at first blush so innocent, yet it screams of de Sade. His work *Justine* (de Sade & Bataille, 2017) discusses this same debate in education – is the purpose of learning to become a better person, or is it to maximize individual enjoyment? De Sade suggested the latter. Baum implies with this quote that morality is no longer necessary in literature or education; which essentially drives a stake through the heart of Rousseau's idea that education provides the foundation for ethical behavior (Rousseau, 2018).

Baum does not specify why pleasure is derived from reading. Is it seeing a young girl who is surrounded by misfits struggling to find a way home? Is it relishing in the de-masking of the Wizard of Oz, or of seeing the Wicked Witch of the West melt away? Could it even be that this poor girl eventually returns home? This is left to the imagination of the reader as the text unfolds, in the true spirit of post modernism (Lyotard, 1979) whereby the reader is given the latitude to interpret. In the following vignette, we analyze the plus zone challenge of imminent harm and mayhem of a victimless death, a victimless murder, and Sadist games being foisted upon the reader and the protagonists.

Victimless Death

Dorothy listened to this speech with wonder. What could the little woman possibly mean by calling her a sorceress, and saying she had killed the Wicked Witch of the East? Dorothy was an innocent, harmless little girl, who had been carried by a cyclone many miles from home; and she had never killed anything in all her life.

But the little woman evidently expected her to answer; so Dorothy said, with hesitation, "You are very kind, but there must be some mistake. I have not killed anything."

"Your house did, anyway," replied the little old woman, with a laugh, "and that is the same thing. See!" she continued, pointing to the corner of the house. "There are her two feet, still sticking out from under a block of wood."

Dorothy looked, and gave a little cry of fright. There, indeed, just under the corner of the great beam the house rested on, two feet were sticking out, shod in silver shoes with pointed toes." . . .

. . ."What is it?" asked the little old woman, and looked, and began to laugh. The feet of the dead Witch had disappeared entirely, and nothing was left but the silver shoes.

"She was so old," explained the Witch of the North, "that she dried up quickly in the sun. That is the end of her. But the silver shoes are yours, and you shall have them to wear." She reached down and picked up the shoes, and after shaking the dust out of them handed them to Dorothy (Baum, 2008, Chapter 2).

A Victimless Murder?

At the beginning of the second chapter we learn that Dorothy has killed a witch. Once again, de Sade strikes. Instead of grieving over this death, young Dorothy gingerly appropriates clothing from a corpse for her own use, and not another thought was given to this action. It appears as one of the worst examples of bricolage (Baker and Nelson, 2005). Her behaviors are reminiscent of de Sade's contention that a victim's only use is to facilitate the Sadist's never-ending quest for satiation (de Sade, 1987). Thus, the question remains: is there any redemption possible for Dorothy?

On an equally disturbing note is the revelation that Dorothy appears at the onset to play the role of Justine (de Sade & Bataille, 2017). She quickly adapts to the Sadists' games for her benefit. Moreover, the "good witch" who is fully aware that the slippers can return Dorothy to her home, sends her on a quest that will result in the demise of Oz and the death of the Wicked Witch of the West. The question remains: at what point will Dorothy wake up and end the game, and will she persuade others to participate in her quest by highlighting their mutual needs?

Identity Not As Constructed, but As Dictated

"No, indeed. I don't know anything. You see, I am stuffed, so I have no brains at all," he answered sadly.
"Oh," said Dorothy, "I'm awfully sorry for you."
"Do you think," he asked, "if I go to the Emerald City with you, that Oz would give me some brains?" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 3).

The Tin Woodman appeared to think deeply for a moment. Then he said:
"Do you suppose Oz could give me a heart?"
"Why, I guess so," Dorothy answered. "It would be as easy as to give the Scarecrow brains" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 5).

"Do you think Oz could give me courage?" asked the Cowardly Lion.
"Just as easily as he could give me brains," said the Scarecrow.
"Or give me a heart," said the Tin Woodman.
"Or send me back to Kansas," said Dorothy.
"Then, if you don't mind, I'll go with you," said the Lion, "for my life is simply unbearable without a bit of courage" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 7).

The Sadist and the System Dictates Identity

As Dorothy finds herself trapped in the World of Oz, the Tin Woodman, the Lion, and the Strawman find themselves in a prison constructed within their minds. This creation of a heterotopia (Bucher and Langhley, 2016; Hjorth, 2005) is a Sadist's dream (Pelly, 2020). De Sade relished in the ability to create both physical and mental prisons for his victims. In direct comparison, in the World of Oz the characters are displaced in a realm that constrains them both physically and mentally. It appears that both de Sade and Baum created circumstances (a plot) in which victims believed they could not escape.

As an "outsider", Dorothy hints that it might be possible to escape these prisons and that the "dungeon master" Oz can help them if they work together. Dorothy begins to evolve as she meets these new characters of the "power over" story, and becomes the integrator in a "power with" story. She commences with Mary Parker Follett's key maxim (Follett, 1919): she listens to what the Strawman, Tin Woodman, and the Lion want, then integrates (Follett, 1940) these perspectives into a coherent, mutually beneficial narrative. The characters could have argued over which was more important – the Strawman's brain, the Lion's courage, the Scarecrow's heart, or Dorothy's trip home. Likewise, they could have fought one other in a zero sum game, or they could have made a compromise to stay in place resulting in none of them achieving their dreams. Instead, Dorothy was creative enough to realize a trip to Oz might give everyone their desired outcomes. This was the impetus behind each character's decision to contribute in ways they saw fit and for their individual reasons – nothing had to be sacrificed with Dorothy's solution. This solution represents a seed of entrepreneurship as it paves the way for our heroes to exploit cracks in the master narrative of Oz.

Cracks in the System

"This will serve me a lesson," said he, "to look where I step. For if I should kill another bug or beetle I should surely cry again, and crying rusts my jaws so that I cannot speak."

Thereafter he walked very carefully, with his eyes on the road, and when he saw a tiny ant toiling by he would step over it, so as not to harm it. The Tin Woodman knew very well he had no heart, and therefore he took great care never to be cruel or unkind to anything.

"You people with hearts," he said, "have something to guide you, and need never do wrong; but I have no heart, and so I must be very careful. When Oz gives me a heart of course I needn't mind so much" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 6). . . .

. . . So Dorothy went first, holding Toto in her arms, the Tin Woodman followed, and the Scarecrow came next. The Lion, although he was certainly afraid, turned to face the Kalidahs, and then he gave so loud and terrible a roar that Dorothy screamed and the Scarecrow fell over backward, while even the fierce beasts stopped short and looked at him in surprise.

But, seeing they were bigger than the Lion, and remembering that there were two of them and only one of him, the Kalidahs again rushed forward, and the Lion crossed over the tree and turned to see what they would do next. Without stopping an instant the fierce beasts also began to cross the tree. And the Lion said to Dorothy: "We are lost, for they will surely tear us to pieces with their sharp claws. But stand close behind me, and I will fight them as long as I am alive."

"Wait a minute!" called the Scarecrow. He had been thinking what was best to be done, and now he asked the Woodman to chop away the end of the tree that rested on their side

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of the ditch. The Tin Woodman began to use his axe at once, and, just as the two Kalidahs were nearly across, the tree fell with a crash into the gulf, carrying the ugly, snarling brutes with it, and both were dashed to pieces on the sharp rocks at the bottom. . . .

. . . . This adventure made the travelers more anxious than ever to get out of the forest, and they walked so fast that Dorothy became tired, and had to ride on the Lion's back. To their great joy the trees became thinner the farther they advanced, and in the afternoon they suddenly came upon a broad river, flowing swiftly just before them. On the other side of the water they could see the road of yellow brick running through a beautiful country, with green meadows dotted with bright flowers and all the road bordered with trees hanging full of delicious fruits. They were greatly pleased to see this delightful country before them.

"How shall we cross the river?" asked Dorothy.

"That is easily done," replied the Scarecrow. "The Tin Woodman must build us a raft, so we can float to the other side."

So the Woodman took his axe and began to chop down small trees to make a raft, and while he was busy at this the Scarecrow found on the riverbank a tree full of fine fruit. This pleased Dorothy, who had eaten nothing but nuts all day, and she made a hearty meal of the ripe fruit" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 12).

Defying the System and Integrating

This passage from Chapter 6 is the first of many throughout the early sections of Baum's work where the characters subtly defy the dictates of the system of Oz. As illustrated, the Tin Woodman clearly had feelings, including compassion, but he did not know he had a heart. The Strawman proved to be very clever but did not know that he had a brain. The Lion demonstrated morsels of courage even though he thought he was a coward.

These hidden abilities manifested themselves suddenly and in a cooperative manner in the passage from Chapter 12. In the face of overwhelming dangers, the situational leadership that Follett described (Follett, 1957) was used to escape from the Kalidahs. The power over system would dictate that our protagonists would have to surrender to their fate. Dorothy would never return to Kansas, the Lion would die a coward, the Tin Woodman would never have feelings again, and the Strawman would never have realized his intelligence. This "together telling" (Rosile et al, 2018) facilitated entrepreneurial search for novel solutions (Aldrich and Kim, 2007) that defied the odds in Oz' power over system.

The desire to overcome their limitations forced integration in a very explicit way. Each character contributed to the group's survival at that moment: the Lion scared off the Kalidahs, the Strawman thought of the plan to use the tree, and the Tin Woodman cut down the tree. By overcoming their constructed shortcomings, the group generated enough collective power to escape certain death. Each chipped in for their own ways and reasons (Hindle, 2007; Pelly and Fayolle, 2020). The power over narrative of Oz that undermined to confidence of our heroes had not been solidified. The cracks within Oz' master narrative permitted Dorothy to create a Folletian-style narrative heterotopia. This system within a system allowed the heroes to survive the perils of Oz.

Dorothy's success as a narrative entrepreneur is demonstrated after their escape from the Kalidahs and by their attempt to cross the river. The Lion carried Dorothy, the Strawman designed the plan to cross the river, and the Tin Woodman once again felled the lumber.

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Lightning doesn't strike twice—this is a clear case of integration succeeding in a power over system.

Much like Dorothy was able to bring out the best in her companions so, too, could Oz create new ways to bend the heroes to his will.

Manifestations of Oz

But what interested Dorothy most was the big throne of green marble that stood in the middle of the room. It was shaped like a chair and sparkled with gems, as did everything else. In the center of the chair was an enormous Head, without a body to support it or any arms or legs whatever. There was no hair upon this head, but it had eyes and a nose and mouth, and was much bigger than the head of the biggest giant.

As Dorothy gazed upon this in wonder and fear, the eyes turned slowly and looked at her sharply and steadily. Then the mouth moved, and Dorothy heard a voice say:

"I am Oz, the Great and Terrible. Who are you, and why do you seek me?"

It was not such an awful voice as she had expected to come from the big Head; so she took courage and answered:

"I am Dorothy, the Small and Meek. I have come to you for help." . . .

. . . So the Scarecrow followed him and was admitted into the great Throne Room, where he saw, sitting in the emerald throne, a most lovely Lady. She was dressed in green silk gauze and wore upon her flowing green locks a crown of jewels. Growing from her shoulders were wings, gorgeous in color and so light that they fluttered if the slightest breath of air reached them.

When the Scarecrow had bowed, as prettily as his straw stuffing would let him, before this beautiful creature, she looked upon him sweetly, and said: "I am Oz, the Great and Terrible. Who are you, and why do you seek me?" . . .

. . . But when the Woodman entered the great Throne Room he saw neither the Head nor the Lady, for Oz had taken the shape of a most terrible Beast. It was nearly as big as an elephant, and the green throne seemed hardly strong enough to hold its weight. The Beast had a head like that of a rhinoceros, only there were five eyes in its face. There were five long arms growing out of its body, and it also had five long, slim legs. Thick, woolly hair covered every part of it, and a more dreadful-looking monster could not be imagined. It was fortunate the Tin Woodman had no heart at that moment, for it would have beat loud and fast from terror. But being only tin, the Woodman was not at all afraid, although he was much disappointed . . .

. . . The Lion at once passed through the door, and glancing around saw, to his surprise, that before the throne was a Ball of Fire, so fierce and glowing he could scarcely bear to gaze upon it. His first thought was that Oz had by accident caught on fire and was burning up; but when he tried to go nearer, the heat was so intense that it singed his whiskers, and he crept back tremblingly to a spot nearer the door. . ." (Baum, 2008, Chapter 11).

Divergence in the System of Power Over

De Sade's writings always used different types of villains to terrify different kinds of victims, and he was a fan of costumes and role-playing (Gray, 2013). Oz's different manifestations epitomize the terror of an overlord in the power over system. The distinctive disguises were designed to terrify the different characters in unique ways. Interestingly, only the Lion and Dorothy seemed intimidated by Oz. The fact that it failed to have the desired effect on the Strawman and on the Tin Woodman is indicative of the fact that even without integration and power with, there are limits to the abilities of a "power over-seigneur".

The heterotopia that Oz created was reflexively interpreted by our heroes in diverse ways, similar to the ways in which Dorothy interpreted their needs and harnessed their unique abilities.

Dorothy, the Lion, Strawman, and Tin Woodman – A Band of Hired Assassins

"Well," said the Head, "I will give you my answer. You have no right to expect me to send you back to Kansas unless you do something for me in return. In this country everyone must pay for everything he gets. If you wish me to use my magic power to send you home again you must do something for me first. Help me and I will help you."

"What must I do?" asked the girl.

"Kill the Wicked Witch of the West," answered Oz.

"But I cannot!" exclaimed Dorothy, greatly surprised.

"You killed the Witch of the East and you wear the silver shoes, which bear a powerful charm. There is now but one Wicked Witch left in all this land, and when you can tell me she is dead I will send you back to Kansas—but not before."

The little girl began to weep, she was so much disappointed; and the eyes winked again and looked upon her anxiously, as if the Great Oz felt that she could help him if she would.

"I never killed anything, willingly," she sobbed. "Even if I wanted to, how could I kill the Wicked Witch? If you, who are Great and Terrible, cannot kill her yourself, how do you expect me to do it?"

"I do not know," said the Head; "but that is my answer, and until the Wicked Witch dies you will not see your uncle and aunt again. Remember that the Witch is Wicked—tremendously Wicked—and ought to be killed. Now go, and do not ask to see me again until you have done your task."

"Power Over" Harnessing the Power of "Power With"

The Wizard of Oz's final power grab was an attempt to manipulate characters who might have been a threat to him. This tactic perfectly mirrors the actions of de Sade with his mother-in-law, Mme de Montreuil (Gray, 2013). De Sade enjoyed manipulating his more powerful mother-in-law to render her complicit in his schemes (she eventually realized what he was doing and ceased aiding him). De Sade also relished in watching others engage in Sadistic behavior even when he was unable to do so (Gray, 2013), which infers that his actions were not based upon sexual gratification but gratification in a much broader sense.

What remains uncertain in Baum's work is whether Oz wanted the Wicked Witch of the West killed because she was a threat to him or because he fantasized about her death. Either way, Oz seemed intent on corrupting Dorothy and her companions for his benefit. The interactions

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between Oz and the heroes of the story show that heterotopias can have an impact upon surrounding spaces, including other heterotopias.

Dorothy the Murderer?

> But the wicked creature was very cunning, and she finally thought of a trick that would give her what she wanted. She placed a bar of iron in the middle of the kitchen floor, and then by her magic arts made the iron invisible to human eyes. So that when Dorothy walked across the floor she stumbled over the bar, not being able to see it, and fell at full length. She was not much hurt, but in her fall one of the Silver Shoes came off; and before she could reach it, the Witch had snatched it away and put it on her own skinny foot.
>
> The wicked woman was greatly pleased with the success of her trick, for as long as she had one of the shoes she owned half the power of their charm, and Dorothy could not use it against her, even had she known how to do so.
>
> The little girl, seeing she had lost one of her pretty shoes, grew angry, and said to the Witch, "Give me back my shoe!"
>
> "I will not," retorted the Witch, "for it is now my shoe, and not yours."
>
> "You are a wicked creature!" cried Dorothy. "You have no right to take my shoe from me."
>
> "I shall keep it, just the same," said the Witch, laughing at her, "and someday I shall get the other one from you, too."
>
> This made Dorothy so very angry that she picked up the bucket of water that stood near and dashed it over the Witch, wetting her from head to foot.
>
> Instantly the wicked woman gave a loud cry of fear, and then, as Dorothy looked at her in wonder, the Witch began to shrink and fall away.
>
> "See what you have done!" she screamed. "In a minute I shall melt away."
>
> "I'm very sorry, indeed," said Dorothy, who was truly frightened to see the Witch actually melting away like brown sugar before her very eyes.
>
> "Didn't you know water would be the end of me?" asked the Witch, in a wailing, despairing voice.
>
> "Of course not," answered Dorothy. "How should I?"
>
> "Well, in a few minutes I shall be all melted, and you will have the castle to yourself. I have been wicked in my day, but I never thought a little girl like you would ever be able to melt me and end my wicked deeds. Look out—here I go!"
>
> With these words the Witch fell down in a brown, melted, shapeless mass and began to spread over the clean boards of the kitchen floor. Seeing that she had really melted away to nothing, Dorothy drew another bucket of water and threw it over the mess. She then swept it all out the door. After picking out the silver shoe, which was all that was left of the old woman, she cleaned and dried it with a cloth, and put it on her foot again. Then, being at last free to do as she chose, she ran out to the courtyard to tell the Lion that the Wicked Witch of the West had come to an end, and that they were no longer prisoners in a strange land" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 12).

In Inability to Cope with Confrontation

Like de Sade, the Wicked Witch became too greedy for her own good. She wanted both slippers and then taunted Dorothy until she snapped. As she snapped, this resulted in the demise of the Witch via melting away. These actions emulate those of de Sade during the Rose Keller affair (Gray, 2013). Like Dorothy, Keller was a struggling victim who snapped and then decided to punish her tormentor. What is divergent in these cases is the lack of power with. Dorothy and Keller both arose independently to combat this oppressive system, and they survived. This leads to the reinforcement that perhaps integration builds upon antecedents. In other words, nothing new is created, rather it is the recombination that is new (Whitehead, 1978). Dorothy was someone with inherent strength; her friends reinforced what was already there. This strength remained even after they went their separate ways.

This vignette signifies that heterotopias leave an echo upon their participants (Spinosa et al, 1995). In this instance, Dorothy fortified her strength by interacting with her companions, even when they were not with her. Consimilar, it also lends to her ability to destroy Oz and the system he created, as illustrated in the next vignette pair.

Oz the . . . Pathetic?

"The soldier had the news carried straight to Oz that Dorothy and the other travelers had come back again, after destroying the Wicked Witch; but Oz made no reply. They thought the Great Wizard would send for them at once, but he did not. They had no word from him the next day, nor the next, nor the next. The waiting was tiresome and wearing, and at last they grew vexed that Oz should treat them in so poor a fashion, after sending them to undergo hardships and slavery. So the Scarecrow at last asked the green girl to take another message to Oz, saying if he did not let them in to see him at once they would call the Winged Monkeys to help them, and find out whether he kept his promises or not. When the Wizard was given this message he was so frightened that he sent word for them to come to the Throne Room at four minutes after nine o'clock the next morning. He had once met the Winged Monkeys in the Land of the West, and he did not wish to meet them again . . .

. . . The Lion thought it might be as well to frighten the Wizard, so he gave a large, loud roar, which was so fierce and dreadful that Toto jumped away from him in alarm and tipped over the screen that stood in a corner. As it fell with a crash they looked that way, and the next moment all of them were filled with wonder. For they saw, standing in just the spot the screen had hidden, a little old man, with a bald head and a wrinkled face, who seemed to be as much surprised as they were. The Tin Woodman, raising his axe, rushed toward the little man and cried out, "Who are you?"

"I am Oz, the Great and Terrible," said the little man, in a trembling voice. "But don't strike me—please don't—and I'll do anything you want me to."

Our friends looked at him in surprise and dismay.

"I thought Oz was a great Head," said Dorothy.

"And I thought Oz was a lovely Lady," said the Scarecrow.

"And I thought Oz was a terrible Beast," said the Tin Woodman.

"And I thought Oz was a Ball of Fire," exclaimed the Lion.

"No, you are all wrong," said the little man meekly. "I have been making believe." . . .

. . . "Can't you give me brains?" asked the Scarecrow.

"You don't need them. You are learning something every day. A baby has brains, but it doesn't know much. Experience is the only thing that brings knowledge, and the longer you are on earth the more experience you are sure to get."

"That may all be true," said the Scarecrow, "but I shall be very unhappy unless you give me brains."

The false Wizard looked at him carefully.

"Well," he said with a sigh, "I'm not much of a magician, as I said; but if you will come to me tomorrow morning, I will stuff your head with brains. I cannot tell you how to use them, however; you must find that out for yourself."

"Oh, thank you—thank you!" cried the Scarecrow. "I'll find a way to use them, never fear!"

"But how about my courage?" asked the Lion anxiously.

"You have plenty of courage, I am sure," answered Oz. "All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The True courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty."

"Perhaps I have, but I'm scared just the same," said the Lion. "I shall really be very unhappy unless you give me the sort of courage that makes one forget he is afraid."

"Very well, I will give you that sort of courage tomorrow," replied Oz.

"How about my heart?" asked the Tin Woodman.

"Why, as for that," answered Oz, "I think you are wrong to want a heart. It makes most people unhappy. If you only knew it, you are in luck not to have a heart."

"That must be a matter of opinion," said the Tin Woodman. "For my part, I will bear all the unhappiness without a murmur, if you will give me the heart."

"Very well," answered Oz meekly. "Come to me tomorrow and you shall have a heart. I have played Wizard for so many years that I may as well continue the part a little longer" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 15).

De Sade Unmasked

This man, this terror who sent a Lion, a Strawman, a Tin Woodman, and a little girl to kill his neighbor, was nothing more than a scared, shriveled up ventriloquist from Omaha. He didn't see himself as a bad man, only a bad Wizard – the irony is overwhelming, because de Sade also saw himself as a victim of other's schemes (Gray, 2013). Despite his ability to build a city, to master illusion, and be the most powerful man in the world of Oz, he was undone by a little girl who wanted to return to Kansas. But it was her ability to relate to her friends that made her so dangerous to the larger system. Like Mary Parker Follett, she appeared harmless, but she was a destroyer of systems and the creator of new ones. Ultimately, she improved the lives of others, and achieved her own goals as well. Follett would indicate that integration should not come at the cost of other's wellbeing (Follett, 1919, 1957). Sadly, this integration involved killing two witches, and terrorizing an old man. Nonetheless, it showed the ability of power with systems to thrive in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

Oz seemed to control everything in his grasp, including the heterotopia that Dorothy created with her companions. But closed systems can generate more energy than they can consume (Bataille, 1993). Dorothy's companions created substantially more energy through their collaboration, which is the embodiment of integration (Follett, 1919). However, this excess

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energy frequently leads to the destruction of systems (Bataille, 1993), as depicted in Dorothy's destruction of the Wicked Witches and Oz.

Just Click Your Heels Three Times

"This is all true," said Dorothy, "and I am glad I was of use to these good friends. But now that each of them has had what he most desired, and each is happy in having a kingdom to rule besides, I think I should like to go back to Kansas."

"The Silver Shoes," said the Good Witch, "have wonderful powers. And one of the most curious things about them is that they can carry you to any place in the world in three steps, and each step will be made in the wink of an eye. All you have to do is to knock the heels together three times and command the shoes to carry you wherever you wish to go."

"If that is so," said the child joyfully, "I will ask them to carry me back to Kansas at once."

She threw her arms around the Lion's neck and kissed him, patting his big head tenderly. Then she kissed the Tin Woodman, who was weeping in a way most dangerous to his joints. But she hugged the soft, stuffed body of the Scarecrow in her arms instead of kissing his painted face, and found she was crying herself at this sorrowful parting from her loving comrades.

Glinda the Good stepped down from her ruby throne to give the little girl a good-bye kiss, and Dorothy thanked her for all the kindness she had shown to her friends and herself.

Dorothy now took Toto up solemnly in her arms, and having said one last good-bye she clapped the heels of her shoes together three times, saying:

"Take me home to Aunt Em!" (Baum, 2008, Chapter 23).

Twisted and Sick Irony of the Sadist

The above passage illustrates that Dorothy could have returned home shortly after landing in Oz and killing the Wicked Witch of the East. The supposed "good" witch was perhaps nothing more than a gatekeeper, another Sadist. Dorothy, as a constructor of a power with system, eliminated the Good Witch's rivals – both the wicked witches and the Wizard of Oz. It was now time for this dangerous little girl to return home. She had created so much power with her friends that she could possibly become even more of a threat to the system that remained. In the end, Dorothy was the ultimate narrative entrepreneur (Spinosa, 1995) – she created her own system, and in turn mastered another to achieve her aims.

Discussion and Conclusion

Despite Baum's desire to keep morals and values out of the Wizard of Oz, there is an implied message for its readers that renders this text a rich empirical setting for theorizing. This novel represented a blank slate for a comparison of different ways of understanding power and systems and how different types of entrepreneurs can construct and overcome these systems. The power over described by the Marquis de Sade, in which an individual builds heterotopias

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designed to torture, confuse, and manipulate others, is embodied in the different overlords of the Wizard of Oz. Dorothy was imprisoned in Oz with no apparent escape other than committing murder, only to have Oz leave without her and discover that the "good" witch knew the secret to her escape the entire time. The idea that the Lion had no courage, the Tin Woodman had no heart, and the Strawman had no brains was nothing more than a farce and a prison of the mind.

In spite of these obstacles, Dorothy was able to fulfill Mary Parker Follett's principles of integration and create a small power with bubble in the treacherous world of Oz. She began by listening to the stories of her companions and relating their desires to those of the other members of the group. Each contributed to the each other's quests which foreshadowed that their deficiencies were only imaginary. In a tribute to power over and integration, Dorothy toppled the most powerful figures in the world of Oz and was then told how to return home. Her companions became enriched and whole through their participation in this quest.

This article makes several contributions. First of all, through the use of metaphor, it provides a simple and elegant illustration of how power with, integration, the truth of the situation, and entrepreneurship as an act of heterotopia formation. It also illustrates the importance of creating versus maintaining systems in power with and power over, respectively. Although a more mainstream academic approach could have been applied to illustrate the dichotomy between these concepts, literature and stories simplify theory in an elegant way (Buckler and Zien, 1996; Garfinkel, 1967). The abstract nature of the *Wizard of Oz* as a discussion of power dynamics awakens the plus zone challenge in entrepreneurship (Hindle, 2007; Pelly and Fayolle, 2020) or alternatively, the Tamara-land approach (Boje, 1995). These two approaches embody post modernism because they do not claim a monopoly of interpretation, but rather allow the reader to generalize about these concepts for their own ways and reasons (Follett, 1970).

There are limitations to this article. First of all, the empirical data is based in a fictional or fantasy world, and is divorced from reality. It could be equally argued that de Sade and Follett were not writing for a children's audience, and they most likely would not have likened their theories to the Wizard of Oz. Finally, this article has focused on a very specific form of entrepreneurship that emphasizes heterotopias, and may not be applicable to other forms of new venture creation.

We would argue that these limitations may be counteracted with the power of this narrative. Even in the introduction to his work, Baum stated that stories can provide generalizability and instruction. Much like the Tamara-Land metaphor (Boje, 1995), literature can be used to theorize about a variety of settings - Walt Disney, the Land of Oz, organizational power dynamics etc. We contend that Follett and de Sade would have also appreciated the intertextuality of their works used in this article. Follett used numerous examples from literature in her speeches (Follett, 1957), and de Sade was a fabricator of stories. Both wrote to provide commentary on the wider world in which they lived.

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R. Duncan M. Pelly is the Cal Turner Endowed Chair of Business in the Department of Business at Fisk University. He received his PhD in Entrepreneurship from EM Lyon Business School. He served in the United States Army for four and a half years, attaining the rank of Captain, before beginning his doctoral studies. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania in International Relations, French, and German. His interests include entrepreneurial opportunity, the Marquis de Sade, heterotopias, autoethnography, and philosophical foundations of entrepreneurship.

David Boje is Regents Professor Emeritus at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA. According to the 2022 Edition of Research.com's Ranking of Top 1000 Scientists in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities, he ranks #1286 in United States as well as #2505 in the world. He introduced the now widely used concept of antenarrative, a prospective sensemaking (foresight) and intuitive-world (the beyond of spirit) in the field of storytelling systems research. David was Editor of the *Journal of Organizational Change Management* for 14 years, and founder and editor of *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry* for 10 years. He was Co-Founder and Board Chair for the entire 25-year life span of the Standing Conference for Management and Organization Inquiry. He was past chair of the Academy of Management Research Methods division. He also was awarded an honorary doctorate from Aalborg University in Denmark, where he is considered the "godfather" of their Material Storytelling Lab. David has published 200 conference presentations, 41 invited journal articles, 27 published books, 151 published journal articles, 102 chapters in books, 50 conference proceedings, and 20 featured news articles.

Implicit Biases and Prejudice are Malleable: Personal Change Management through Utilization of the True Storytelling Model

James R. Sibel
True Storytelling Institute

Abstract

Through the use of ethnographic narrative analysis, the cultural nature of the proliferation of racism is examined in order to introduce a change management model for an individual utilizing the principles of True Storytelling®. Racism is learned early in the life of a child bombarded with messages that create their perceptions and beliefs about others, acting to create implicit biases supported through parents, siblings, and the usual mechanisms utilized in the transfer of culture. Examination of this process through the lens of True Storytelling® permits an objective view, acknowledging and respecting the stories already there while making room for futuring to create space for restorying that is then manifested in the new future. The new story finds support in its journey through a Kierkegaardian view of a "true" self, the use of plot, timing, and effective staging, to include the use of artifacts, ultimately being actualized and sustained with an ongoing process of embodied reflection.

Keywords: True Storytelling®, implicit biases, racism, privilege, artifacts, plot, staging, timing, introspection

Introduction

What is True Storytelling®? In the book "True Storytelling – Seven Principles for an Ethical and Sustainable Change Management Strategy" the definition states that it is "a new method for studying, planning, facilitating, ensuring, implementing, and evaluating ethical and sustainable changes in companies, organizations, and societies" (Larsen et al., 2021). However, that definition of True Storytelling® (TS) does not fully describe the actual breadth of application for the TS methodology. The TS process has demonstrated an effective capacity for providing a path toward facilitating positive change in organizations and individuals. Beyond the confines of the above organizational definition, TS can be effectively applied as a template for personal growth. Utilizing the seven principles as a guide to identify and expose an issue for which a person seeks personal growth through mitigation or change while offering a path that evolves toward the desired outcome can facilitate the creation of a new set of values. It should be kept in mind that before positive change can be instilled in a group, organization, or a society, it must start with an individual and expand outward. With a steadfast commitment to change, applying the TS methodology to seek positive change on a personal level to characteristics like racism, misogyny, or sexism, can yield a greatly beneficial outcome.

True Storytelling on an Individual Level

Are you a racist? How would you even know whether you are? In some cases, those around you might provide you with the necessary feedback to acknowledge that realization, particularly if you are involved

in an occupation with a diverse workforce or profession that requires you to interact with people in other parts of the country or world – those outside your normal geographic comfort zone. However, in the United States, many people live, work, and die within a few miles of their birthplaces (Figure 1). A little more than a decade ago, in the Midwestern United States, 46% of adult residents said that they have spent their entire lives in one community; nationwide, 37% have lived in the same town their entire
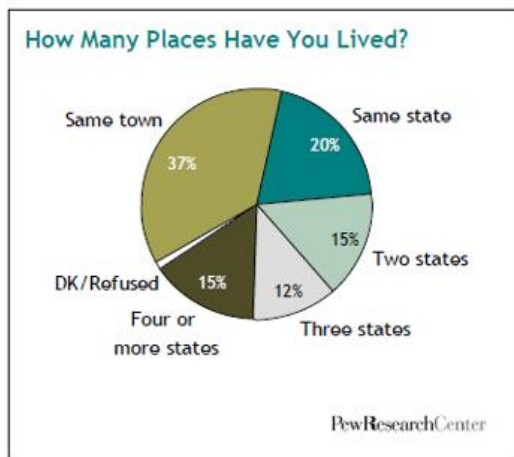
Figure 1. Frequency of Mobility

lives and 57% have not lived outside their current home state (Cohn & Morin, 2008). Those statistics show us that nearly four of every 10 adults have lived in one community throughout their entire lives and that community likely generated many of their values, beliefs, and biases. If a person remains in the same community where they grew up, one which often fosters a clearly defined common belief system and the inherent characteristics, one of which could be racism, the opportunity to interact outside of those biases—the biases generated during their youth—rarely occurs. In the case racism, that behavior has been normalized within the community that aided in the creation of it and may be continually reinforced through various biases, including but not limited to confirmation bias – much like living on an island with a single

unchallenged common belief system, commonly termed living or being in a bubble (Figure 2). However, with the changing demographics of the United States, the life of a person exhibiting racist behaviors may be increasingly negatively impacted. The first step is acknowledging a new reality outside the bubble that demands the need for change; the next step is how to accomplish that change and sustain the energy and effort needed to support it.

Figure 2. Pictographic Display of Being "In a Bubble"

Adopting a TS change management approach and using it as a template has the ability to work successfully in this application. For example, presume a racist person, having lived in a small mid-western community their life, starts a new job for a large company with a diverse workforce in a cosmopolitan city on the east coast. Having quickly been characterized by colleagues as racist, they may quickly find themself spending a lot of time in the HR department with mandated diversity training. Now imagine, in a sincere effort to change this behavior rather than feint a temporary compliance, they begin with an examination of how intensely personal the characteristic of racism is and how deeply it has embedded in their psyche. That is the potential power of the TS methodology. Here is where the TS principles can provide a process for positive change.

It begins with a deeper understanding of *"who am I -what is my story?"* Consider how your racist beliefs were created? In many nations around the

world, particularly the United States, **"race"**[1] relations have continued to deteriorate concurrently with an increased growth of populist movements. Many of the members of these groups espousing support for a populist agenda have been motivated by the increase in immigration caused by conflicts, natural disasters, and politically disruptive forces. Consider Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and Latin America, among other geographies from which millions of refugees fled to host countries to permanently relocate. Some of these refugees arrive to an openly racist reception by citizens espousing populist or nationalist ideals. The discord and clashing of the existing culture with that of new arrivals has often served as the catalyst for demonstrations, riots, and murderous acts of violence around the world. Far too frequently, examples are reported, such as the assassin Anders Breivik in Norway convicted of bombing the office of the prime minister and shooting sixty-nine young adults (OGrady, 2018) or the domestic terrorist in San Antonio committing the mass execution of twenty-three people (appearing to be Hispanic or Mexican immigrants) at a Wal-Mart (Satija, 2017). Unfortunately, there are abundant examples of terrorism directed toward those fitting the description of "outsiders." Racism is not a new phenomenon or a shameful part of our human past – it has existed and actively proliferated in all times when given the opportunity and circumstances to do so (Balibar, 2007). Consider, for a moment, the disparity of treatment between the immigrants fleeing war from Ukraine and those from Syria. Certainly, there are many factors involved, but this does provide a very visual example of what could be viewed as an underlying racist culture in the West and the flexibility or rigidity of

immigration policy based on attitudes toward immigrants and the countries from which they arrive (Fussell, 2014)

In the case of the United States, where do openly racist and hostile feelings among some Americans emanate from?

Figure 3. The 'Thin Blue Line' Flag

There is considerable amounts of academic literature placing responsibility and validating the creation of implicit and explicit biases through the Eurocentric structure of education from primary through university toward a nearly exclusive focus on Eurocentrism (Chang, 2020). This version supports the teachings that "White European" culture is responsible for the great achievements of the United States, while excising the contributions made by people of color (Baker, 2012). Couple this with numerous historical principles that either overtly or inadvertently continue to promote racism, such as Manifest Destiny (and its ethos of White supremacy) (Stephanson, 1995), the "one drop rule" classifying someone ever having had a black ancestor in their lineage as being black and legislatively mandating hypodescent of children into subordinate groups (Miller, 2010). Such things served to create and reinforce existing biases and many continue to propagate in contemporary society both

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[1] The term "race" is a misnomer; there is only one "race" of humans, that of Homo Sapiens. Categorizing humans into racial divisions is a social construct not a biological one. However, the word "race" will be used in the social construct sense throughout this paper.

through covert 'dog whistle'[2] messaging like the counter response to BLM with ALM[3], creation of the "thin blue line" flag (Smith, 2023)[4] or overt 'Jews will not replace us' chants heard at White supremacist rallies such as those held in Charlottesville in 2017 (Lee, 2020). In addition, recent politics appear to have supercharged those with racist attitudes to a point of nearly legitimizing these beliefs among certain political groups. Regardless, a child is not born a racist. Where does racism get its foothold in the mind of a person so as to create the attitudes expressed later throughout life? What is the story behind it all?

Who are you? What is your Story?

The following is an excerpt from an ethnographic narrative "Beyond Culture - Social Exclusion Dynamics in the Lived Experience of Long-Term Mexican Residents of the United States" (Sibel, 2019). It describes how, in part, a child evolved into what is described in contemporary terms as – a racist.

> From the beginning, I did not know I was White . . . I did not know it could be otherwise, or that there was anything else to be, other than the way it was. In my world, everyone was White. Parents, grandparents, cousins, neighbors, teachers, school friends, the entire cast of characters in all the early morning children's television shows . . . The entire church congregation . . . was White. On Sunday, I would sit on the same

stone hard wooden church pews that my ancestors had sat on, listening to what seemed like an endless monotone lecture given by a diminutive White pastor. Generations of my relatives were buried in the churchyard along with soldiers from the revolutionary war. After church and during Sunday school, I would learn about Jesus. His blue-eyed picture was on the wall, and He was White with flowing shoulder-length blonde hair. I presumed God was White too; He had to be . . . My entire world was populated by White Protestants . . . In school, we studied history, science, math, and English. Everything was about White men who did amazing things. The order of the world was clear where White men were responsible for accomplishing everything. I would grow up to be a White man . . .that was 1964. Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965 and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968. Race riots were always in the news and cities burned on the television screen . . . the Black Panthers became an active extremist militant group. On the television news, rioting Black people were burning the cities. During what became known as *The Long, Hot Summer of 1967*, 159 race riots occurred throughout different cities in the United States and all appeared in dramatically edited excerpts on

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[2] A subtly aimed political message (code words) which is intended for and may only be understood by a particular group. The target group hears the whistle because of their common cultural reference, others often do not hear it.

[3] Black Lives Matter (BLM) – All Lives Matter (ALM) – All Lives Matter was introduced by the Alt-Right as a counter to BLM

[4] Thin Blue Line – is a term for the police, suggesting that they stand between "an ordered society and potential chaos" and for many also a symbol of opposition to the racial justice movement and a symbol of white supremacy.

the black-and-white nightly news television broadcasts (McLaughlin, 2014). Everything was changing very rapidly; nothing was static. It was a White world, and it was going in every direction. White men were keeping order and Black men were burning, rioting, looting, and creating chaos. That was the visual message seen on the television and overheard in adult conversations. To me, none of it made any sense. My parents were upset by it. My teachers were upset by it. When I asked about these things, I was told that the "n…… are burning down our cities and destroying our country." I understood that these problems were being caused by all those people on television who were making all that trouble, burning cities, looting, rioting. The people on television were Black, Black people were destroying our country. Everything that was going wrong was because of these people – these Black people. The evils that they were committing needed to be stopped. . . ." (Sibel, 2019).

There is much in the preceding "story" that could be viewed as offensive and a catalyst for creating a very emotional response from the reader – particularly when it is contrary to the reader's story. However, an individual's story is personal, unique within the universe – it is not "right" and it is not "wrong,"- it simply "is" – and there is none other exactly like it. When related in pure form, while it may elicit reaction, that reaction can only occur through a comparison to another's story. A story without "judgement" cannot be anything but itself; to "judge" the story of another requires comparison to their story, or their value system. Using the above story as an example, read it and refrain from making a

comparison to your own; do not judge it – view it in its pure form.

Deep Nonjudgmental Listening to the Story

The afore-told story is not about malevolent parents and a group of coconspirators attempting to perpetrate crimes against society by indoctrinating their children in an attempt to perpetuate racist attitudes. What it exemplifies is how culture is transferred from a parent to a child and within a group. Certainly, the two would not be conflated, but there are identifiable similarities between this process of transferring racist culture and beliefs and that of transferring other dogma such as religious beliefs from one generation to the next. Culture is broadly defined as a learned behavior of a group of people which reflect the beliefs, behaviors, and traditions of those people and is transferred generationally through social learning, verbally, nonverbally and through norms of interactions with one another (Sorokin, 2010). Culture is a living thing – those living now bear the culture received from previous generations while simultaneously acting as the generators of cultural adaptations into the future, thus it is often self-perpetuating unless the beliefs evolve to present a danger to the individual or larger group as a whole (Suen, 2004).

This paper is about how to apply the process of TS change management to an individual who exhibits racism as a personality trait and earnestly desires to change as it is limiting their success and happiness in life in an evolving society where racism is becoming increasingly identified as unacceptable. This person seeks a "new future story' that provides for a more fulfilled and loving life void of embedded implicit biases that lead to racist beliefs.

Begin with an understanding that, to some degree or another, we are all products

of our environments, and every one of us has biases that affect the way we conduct our lives and interact with others. Some are obvious and others are more difficult to identify. According to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University, implicit bias refers to the:

> attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection. The implicit associations we harbor in our subconscious cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. In addition to early life experiences, the media and news programming are often-cited origins of implicit associations. (Ohio State Univ., 2015, para. 1) (Kirwan, 2021)

Implicit biases exist in everyone; they are reflected in our actions regardless of any conscious effort made to cleanse them from our psyche. Often, these biases do not align with our professed beliefs and frequently favor our own tribal beliefs. However, the Ohio State University Kirwan Institute research study has also demonstrated that these biases are "malleable" and can be unlearned over time (Kirwan, 2021). You have just read how a young child, through explicit cultural images and messaging created in his subconscious mind racial biases. This cultural programming, coupled with implicit messaging, created a racist. It was further reinforced though other often common mechanisms such as confirmation bias where an individual seeks out validation of their own already founded beliefs and opinions (frequently surrounding themselves with those of similar values and beliefs, thereby presuming that everyone, everywhere has the same beliefs) and upon finding another with similar beliefs "confirms" validity, thus remaining "in the bubble." The question arises, how are those views changed over time? Can they be changed? The first step is for the individual to recognize and acknowledge they exist. The second step is an earnest intention and desire to change by that individual, and the final step is to act.

The process of TS, based on the seven principles, can be utilized in many forms. Its effectiveness in not confined to utilization for organizational change. It can be applied to nearly every issue where positive change is desired, whether as an individual, a couple, or in a group, an organization, or even a setting as large as a country. By way the aforementioned example, imagine that newly relocated employee spending too much time in HR-mandated Diversity training. Begin with a very deep introspective examination of Principle 1 – who has this child grown into as an adult? How do they interact with society and how dramatically does the issue of racism affect them and their interpersonal interactions with others? Start the process with Principle 1.

Principle 1: Be True – Who is the "True" You?

Understanding what it means to be "true" is the fundamental foundation upon which you will build the TS process. It will require time, effort, honesty, and an environment where safe space exists to allow levels of vulnerability probably well beyond your normal threshold of comfort. The deeper you go with your introspective examination of Principle 1, the more meaningful and sustainable the outcome that emerges will be. Begin with introspective reflection, coupled with objective analysis, as follows.

Who are you – really? In the silence of your mind, in deep reflection, reach inside your soul and describe yourself as though speaking to your Creator. Who is the "true" you? Do you self-identify as a *just* person, an *honest* person, a *moral* person? Do you steal, cheat, lie, or commit unethical acts - ever? If you do, why, when, under what circumstances? How do you feel when you do such things? What kind of a life do you "truly" live? Is there a higher meaning in your life? Are you living the life you are capable of when reaching your full potential? Be particularly aware of self-equivocation or delusion of mind or character when making these inquiries. Go deep into your belief system, examining whether there is space for considering whether certain beliefs are founded in self-deception – doxastic or based on biased treatment of evidence (Bortolotti & Mameli, 2012) and how much your life is affected by them. The following are principal questions necessary to consider in this exercise.

What is morality? Are you moral?[5] Is it a convenient "some of the time" morality?

There is no "conditional morality" for a moral person; does a "true" life permit picking and choosing the circumstances in which morality can be applied?

What is ethical? Are ethics conditional or in all circumstances? Are there certain times when you act "less" ethically than others? If you are treated unethically, do you reciprocate or do you remain "true" to ethical standards? Do you make ethical distinctions between your business life and your personal life? Is "it's business" an excuse for acting unethically?

Are you honest? Are you "truly" honest? Or are you conditionally honest when it is convenient? Are all those with whom you interact treated with the same level of "true" honesty, in all circumstances, all the time?

Are you kind? Do you treat people with kindness and respect regardless of circumstances? Is your kindness only applicable when linked to previous or anticipated reciprocity or to "certain kinds" of people?

Are you truthful? How do you define truth? Do you speak truth - all the time? Are you truthful to some but not others? If so, why? Under what circumstances?

Can you apply these questions and answers to your interactions with all people? Or are your morality, ethics, honesty, kindness, and truth only reserved for certain people at certain times under certain circumstances?

Discussion of Principle 1

Presuming your introspection allows a continuing objective journey, examine the raw, vulnerable, and deeply introspective

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[5] Is it possible for a racist to be a moral person? Is morality culturally relative? Is the Creator's love disparate – loving one "race" of humans more than

another? Judge these questions against an introspective examination of your beliefs.

conversation you are having with your soul and Creator. Consider whether it is possible to be a moral, ethical, honest, kind, racist – hating someone for the color of their skin, their beliefs, or faith. Go deep into the question – who is the "true" you? Spend whatever time necessary in the reflection to identify the biases. Peel away the layers, the bravado, the armored protective shell, to arrive at a description of your ideal self – who are you when your soul speaks? Who is the person – the "true" you? Is the core value of your soul loving? Is there a place for racism in a true loving soul? That reflection will arrive at an outcome.

Principle 2: Make Room for and Respect the Stories Already There

Early in the article, you have read a portion of the ethnographic narrative that served to guide a child into becoming a racist. However, there are countless other stories comprising the *being* living within (already there) that makes each person into who they are - the deeply embedded foundational stories, not just the superficial ones. Think about what tapestry of stories comprise the *before* that served to cause an effect on the *present*? Also consider that the stories already there are in a dynamic state, with the ability to continually morph as they permeate through time affecting the now and the future while restorying the past. Excellent examples of how stories already there are dynamic, moving backward through time to restory the present and future, are the reports of genetic profiles (such as those done with *23 and me* or *ancestors.com*) that provide irrefutable science-based facts that may conflict and disrupt the accepted present story inevitably creating new present stories in the now, as the past is restoried and new futures are created.

Imagine for a moment that you grew up in a part of the rural deep South of the United States, for example in Alabama or Mississippi, 158 years after it ended, you would have grown up with the shadow of the civil war still alive around you. To this day, among many aged rural Southerners, the term "damn-Yankee" is a single nonhyphenated word. In 2023, the *story* of the Civil War still remains alive and affects daily interactions among people. It is the *story already there.* With active listening, you are not expected to agree or disagree with the story, simply to acknowledge that it has a valid existence (remember that individual's story is not "right" or "wrong" – it simply "is" their story) within the "web of being" of a person's past. Similar stories of other lands in other times are equally representative of how such things permeate the psyche as they travel generationally through time, whether the result of military conflict or institutionalized government sanctioned acts – the Sami in Nordic Arctic regions (Hanse & Sorlie, 2012), the Uyghurs in China (Rayila, 2011), Armenians in Turkey (Dadrian, 2004), Amazigh in
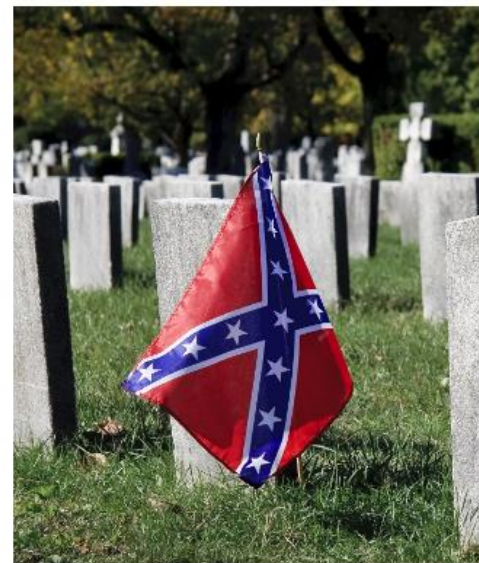
Figure 4. Pictographic Depiction of Confederate Flag

Morocco, and certainly many others all over the world having had enslaved ancestors. To acknowledge the quantum nature of stories within the spacetime-mattering paradigm is

to understand that a story never truly disappears – it evolves through time. *The story already there* must be respected and room in the change management effort must be made while simultaneously remaining cognizant of their power within the psyche and their dynamic nature of change through time.

Discussion of Principle 2

Respect the *stories already there*, not in judgement or criticism. Imagine how your message would be received if you critically judged the existing story and responded: "how could you believe such stupidity?" "The idea that one 'race' of humans being superior to another because of skin color – how could an intelligent person truly believe such nonsense?" The dialogue between you and the other person from whom you heard the story would probably immediately and completely shut down. Any hope of interactive dialog or communication would likely end. We must acknowledge that these interwoven stories are the fabric which represent the *being* of a person. Along the way, remain keenly aware of the goal of the process – futuring a new story which has shed the fog of racism and moved into a new story – a restorying. Allow the process to move fluidly through the principles, each one firmly supporting the next, building upon one another in much the same way as you would open a door and welcome someone to enter. As you progress, moving through the principles, picture yourself as opening a series of doors providing entrance when ready, and voluntarily willing, to enter with recognition and process of thought.

Principle 3: Create a Clear New Plot with Direction and Prioritization of Actions

An understanding of how the present may be viewed within the framework of a "plot" can be helpful in defining where you are in the world within and without. Are you able to identify a plot at play? Have you been an actor in a larger drama that is self-perpetuating without your own conscious awareness of it? Are you benefitting by being a participant in this drama or is it having a negative effect on your life? If it is negative, how do you change the existing plot to serve your own higher aspirations and destiny to become a "true" person? Has being a racist served you or have you served it? Are you moving a plot forward that benefits others while diminishing your own growth or are you growing and benefiting concurrently with your plot? Are there definable benefits to being a racist – conversely, are there definable benefits to excising racism from your being and from the world? In your *ideal* self, which would you prefer – a racist or a non-racist? Which would link with the introspective journey in Principle 1?

Discussion of Principle 3

Implementing positive personal change is equally as much about breaking the many patterns of the past as it is committing to a new mindset and course of action – create a clear new plot which guides and directs new thoughts and actions toward arriving at the new story – the place where you want to be. Plan your new future. Identify the people you will involve, and

Figure 5. Pictorial Representation of Conception of Racism as a Disease

those whom you will not involve. Part of changing the plot may involve changing the actors. Are those with whom you have historically associated going to assist and guide you into the new plot or continue to involve you in maintaining the status quo? It is highly likely that you may begin to realize that the key to changing the plot and arriving at the desired outcome may also include changing those with whom you spend time. Associate with people who will help you move the new plot forward – that may mean creating new friendships and allowing the old ones to become part of the past.

Principle 4: Timing

When is the time right? With most things, there is an optimal time and a less than optimal time to start a project, promote an idea, or accomplish a task. Is there a right time or wrong time to make the change from being a racist in your life? If you have introspectively arrived at the conclusion that racism has no positive place in your life, the right time is the present. But is the timing right for those around you? What is the first step toward making your new reality – the next step, and so on. If the timing feels right, begin to have conversations with those around your new wider circle of friends and keep expanding outward. If you are part of a change management effort for another, realize that "the right time" must be determined by them. To compel someone through manipulation or a sense of urgency that they do not acknowledge will likely result in less than optimum or unsustainable results. The time is right when the time is right – when the head and the heart reach an aligned intersection concurring that change is necessary; then, the timing is right.

Discussion of Principle 4

The primary challenge in making positive changes in our lives is often the difficulty. It requires immense effort and ongoing commitment. It is far easier and simpler to say, "the timing isn't right." But, conditioning ourselves with a disempowering perspective like "the timing isn't right" removes any motivation to move forward by excusing the failure to act proactively toward achieving the goal. The right time to start the path toward enacting change is when the reality of your racism becomes an awareness and you have recognized racism as being a negative factor in your life, a barrier standing in the way of achieving the personal growth or professional goals you desire and know you are capable of achieving to be your "true" self – aligning the head and heart.

Principle 5: Help the New Story Along

Helping the new story along is about building upon incremental successes and continually moving the new story forward through both conscious effort and dedicated focus toward achieving the goal. It is about keeping your "head in the game" and not allowing yourself to get thrown off track by hecklers, sabotage, or rudeness from others. It is about understanding the difficulty of deprogramming your biases and acknowledging that should you occasionally falter, dust off and re-engage immediately. There will continue to be those around you who will be uncomfortable with your change in attitude or apparent rejection of what had been the tribal view of the world. As much as possible, endeavor to avoid those who might pull you back into the old mindset. Keep building alliances with those able to draw you closer to your aspired goal. Helping the new story along requires envisioning the ultimate goal all the time – keeping your eye on the prize and continually strengthening your resolve to move forward into the new *being* you have identified as your *true* self.

Discussion of Principle 5

According to a January 2020 poll of 2,000 Americans (Gervis, 2020), it takes 32 days for the average person to break their New Year's resolution with 68% reporting abandoning resolutions before the 32 days. Why is that? What causes people to give up on actions that they themselves acknowledged as a path toward positive change in their lives? Have you ever successfully instilled a New Year's resolution into your daily life over the long term and continued with it into the present? If so, why were you successful? If your resolution faded into abandonment, why did you let it go? The poll indicates that two in five people consider societal- and peer-pressure as a principal reason their commitments to change fail. But the primary reason given was "lack of discipline." It is extremely difficult to change a characteristic that is embedded in your subconscious mind – it takes total commitment, all the time. The subconscious may resist change and defend itself at every opportunity trying to maintain the status quo [known as the 'status quo bias'] (Kahneman et al., 1991). One way to aid in maintaining that commitment is to enlist the help of others who will provide support to you in your efforts and hold you accountable. Another way of helping the new story along is by framing it in a positive light. Rather than *ceasing racist behavior*, frame it as *expressing kindness, love, and tolerance, to everyone in a non-judgmental way*. Begin to imagine how it feels to live that life as it increasingly becomes a reality, day by day.

Principle 6: Staging is Critical, Utilizing Artifacts and Scenography

Previously discussed under Principle 2 and 3 were the profound effects that can be caused or supported by staging and the use of artifacts. The confederate flag (Figure 4) and the Thin Blue Line (Figure 3) are excellent examples. Words are not required to tell the past story represented by the flags, particularly the Confederate flag – but it is not a single story anchored in the past; there are multiplicities of stories from the past represented in that flag, in a constant state of dynamic interconnectedness, moving through time into the "now" and the countless multiplicities of futures yet to be. The present is equally represented when seeing the confederate flag as a contemporary artifact. For some, it represents the proud history of the Southern "Confederate States of America" while simultaneously representing to others the lasting injustice of systemic racism, serving to sustain the hatred and suffering of the past into the future. That is the power of an artifact – in this case, an artifact having the ability to represent a broad spectrum of thought that transcends time and space. Figure 5 is a representative of staging that intersects both Principle 6 with Principle 4, exhibiting how opportune timing for artifacts may occur naturally, such as the intersection of the stories of the COVID -19 Pandemic and the Racial unrest co-occurring in 2020.

What is the benefit of staging through the use of artifacts? Staging is a way to move from abstracting ideas into grounding those ideas into the 'living story web' – it allows retrospective rehistorizing to evolve into prospective sensemaking to become futuring (Larsen, Boje, & Bruun, 2021). With futuring, you build and manifest what it is you are trying to achieve or create and support that journey through the use of effective staging, which includes the use of artifacts. Contemporary examples of the use of effective staging through artifacts are everywhere – the Pride Flag and colors (Figure 6) have become universally recognizable symbols used by individuals, groups, and organizations to represent the spectrum of human sexuality and gender; it

simultaneously represents the past, the present, and a possibility of futures; it has evolved through time to become more inclusive than when originally created in 1978 by Harvey Milk and Gilbert Baker. (GLBT, 2021). In 2016, the world was witness to the power of a truly effective artifact and the power demonstrated by it was considerable. The red MAGA hats used during the 2016 presidential campaign were highly effective in building "the new story" which eventually became a movement and a major force in American politics. Staging can be used positively or negatively, and can be powerful in either direction. It can be a pivotal principle for driving change.

Specifically, focusing on futurizing the evolution of a person into a non-racist, personal staging (including artifacts) could

Figure 6. Representation of Pride Flag as an Artifact

serve to effectively create and support a mindset into the new future.

Discussion of Principle 6

Start with the understanding that to move away from business as usual (the status quo) a new *usual* needs to be created. With whom do you "usually" interact? Examine your friends, associates, colleagues behaviors and call out racist jokes or dog-whistles when you hear them. Recognize and deeply examine your own personal privilege that is related to gender, race,

language, or citizenship. Identify your biases and root out their source to aid in futurizing a life without them. Consider that beyond racism, all forms of injustice are interconnected. Consider whether you can remove racism from your life while continuing to participate or tolerate other forms of injustice such as sexism, misogyny, or homophobia. Are not all interconnected?

Principle 7: Reflection

As explained in Principle 1 above, many of our patterns of behavior and habits were programmed long ago into our self-conscious minds and control behavioral operations throughout our lives on an *automatic pilot*-like mode causing us to take actions or make decisions that may or may not be in our self-interest or the best interest of others with whom we interact. How do we access that sub-conscious programming to examine whether it is in our best interest? Refection is one of the best methods toward arriving at the answer. Reflection is the self "examination, contemplation, and analysis of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions" (APA, 2021). Communicate internally with yourself and communicate openly and honestly with others *outside your comfort zone* so as to acquire objective input which you can then contemplate through Principle 1 and incorporate into the personal change management. Stepping outside the zone of comfort will provide valuable input, may create questions, and can prompt neuroplasticity.

Discussion of Principle 7

Reflection is a never-ending process. Internally communicating with yourself to gain deeper insights and develop a better sense of self-awareness, aiding in assessing the consequences of the affect your actions have on others (Farthing, 1992). Effective use of reflection requires a quieting of the mind that permits focusing on the matter

that is being examined (Long, 2020). Try to think of a time when you made a racist or other bigoted comment or acted in a prejudicial way that caused visible direct hurt or harm to a person you were interacting with. How did that experience make you feel? How did it make that person feel? What caused you to act that way? How can you change those subconscious mechanisms and reprogram them to align with your new story? Go back to the most distant memory relating to those subconscious thoughts on racism. Where did they come from and why did you act the way you did? Were you in control or were you being directed to act in a certain way by some little understood force? Take those memories and restory them. Put your new story in place and imagine what it would be like to love and respect all people regardless of their background. How would that feel? This is your new story – build on it.

Conclusion

For change management to be effectively implemented, over the long term, in this age of changing demographics and generational dynamics, it needs to affect participants equally through both their minds and their hearts. It must serve to satisfy the needs of the organizational balance sheet while providing equally for the professional and psychological needs of the management and labor community. Short term solutions are simple and often discarded when too complicated, or effectiveness becomes too difficult to measure, with the vision of the outcome getting lost in fog. For long term change management to be effective, whether for an organization or an individual, there needs to be a clear path from the existing story (one requiring change) to the futured story; it needs to provide for clearly understood steps progressing incrementally toward the desired outcome. Each step must direct effective new actions which both consolidate and strengthen the previous steps while progressing toward the ultimate goal. And, most importantly, it needs to create lasting change – change that continues to grow dynamically forward as the future unfolds. It needs to be a change that is flexible enough to accommodate the unpredictability of the unknown future. By building on the solid foundation of truth and respect, the TS change management methodology (Figure 7) effectively provides that model.

Figure 7. Diagrammatic Representation of the 7 Principles of True Storytelling

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Dr. James R. Sibel is currently active in both the commercial business world and as a scholar practitioner of organization development and change (ODC). Current positions are those of CFO of a multi-national data technology company and CEO of a privately held financial services company, with over 40 years' experience in various elected, appointed, and advanced leadership functions, holding licensure and certifications in numerous states throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. Sibel holds an MA in Law and a PhD in ODC and is a founding member of both the Institute of Interdisciplinary Leadership Education and Development (I-ILEAD) and the True Storytelling Institute (TSI) serving on the Board of Directors of numerous industry-leading organizations. Sibel is an author, speaker, and lecturer, having traveled throughout the United States and Europe presenting at professional conferences and seminars on Corporate Social Responsibility, Team Building, Leadership, and the Power of True Storytelling® to create positive organizational, social, and personal change.

Together-telling: The 7 Principles of Storytelling, A Co-created Approach for Teaching Leadership for Sustainability in Higher Education

Hope Witmer

Center for Worklife Evaluation Studies (CTA), Department of Urban Studies, Malmö

Eva Ritter

Institute Nordic Perspectives, Flensburg, Germany

Abstract

This article argues that sustainability courses in business administration programs are typically based upon a philosophy that does not consider the entangled relationship of humans with all living beings. As an alternative, a different approach is suggested that provides the way for non-linear solutions and collaborative meaning making. As an example, a one-year master's program in leadership and organization for sustainability was framed around stories and storytelling with a focus on the process of *together-telling* and the co-creation of stories. The teaching concepts use the *7 Principles of True Storytelling*, an approach that aims at encouraging sustainable changes in teams or organizations. It is based on the understanding of the interdependence of the human experience with connections to nature. The teaching process of the masters program is described in four phases consisting of (a) the individual story, (b) the collective cohort story, (c) the development of "storying" moments, and (d) the carrying of story into the world. The example illustrates how learning activities structured around storytelling can facilitate individual and co-creative moments, thereby creating momentum for sustainable transformation.

Keywords: Storytelling, Together-telling, 7 Prínciples of Storytelling, Sustainability Leadership, Sustainability Education

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Introduction

Storytelling in Higher Education

Stories have long been recognized by leaders and educators as an important means for sharing a vision or communicating a compelling message (Gabriel & Connell, 2010). More recently, stories have resurfaced as a feature of critical management pedagogy for teaching sustainability and organizational leadership development (Heizmann & Liu, 2018; Jørgensen, 2022; Mohlthan-Hill et al., 2020; Shufutinsky, 2019). Depending on content, audience, and educational goals, storytelling has been shown to provide engaging information, including reflections about values, social norms, and the consequences of decisions among students (Molthan-Hill et al., 2020). Storytelling can encourage learners to utilize the information presented in the learning process, thereby enabling them to make decisions and act accordingly in future situations (De Young & Monroe, 1996).

Although storytelling has gained increased attention in higher education, the method of storytelling for teaching sustainability is still in the exploratory

stages. In business administration and management courses, storytelling has traditionally been "packaged" as a part of marketing with the purchasing consumer as the target and sustainability as an add-on bonus. Teaching sustainability in business administration units tends to be based on integrating concepts of CSR where profit almost always comes first, people second, and planet third (Jørgensen and Boje, 2020). It is based upon a philosophy embedded in a consumption mentality with "man" as the central figure and hero of the story (e.g., Fischer et al., 2021), rather than acknowledging the context of humans entangled relationship with all living beings (Greenhalgh-Spencer, 2018; Haraway, 2016; Latour 2018; Roslie et al., 2018) with few exceptions (see Jørgensen and Boje, 2020 and Voss, 2019 for examples in higher education).

The traditional philosophical underpinning, and in turn teaching, oversimplifies the entanglement of multiple actors and stakeholders, thereby reinforcing simple, linear solutions. This understanding of sustainability often does not provide opportunities for students to sit with the complexity of issues such as equity, giving voice to the voiceless, and considering their own positioning within multiple and often competing sustainability discourses (Jørgensen, 2022; Laine, 2010; Lozano et al., 2022; Riedy, 2020). It is in this context where storytelling is introduced. Through stories, the experiences of one person become a shared experience. Storytelling helps to create an understanding of being a part of a network of individuals rather than a separate disconnected being (Breithaupt, 2022, p.10; Gabriel & Connell, 2010; Nita, 2020).

The point of departure for this paper is the presentation of storytelling as a pedagogical frame for teaching leadership and organization for sustainability in a business administration unit. It brings together critical management pedagogy and organizational storytelling for

leadership development as an iterative developmental teaching process (Gabriel 2010; Jorgensen & Boje, 2020; Shufutinsky, 2019). A process that considers theories, experiences, and entanglements with all species (Haraway, 2016; Latour, 2018). The aim is to equip aspiring sustainability leaders with the capacity and skills to reflect on their own sense-making processes through story and to learn how to co-create stories for the purpose of imagining and creating a better future. The examples presented in this article illustrate the possible design and practice of teaching sustainability as a process organized around the *7 Principles of True Storytelling* (Larsen et al., 2021). This approach has been chosen because True Storytelling incorporates many of the aforementioned aspects while offering a philosophical foundation for structuring a teaching-and-learning process for sustainability.

Interrogatory and Exploration

True Storytelling and the Design and Practice of Teaching Sustainability

There are multiple ways of working with storytelling for sustainability in higher education, including (a) film clips, (b) telling stories to envision new futures, (c) storytelling in problem-based learning, and (d) storytelling to highlight the spiritual connection between humans, earth, and the cosmos (Johnson et al. 2020, Jørgensen & Boje, 2020; Riedy, 2020; Voss, 2019). We have decided to work with the approach of True Storytelling as the grounding principles that frames an educational process. True storytelling is based on internal reflection and awareness of context with the aim of sustainable change. Based on the *7 True Storytelling Principles*, storytelling is used in a dialogic way to co-create stories that bring about mindset and societal changes for sustainability while considering the resources of the earth, wellbeing, and the

economy (Larsen et al., 2021). This perspective is in line with emerging sustainability discourses based on understanding the earth as a complex system and web of relations, an entangled shared living and dying that highlights the interdependence of the human experience with connections to nature (Gibbons, 2020; Haraway, 2016; Jørgensen, 2022). As a differentiation between other types of storytelling, "true" storytelling is defined as making ethical and sustainable decisions that considers the interconnectedness and the inseparability of humans and nature. This contrasts with "fake" storytelling which entails spinning the facts, usually for PR or marketing purposes, to give the impression of being sustainable while policies, practices, and actions are not aligned with what is purported (Jørgensen & Boje, 2020). Such is a condition related to Capitalism and the accompanying Western needs and values that has been criticized for dominating Education for Sustainability Development (ESD) (Latour, 2018; Malone et al., 2017; Naess, 1986; Wright & Nyberg, 2015).

In contrast, "true" sustainability leaders, as in-line with True Storytelling, should strive for cultivating the understanding of shared response-ability that enables a "collective knowing and acting" (Haraway 2016, p. 34; Rosile et.al., 2018) of members of a group for shaping a sustainable future. The co-creation of stories becomes a form of *together-telling*. It plays an important role in True Storytelling by initiating processes that rely on mutuality, respect, and dynamic interactions. This collaborative process explores multiple connections and relationships with less of a focus on one end goal, but more of a reliance on entangled process (Gibbons, 2021; Greenhalgh-Spencer, 2018). It establishes conditions for a regenerative process that moves a group of people towards individual and transformational change (Gibbons, 2021; Voss, 2020).

The 7 Principles of True Storytelling

The True Storytelling approach works with the following 7 Principles that describe a process of thinking, reflecting, and acting with the aim of encouraging sustainable changes in a team or organization. The following are the 7 Principles.

Principle 1. You yourself must be true and prepare the energy and effort for a sustainable future.

- **Principle 2.** Make space that respects the stories that already exist.
- **Principle 3.** Stories must be created with a clear plot, creating direction, and helping people prioritize.
- **Principle 4.** Timing is crucial.
- **Principle 5.** You must be able to help stories on their way and be open to experiment.
- **Principle 6.** You must consider staging, including scenography and artefacts.
- **Principle 7.** You must reflect on the stories and how they create value (Larsen et al., 2020).

The order of the 7 Principles can be adapted to each individual case. However, Principle 1 is the basis for every project or strategy and Principle 5 is the core of the change process. Principle 1 starts the process with becoming aware of one's personal motivation, values, and stories, and continues with listening to each other and sharing stories in the group. Through the co-creation process in the group, both the energy generated and the values established become the grounding for future decisions (Larsen et al., 2020).

Principle 2 highlights the knowledge, activities, and partnerships that are already present. This principle includes respecting existing stories that are helpful and supportive of sustainability while concurrently making space for new stories.

What follows (Principle 3 and 4) is creating and communicating a clear plot that identifies why the change is necessary. This creates clarity of direction, including understanding how people individually and collectively can contribute to a change for sustainability. It helps identify the right timing, including (a) when different steps should be arrived at, (b) preconditions that need to be met, and (c) when it is important not to act but just to wait.

Principle 5 is the core of the whole change-making process. It is closely connected to the process of *together-telling*, because implementation will only happen by commitment and when the process stays flexible enough to adjust to the stories that are emerging in the present, e.g., stories that come from people's everyday lives and relational encounters *(*Boje 2008; Jørgensen & Boje, 2010; Larsen et al., 2020; Rosile et al., 2018). To complete the work with change management and development, the project has to be made visible (Principle 6). Finally, there needs to be an intentional reflection process on the value of the project in the broader context (Larsen et al., 2021).

Storytelling for Sustainability – Bringing Together Truth and Story

In higher education, some students enter with grand stories and no substance and others with solid substance but no sense of story. The question emerges: How do they *together-tell* the story of a shared concern, an urgent crisis; how do they tell their individual and collective stories with potential for influencing the meta-narratives for sustainability?

Teaching Sustainability as Organized Around Storytelling

In the following example, the frame of story is used to view the meta-process of learning that occurs throughout the one-year master's program in leadership and

organization for sustainability. The process will be outlined in four phases, consisting of (a) the individual story, (b) the collective cohort story (c) the development of "storying" moments, and (d) the carrying of story into the world. These will be outlined with practice examples as supported by the *7 principles of True Storytelling.*

The Case: A Master's Program – Once Upon a Time…

In 2009, a one-year master's program of leadership and organization for sustainability was started in a Scandinavian university. The aim was to create a cohort of international students who would be equipped with theoretical and applied knowledge and skills to lead and organize sustainable change in the workplace, community, and/or the world. The author of this article has been a primary lecturer in the program for 10 years and the Program Director for 6 years. The program is very popular, with over 1000 students applying every year for 55 admission spots. The program bridges the fields of organization theory, leadership, project management, social innovation, and social entrepreneurship. The aim being to ground students in the existing theories, concepts, and models while equipping them to rethink common perceptions of leadership and organization so that innovative ways of organizing and leading sustainability occur in both theory and practice.

The program targets a wide range of students from many nations with multidisciplinary backgrounds including but not limited to backgrounds in (a) business, (b) design, (c) urban planning, (d) education, (e) fashion, (f) engineering, and (g) psychology, among others. This multidisciplinary, multicultural, and diverse student population contributes to a learning environment that facilitates both innovation and international collaborations, creating a base for interesting and diverse stories.

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The following section is divided into four phases of the storytelling design and practices for teaching sustainability leadership. Each phase includes an example of a learning activity in connection to the *7 Principles of True Storytelling*.

Phase 1 - The Individual Story

As a part of the application process, the students are asked to write their stories of how leading and organizing for sustainability has been expressed in their life thus far. They are expected to position their stories within their geopolitical context, their personal development while demonstrating the ability to imagine, through storying, a more sustainable future. As in line with True Storytelling Principles 1 and 2, this process identifies whether they have a foundation of an ethical and sustainable (true) way of life. Upon meeting the university's admission criteria for eligibility, the final selection is made with the help of supporting documents where the applicants tell their stories. They should illustrate (a) why they are interested in leading and organizing sustainable change as supported by their previous experience, (b) how they influence within their present context, and conclude with (c) their future intention for creating a more sustainable world. What follows are excerpts as examples of a few individual stories.

> *I currently work in a company which has been seen by many as one of the champions of sustainability. I currently work in a department which has a designated mission to save each and every resource that can be saved and not wasted. It has been a great journey so far, but I think that there is a lot of room for improvement, for new ideas.*

This example demonstrates appreciation for existing narratives (Principle 2) while also seeing the opportunity for experimentation (Principle 5) and leaving room for narratives that lie outside predominant narratives (antenarratives) to emerge.

The urgency to provide a clear plot and help prioritize (Principle 3) can be found in the following excerpt from another applicant.

> *Sustainability is a legacy that we have to pass on to future generations. First, by admitting the mistakes we have made in our journey on this planet and things that we have to do in order for us and for the ones that shall come, so that we can live in harmony with the limited amount of resources that we have on this planet.*

This first stage in the process is to assess aspiring sustainability leaders' internal reflective capacity as well as their understanding of the skills needed for transformative work (Gibbons, 2020; Jensen et al., 2020; Jørgensen & Boje, 2020; Kadabadse et al., 2009). As a way to continue the process of self-reflection and maintaining the foundation of an ethical and sustainable (true) way of life, interactive lectures are scheduled throughout the year on the following topics: reflective journaling, reflection and reflexivity, and personal narratives in relation to sustainable management.

Phase 2 - Together-Telling

One of the unique aspects of the program is that the students typically represent approximately 35 different countries. When they share their stories, they find that their definitions and perspectives of sustainability are constructed based on assumptions of their geographic locations and experiences. For example, one student from Kenya

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explained how social sustainability is a part of the shared understanding of sustainability while another from Germany highlighted the focus on electric vehicles. As another example, Europe holds the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the gold standard for sustainability, while in New Zealand the SDGs are not the referenced standard.

The students' multi-academic and professional experiences also brings many different aspects to the shared story; Those from the fashion industry highlight the over consumption of water in the dye making process while others in manufacturing and retail businesses highlight the tensions of profit and sustainability. At this stage in the process, it is important that they listen and learn how to make space for the different stories that exist (Principle 3) and are open to experiment with new configurations, combinations, and understandings of a sustainable future.

One of the first activities occurs in groups where they create a shared understanding of sustainability and express it creatively using art, music, acting, dance, and other methods. For example, some groups have written rap songs to communicate their shared story while other groups acted out, through movement, an interconnected web, and yet others created art projects that reflected their shared group story of sustainability. This is an illustration that is in line with true storytelling. By striving to cultivate the understanding of shared response-ability, They enable a "collective knowing and acting" (Haraway, 2016, p. 34) of members of a group for shaping a sustainable future. This process of co-creating stories is a form of *together-telling*, a collaborative process that relies on mutuality, respect, and dynamic interactions (Jamil, 2021). The aim being the process and the emergence of "living stories" that are happening in the here and now rather than an end goal of a technical definition of sustainability.

The final thesis is also a together-telling process. The theses are researched and written in pairs with the support of individual and group supervision. Through this process the students, as teams, bring together their respective knowledge and experiences to a research project, co-creating a shared story as a summative assessment of their shared knowledge acquired in the program. They are encouraged to start this process by sharing their stories in multiple configurations of small and large group discussions and through shared documents. Through this storying process, they find a partner with whom they can co-create a story utilizing theories and research methods to build upon their individual stories and create a shared story. For example, one student who had experience in AI and wanted to look at the influence of AI for sustainability partnered with a student who had experience in design science. Together they crafted a story of organizational design for sustainable mindset change.

Phase 3 - The Development of "Storying" Moments

The next stage connects well with Principle 5 of True Storytelling by providing learning activities as experiments to help stories along in their processes of development. This aspect is a continuous and iterative process where the students are given moments throughout the program to reflect and practice refining their own stories while concurrently developing a collective story. This includes bringing people into the process who are further along in their journeys. For example, a panel of alumni students who had been working in the field of sustainability were brought together with the enrolled students to discuss how they handled resistance in the workplace, how they adapted their story in the context of other stories, their influence on others sustainability stories, and how they remained true to themselves.

The following is an example of a learning activity about innovation for sustainability in the public sector. The aim of the activity is to make room for the stories that already exist (Principle 2) while practicing how to create new stories in the context of existing theories and predominant discourses (Principle 3).

Exercise Part 1. Present definitions and critical perspectives of public sector innovation are presented through articles and a lecture. The students are invited into a critical reflective process by evaluating existing theory (pre-reading) followed by the comparison of two different and often competing discourses of public and private sector innovation. They are then invited to, in small groups, sit with the different perspectives and find a new emergent story that brings these two aspects together around sustainable innovation. This activity utilizes pre-lecture reading, lecture, SWOT analysis, and small and large group discussions that utilizes critical reflection questions about sustainable innovation.

Exercise Part 2. As part 2 of the learning activity, one half of the students conduct a SWOT analysis for public sector innovation, the other half conduct one for private sector innovation. Together, they combine the two and develop a story of innovation for sustainability and other complex challenges. Using these two activities, the students practice creating a story that integrates different perspectives while respecting the existing discourses around private and public sector in relation to sustainability innovation.

Stage 4 – After-Program Story Development

In preparation for taking their message out into the world, the students undergo a workshop on how to craft their stories and share them with others. This activity is in line with Principle 6. Sharing a story is not only about making it known and visible, but also about creating an opening for the listener. The sharing of stories becomes a catalyst, triggering the process of understanding, transformation, and sustainable thinking by the audience. To achieve this transformation, it is necessary to make space in the mind of the listener, an opening to respond to the story. It is in this space that changes can often happen (Nansons, 2023, p. 163).

This workshop is conducted with currently enrolled students together with alumni. As a preparation for the workshop, the students are asked to bring the story (project, strategy) that they have developed during their studies or that they are currently engaged with at work. As a first learning activity, the students are asked to shape their stories in order to be able to tell them (orally) to an audience. The core-message should be clear, as well as the order of events that underline the message. Examples of stories are shared in the workshop to elaborate, if the silent voices – of nature, from society – are respected and presented in the story to allow for reflexive multispecies-storytelling (Cajete, 2000; Haraway, 2016, Laine, 2020). However, Principle 6 of True Storytelling is about more than the oral sharing of stories. Equally involved in the sharing of a message are body and scenography. This is done by working with materiality, the use of artefacts, the choice of places or rooms to convey a message, to achieve embodiment, and to engage the emotions of the listener/audience.

Hence, as a second learning activity, mixed groups of students and alumni develop scenarios to stage their story by using scenographies and artefacts. The aim of using these means is to learn how to embody the story; how to bring the story into a physical form. Existing projects or activities are used to elaborate experiences and reflect upon how staging has been used to support a story. For all their stories, the students discuss what should be symbolized by the staging and how their own appearance, artefacts, or the choice of places for an activity can support

the concept of the story. Using both existing and still more abstract stories, the students and alumni practice *together-telling* in the learning process of the workshop.

Discussion

Present sustainability teaching tends to align with status quo or reform approaches to sustainable development (Jordan & Kristjánsson, 2016). The present approaches are anthropogenic and human-centered, positioning humans as the hero of the sustainability story, marginalizing the value of the interconnection with other humans, nature, and society. This creates conditions for educational trajectories that lean toward single solution-oriented approaches and only partly consider altering values and world views that undergird sustainable transformation. In this article, we presented storytelling as a useful method in the teaching and learning process of leadership and organization for sustainability, not as separate pedagogical interventions but as a framework whereby knowledge and experience are woven into a collective and evolving story throughout a one-year education process. We describe a teaching and learning process that is co-created between teaching team members, enrolled students, and program alumni. At a time when truth telling is blurred and media spins stories, it is important to ground stories in facts and truths (Greenhalgh-Spencer, 2018). The *7 Principles of True Storytelling* are used as the vehicle to bring together story and truth so that people can feel, see, hear, and factually understand the information in relation to their experiences. Thereby, True Storytelling provides an opening for transformative change that contributes to the emergence of new narratives and antenarrative as a part of the meta-sustainability story (Jørgensen & Boje, 2009; Larsen & Boje, 2020; Neuhauser, 1993; Reidy, 2020).

Towards True Storytelling and Education for Sustainable Development

Discourses of sustainability are shifting towards a regenerative, entangled perspective that highlights capacity development and emphasizes entering the trouble rather than quick fixes and easy solutions (Gibbons, 2021; Haraway, 2016; Lozano, 2022,). This trajectory points to the need for new ways of teaching sustainability for business and management students as alternatives to present models and pedagogical practices. We propose that education for sustainable development should encourage integrated and transformational pedagogical practices, educational programs that include a fundamental reconstruction of how humans relate to themselves, to one-another, to nature, and to society. We call and argue for an education that includes fact-based aspects of sustainable development while acknowledging the human position, privileges, and vulnerabilities as a part of the larger ecosystem; a holistic perspective of sustainability that incorporates the *7 Principles of True Storytelling* (Larsen et al., 2020).

Stories at their best open the way for multiple interpretations, free from the entanglements of power, dominant discourses, and moralizing rhetoric (Jorgensen & Boje, 2020). Stories allow individuals to wrestle with the dissonance of conflicting values and competing stakeholder demands, developing the cognitive capacity to sit with ambiguity until truth emerges. We posit that this approach affords an ability to not just acquire knowledge but to develop the advanced cognitive capacity to hold competing perspectives and make a decision in the midst of the tension, for personal and societal good. Thereby, stories provide the necessary distance to bring together knowledge and experience for change while providing a transitional space for students to make sense of the

disparate views in relation to their own experiences and knowledge (Reason & Heinemeyer, 2016). This method affords a tool for the collective to co-create a story in relation to the evolving narratives that are shifting around them—a collective and shared story that is co-created by multiple actors, both human and non-human who have differing levels of power, different levels of agency, that all affects their capacity to bring about sustainable change (Nita, 2020; Rosilie et al., 2018). These practices draw out forces that collectively are part of the entangled sustainability story, contributing to the evolving narratives. The focus in this article is a process for teaching sustainability that highlights co-creation (*together-telling*) aspects of story-making to prepare future sustainability leaders—leaders who will take these stories into society to influence and transform existing narratives for sustainability.

Conclusion

Education is a Lighting of a Flame Not a Filling of a Vessel - Socrates

The socratic statement viewed in this heading (Leef, 2019) speaks of education as a collaborative processfocused on conversation. This article has presented an example of storytelling as a pedagogical frame for the design and practice of teaching leadership for sustainability in an international master program. The collaborative process was organized around the *7 Principles of True Storytelling* to prepare aspiring sustainability professionals to develop both a theoretical foundation and the internal reflective capacity for transformative sustainability work (Gibbons, 2020; Kadabadse et al., 2009). The examples in this article illustrate how learning activities structured around storytelling can facilitate individual and co-creative moments as an international group of students craft their stories of sustainability. This is less of a prescriptive process and more of a reflection on how storytelling, pedagogical strategies, and group dynamics mingle together to craft an individual and group story. At times storytelling is a defined activity and at other times it is emergent, equipping aspiring sustainability professionals with the conditions that allow their minds to "go visiting" for imagining a better future (Haraway, 2016).

The hope is that this type of education provides an alternative to the anthropogenic, human centred approaches that highlights the individualism inherent in capitalism and positions humans as the hero of the sustainability story (Heizman & Liu, 2017; Malone, et al., 2017; Wright & Nyberg, 2015). Instead, it aims at raising an awareness that moves us as a society away from a conquering mentality towards experiences, understanding, and collaborative meaning-making. It offers an alternative that utilizes the *7 Principles of True Storytelling* and recognizes the entanglements of and symbiotic connections to nature, each other, and society. Through the *together-telling* of stories, creating momentum for sustainable transformation emerges (Larsen et al., 2020).

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Hope Witmer, PhD, is Associate Professor in leadership and organization at the Urban Studies Department; she is the Director of the Leadership for Sustainability Master program; and researcher for the Center for Work Life and Evaluation Studies (CTA) and the Collaborative future making (CFM) research platform at Malmö University, Sweden. Research areas include: organizational resilience, power dynamics, stories, and organizational translation. Professional experience includes healthcare management, leadership/team consulting and higher education and non-profit leadership.

Eva Ritter (Ph.D.) is a trained geo-ecologist. She has added an M.A. in Education and Sustainability with focus on cultural values and oral storytelling. Eva Ritter has worked as an Associate Professor at universities in Denmark, Iceland and England. Her research comprises processes in forest ecosystems and the cultural connections between humans and forests. She now works as an freelance educator in Education for Sustainable Development. www.nordicperspectives.com

The Power of Words: Experiences of Female Leaders

Stephanie Rossi
Talent Acquisition, Korn Ferry

Abstract

Words, phrases, and terms can hold tremendous power and influence. The perception of women by others can help or harm their career progression. Women are also influenced by their own motivations, both personal and professional. Statistics show that women comprise about half of the workforce in the US, but only about one quarter of the members of C-suites are women. While women have advanced in the workforce, there are remaining discriminatory practices or acts, and the influence of social media that impact not only the experiences, but also the perceptions of these working women and particularly women leaders. This *Power of Words* work explores the lived experiences of two women through storytelling, understanding those experiences using grounded theory and thus providing insight into what makes female leaders potentially opt out of executive leadership roles.

Keywords*:* Women in Leadership, Gender Theory, Storytelling, Grounded Theory, Bias

Introduction

It is powerful and inspiring to see women advance into executive leadership roles. From Katharine Graham, who became the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company when she led The Washington Post in 1972 (Carpenter & Sherman, 2017) to Kathryn McLay who was promoted to president and CEO of Walmart International in the fall of 2023 (Walmart, 2023), the potential opportunities for women seem to be limitless. However, for every Kathryn McLay, there are many women who do not rise past a mid-manager level in their organizations. With the tremendous strides that women have made, there is still a substantial disparity in the number of female leaders in executive (C-suite) positions in corporations (Zillman, 2019). American women continue to obtain professional and advanced degrees in greater proportion when compared with men, earning 58% of the bachelor's degrees, 61% of the master's degrees and 55% of the doctoral degrees (U.S. National Center for Educational Statistics, 2021) in the United States. Women possess the competencies to be great leaders who can work alongside their male colleagues and, more importantly, can also teach and inspire them (Korn Ferry, 2016). In the U.S., women hold approximately 41% of the mid-level management jobs in corporations and comprised 47% of the workforce in 2021 (Catalyst, 2022). While the workforce is almost fairly represented in mid-level management jobs, only 24% of C-suite positions in the U.S. are female (Catalyst, 2022). This paper provides stories regarding this phenomenon, aiming to provide insight surrounding these statistics?

Background

The review of the literature shares some of the challenges that women experience in the workplace—challenges that may prevent women from advancing.

Stereotyping

Women encounter negative stereotypes regarding their positions in leadership which can make them reluctant to apply to positions. Stereotypes are generalizations that do not allow for individuality and are often inherited from parents and society (Test yourself for hidden bias, n.d.). These generalizations create different leadership traits among men and women. It is important to understand that women hold approximately 20 percent of corporate board seats in American corporations with only three percent chairing the boards (Cook & Glass, 2018). Some would argue that this design is by choice of the women as some women decline senior leadership roles due to family obligations and commitments while others would argue that it based on the design of competition in the market (Cook & Glass, 2018). Feminine leadership traits are viewed as less than desirable than male leadership traits which leads to a disparity in gender in management positions. Even without those stereotypes, most women have questioned themselves at some point during their career from the vantage point of if they are worthy (Brands & Fernandez-Mateo, 2017).

Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when there is unjustified or prejudicial treatment of one group over another. Many women have faced gender discrimination or bias at some point during their careers. A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2017 measured the experiences women had regarding discrimination. 42% of women in the United States have faced discrimination based on their gender (Parker & Funk, 2017). Of the types of discrimination that women face, the highest occurring included being paid less than a man for doing equal work and being treated as though they were not competent (Parker & Funk, 2017). A challenge that competent women can face is that these qualified women who are seen as being effective are often not liked by their cohort. To further the challenge, a working mother faces the stereotype that she is not committed to her career because she had to leave work occasionally to care for a child with no one recognizing the extensive time she puts in after normal working hours (Rhode & Kellerman, 2007). This stereotype that some women find themselves wrapped in can lead to biases in the workplace.

Gender discrimination can be so deeply embedded into an organization that it is almost impossible to discern it (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). The challenge lies in that most organizations were created by men, for men and are based in male experiences. While there is no argument that women add value, competencies in leadership still are associated with the male characteristics of being tough, aggressive, and decisive (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Furthermore, while there are both working fathers and mothers employed by an organization, many organizations are still structured as if the division of labor at home still reflects that women are the primary caretakers (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000).

Impact of Social Media

Media also influences and/or enhances stereotypical attitudes towards women. There has been a movement on social media to belittle women who do not

smile and saying that they possess RBF (*resting bitch face*) (Allen et al., 2016). Society has been told that it is not acceptable to tell women they must smile, yet poses the RBF term on women, rather than men. This stereotype of judging women whose facial features make them appear as unhappy or unwelcoming can hurt a woman's career much more than a man's career (Allen et al., 2016).

Social media can provide an outlet for professional women to find support in their career advancement. A qualitative study by Urszula Pruchniewska (2019) demonstrates how professional Facebook groups designated for professional women can aid in supporting women and advancing the women's movement. The findings show that these groups can help individual women share their ideas and experiences to help themselves and others thrive in their careers (Pruchniewska, 2019). Aside from garnishing career support, these women can also find support in battling harassment and discrimination in the workplace. The author discusses this as being the fourth wave of feminist practices that are an important part of culture, yet not overboard while providing an important contribution to social justice work in current times (Pruchniewska, 2019). Limitations with these private Facebook groups include not being accessible to all as one will need internet access and these groups are often dominated by white, middle-class values. Moving forward, social media can continue to grow as an outlet for women to confidentially work with other women to mentor one another and learn from each other's experiences. These challenges, found in the literature, are echoed through the stories in this research.

Research Methods

Storytelling is used in many different forms and for many different reasons in society, including in business and organizational environments (Shufutinsky et al., 2023). In the corporate sector, unique stories, through varying storytelling approaches, can be used to provide insights into the experiences that women have that may hold them back in their careers. Understanding these experiences can yield opportunities for dialogue and changing the attitudes towards women in corporate settings.

This pilot study used a storytelling grounded theory research methods approach, with the use of conversational interviews, to understand the lived experiences, processes, and reasons for the aforementioned disparities. Findings are reported out using intertextuality, combining storied accounts with literature and researcher interpretation.

Participants

Through purposive, convenience sampling, two women in managerial roles were selected for participation in the brief storytelling pilot study intended to understand the experiences women have in the corporate world relative to positions, promotability, promotions, and power, and the behaviors or phenomena that prevent upward mobility.

Data Collection

Data were collected from each participant using conversational interviews via an iterative interview process until topic-oriented saturation was reached for the pilot study. The data were captured using a digital recording device and were transcribed for written story analysis.

Data Analysis

Data captured through participant interviews were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using de-storying and re-storying as well as a thematic analysis process. Coding was conducted using an *initial coding* (Creswell, 2016) process and followed by interpretive grouping of story themes and trends. The generated themes from the stories are intertextually provided in the research findings section in order to understand participant experiences and dimensions (Shufutinsky, 2019).

Research Findings

Thematic Findings from Analyzed Participant Stories

These stories emerge from conversations with two women, Elizabeth and Kate, both women in managerial positions, surrounding their real experiences in those workplaces. At the time of the pilot study, Elizabeth was the Senior Director of Corporate Social Responsibility for a large automotive group based out of Charlotte, NC. Kate was a Senior Global Leader for Human Resources for a large chemical company headquartered in suburban Philadelphia. Both Elizabeth and Kate are college educated. At the time of the study, both women were married with more than one child under the age of eighteen. Both had been working in corporate roles in excess of twenty years, and both women had progressed from individual contributor roles into leadership positions over the course of their careers. Both women worked in male-dominated industries based on their products/focus, automotive and chemical manufacturing. As the researcher, I was interested in hearing about their professional experiences within their organizations including any type of gender disparity or prejudices towards women in their

companies. There were valuable themes that appeared in both interviews. What was interesting to note is that both women had some very similar experiences while also having some very different experiences to draw upon.

The stories told by Elizabeth and Kate were synthesized into long-form interpretive themes based on commonalities of experiences identified in the conversational interviews. Theming was conducted within stories and between stories.

Thematization was drawn from within and between stories and there were a total of seven themes generated from the two participant stories. These themes included (a) workplace flexibility, (b) representative mentorship, (c) Personality or Skill; "Needs to…" or "We Should…", (d) underutilization or undervaluation, (e) fraternal favoritism as discrimination, (f) questioning self, and (g) longevity of tenure. These themes are discussed and described using the stories and interpretations through an intertextual approach.

Theme 1 - Workplace Flexibility

A prevalent theme for both Elizabeth and Kate was the importance of having flexibility in their careers. Because both are mothers and have responsibilities, they wanted to be able to work while also caring for their children. Kate noted, regarding an executive position, that "…ultimately, I'd be able to do the job well, but right now flexibility is really important to me."

Likewise, Elizabeth expanded on a desire to see more flexibility in the workplace by discussing wanting the ability to work remotely, and logging in for her eight hours of work whenever it was conducive to her schedule. She stated that "…if you want to do 6:00 to 10:00 in the morning and 6:00 to 10:00 at night, and get

your eight hours that way so you can care for your kids…that flexibility… I think is really critical." Flexibility was defined differently by both Elizabeth and Kate, but that flexibility was important for both.

An interesting difference between both interviews was that Kate felt that by not pursuing an executive position, she was able to give her family the attention they needed while contributing to her organization and growing in her career. Kate viewed the executive title as adding additional responsibilities that she did not feel she could manage with her current life situation. She was not opposed to a future executive role, but felt that she could not put the required time in due to her family obligations.

She highlighted the lack of family-friendly benefits and lack of flexibility, including work/life balance not being favorable. It quickly became apparent that having flexibility was important to Elizabeth. She champions herself and knows that she can get her work done and accomplish her career goals while taking care of her family.

Theme 2 - Representative Mentorship

The second theme that emerged had to do with mentorship and supervision, and particularly with sex-based representation in those roles.

Prior to joining the automotive group, Elizabeth was a vice-president for an advertising agency. She had a seat at the decision-making table and had the flexibility to take care of her family. An important item of note regarding Elizabeth's experience with the advertising agency was that she had a female president who was also her mentor. Having a female mentor helped her achieve her success and reach the C-suite at that organization. She reflected that she "…aspired to be vice-president and

accomplished that. Then was even promoted to senior vice president."

Elizabeth left her role because she wanted to take on new challenges and be more involved in corporate social responsibility. She mentioned numerous times how she felt her role should have an executive title, but her current company would not give it to her. The sharp contrast of experience for the same woman in different industries was very interesting to me. Elizabeth had the experience of being able to "have it all" at the advertising agency, but then found a much different experience when she joined the automotive company. It seems that having a female mentor who held an executive leadership role helped Elizabeth advance in her career at the advertising agency. Her president was supportive of her career while knowing she had responsibilities to her family.

Elizabeth's interview was interesting because she had two dominant themes based on her experience. In her first experience, there is a theme of positive female leadership. Having a female mentor shows a woman in corporate America that any goal can be achieved. In her experience at the automotive company, the theme was a lack of support for women. There were few women executives and a lack of training for women to achieve leadership roles in this male dominated organization. Is having a female mentor a key component to the career advancement of other females? This is an area that should be explored more.

Theme 3 - Personality or Skill; "Needs to…" or "We Should…"

Themes three, four, and five are interrelated and appear to have common roots in discriminatory behavior. Theme three arose from the display of sex-based assumptions and treatment related to worker skills, personalities, and executive leaders'

decisions or interpretations of actions related to those factors.

Male and female perception was an important area of focus for Kate. She spoke extensively about a recruiting meeting she had attended with other leaders. During the meeting, the team was comparing candidates and candidate experiences as it related to the position requirements. Her story recounts how it was mentioned that one of the female candidates needed to attend "charm school," leaving a strong impression that they felt this candidate was too aggressive. For male counterparts, the same type of commentary was more about being assertive, often seen as a positive characteristic (Postolatii, 2017). Similar behaviors apparently are treated differently for men and women. Research literature has exhibited that assertiveness is often a "double-edged sword" for women in the workplace (Lease, 2018), and this phenomenon appears to be taking place in Kate's place of employment. Further, she recounts that, when speaking of male candidates with similar traits to those of women candidates, their actual skills rather than personalities were highlighted. Not only were these traits highlighted as skills versus as drawbacks, but the inquiry among the team was a focus regarding how they can "…make this person better" or "…where do they need to grow." For women, the focus was on whether "…she needs to attend charm school." This account identifies disparities in perception and subsequent treatment of individuals, or at least their applications, exemplifying potential stereotypes and assumptions that are not warranted (Postolatti, 2017).

Theme 4 - Under-Utilization or Undervaluation

The second theme in the three-theme series that can be interpreted as discrimination has to do with the allowance of application of skills. Elizabeth and Kate both experienced frustration within their organizations regarding their work and the levels of impact and responsibility they were afforded when compared to their counterparts. While it was not outwardly stated, it was apparent to them that they both were underutilized in some ways, be it self-driven or culturally driven by their organizations. Elizabeth discussed how she enjoyed her current role but also felt like it was a demotion to her in some way. Underutilization and undervaluing can create environments in which employees feel disengaged, not meeting the necessity of belonging and self-actualization that are important to morale (Foster, 2021; Kunc, 1992).

Theme 5 - Fraternal Favoritism: Discrimination

Theme five, the final of the three-theme series exhibits potential sex-based discrimination through the participant accounts. Both women found themselves in male-dominated industries or workplaces. Elizabeth particularly spoke about this as a significant workplace experience, mentioning several times that her company was a "good ole boy" network. Whether outwardly stated or not, a culture that is perceived as preferring men in leadership roles can be extraordinarily intimidating to a woman, especially to a career-minded woman. The existence of different forms of hegemonic masculinity that legitimize males as ideal executives construct barriers, explicitly or implicitly, and establish power structures of careerism that benefit men and inhibit the career progression of women (Poorhosseinzadeh & Strachan, 2020). Using the phrase "good ole boy" in her account expresses a very strong commentary regarding the corporate culture in the

organization, implying, at the least, the lack of support for women in the ranks.

There is a difference between no women *being* in leadership roles and there *not being support* for women in leadership roles or for getting into leadership roles. The storied accounts exhibit a belief that a company that does not support women in leadership will be a company in which women will be reluctant to apply because they believe they will not be supported in their efforts. Elizabeth spoke of how heavily male dominated her organization is and stated that she thinks "it's a very hard culture for females to advance just because of how strong[ly] male dominated it is." She reported that, of the twelve executives at the automotive group, only one is a woman. She remarked that, with her level of responsibilities, she applied for or "…requested a higher title numerous times" but has not received the title she desired or believes she deserves. Additionally, Elizabeth highlighted the lack of women in leadership at the individual auto dealerships owned by her employer, exhibiting the dominance, and at least the perception of sex-based discrimination.

She found that this *new world* that she is working in is more challenging for her to manage, partially because of a fraternization-type environment. The "good ole boys" atmosphere that she experienced is highly prevalent, according to her story. Elizabeth spoke specifically about the male domination of her company, expressing that the " good ole boy" atmosphere is highly prevalent, and the use of those terms specifically alludes to the existence of exclusivity and exclusion—a club that women are not allowed to be a part of. This behavior, even when implicit, established tones of gender bias or prejudice that persists in the organization.

Theme 6 - Questioning Self

Theme six is related to Use-of-Self, a theory or phenomenon that includes self-awareness, mindfulness, self-actualization, as well as esteem (Cheung-Judge & Jamieson, 2020; Shufutinsky, 2020). Kate talked about her continual promotions throughout her career and that with every promotion, she thought she was in a good place, but then was able to move up and take on more challenges. Her next levels would potentially be those of Director and then Vice-President. However, there was hesitance in accepting new positions. First, as aforementioned, Kate felt she would lose flexibility by taking on these extra responsibilities. The phrase, "not now" was used by Kate when describing upward opportunity, taking a stance on advancing in her career. This phrase aligned with the *Harvard Business Review* interview with Ginni Rometty of IBM, where Rometty discussed being offered a promotion and questioning whether her readiness for that next step in her career (Ignatius, 2017). Ms. Rometty shared her trepidation with her husband who asked her what a man would do in her situation, causing her to immediately accept the promotion the following day (Ignatius, 2017). Similarly, Kate discussed not feeling ready for the next level, "not now,"questioning herself. She stated that she was confident she could do the work but feared the learning curve. This behavior may be linked to impostor phenomenon, a condition in which there exist a range of negative emotions associated with personal assessment or perception of self, self-ability, or self-capacity (LaVelle et al., 2022; Rossi, 2022). She also questioned her commitment to such a role, wondering whether she would want it or be committed enough to that level of work.

Theme 7 - Longevity of Tenure

The seventh and final theme that emerged from the story is one that includes employee longevity and tenure in the organization. This was another trending discussion between the two women. Both Elizabeth and Kate touched upon this factor in career decision-making. Elizabeth noted that, despite the patriarchal system in which the male-dominated workplace affected her progression, she still believed she may see more career opportunities at the automotive group if she stayed there. However, because this was a smaller company, and based on her previous experience with promotion requests, she acknowledged that upward mobility would likely depend upon retirement or attrition of others. Kate also spoke of potential career progression if she chose to remain where she was but was unsure of the direction that would take her. Kate highlighted that some opportunities had presented themselves to her already, but her reluctancy to advance due to her personal obligations have prevented it at this point.

Antenarrative Framing

Storytelling is not a simple, linear regurgitation of a timeline-oriented narrative provided by someone who has experienced it (Shufutinsky et al., 2023). It is complex, and stories have discontinuous properties with a multiplicities that create evolving sensemaking and meaning-making (Boje, 2019; Boje & Rosile, 2022). One agreed-upon aspect of storytelling science is that stories have varying dimensions and dynamics, and in order to understand a story closer to its core, one needs to understand these different aspects, including antenarratives related to the story. These includeBoje's 7 Bs of storytelling, consisting of (a) before, (b) beneath, (c) beyond, (d) between the lines, (e) being, (f) becoming, and (g) bets on the future (Boje, 2019). Using Boje's 7-Bs (Boje & Rosile, 2022), one can dissect the experiences of women in the corporate world and take the narratives from Elizabeth and Kate to make it relatable to the audience.

Before

The Before in antenarrative is also termed *fore-having* and consists of layers of historical consciousness. This component is *a priori* and looks at what occurred in the past, over layers an layers of history, and it impacts our stories today as it is a preamble to our sensemaking, meaning-making, and decision-making in the present and for the future (Boje, 2019). Looking at the experiences of women in America *Before* current times, one can see how far women have come, and this impact the space they are in now, and the space they are moving into and will be in the future. The Before provides a back story and a frame of reference where we can begin. To quote Virginia Woolf, "the history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself" (Woolf, 2016). When originally published in 1929, Woolf talks about the "boys' club" which is an interesting comparison to Elizabeth discussing her experience working within a "good ole boys" network in a predominantly male leadership team in a male-dominated company, and in a male-dominated industry, especially in comparison to her previous play of employ. To expand on the *Before*, Kate made a great point of how the roles of women have changed over the past half century, with women starting out primarily as homemakers and those who were not generally employed as teachers or administrative assistants. As women entered the workforce, their roles as teachers and administrators expanded, and they became

nurses and bank tellers. Most the positions that women took did not require much education (aside from teachers and nurses) and were not careers. They were really "jobs" which paid the bills and did not provide a career track. The *Before*, in this case, is a historical account that puts the pieces together and sets up the stories told by Elizabeth and Kate today, and as women did and continue to move towards and through every professional glass ceiling, the *Before* will intersect with the *Being* and the *fore-sight*.

Beneath

What lies *beneath* are The grand narratives of organizations, societies, etc. It includes what may lie underneath what we know and can see, including those elements of value and core values. In the *Beneath* are the assumptions, presumptions, and the opinions and they are the deductions we make through observing, classifying, sensemaking, and the conceptions that emerge. *Beneath* comes from one's personal experiences and background, including core values. Thus, a considerable abduction, based on what is known and what is opined, through sensemaking and meaning-making from what is seen, what is experienced, what is presumed, and what is valued, can be made regarding he conditions of the companies that Kate and Elizabeth work in, and their perspectives are driven by experiences and deductions from past workplaces that, compared to the new workplaces drive the story, the assumptions, and the predictions made, and the decisions considered.

Being

Being is about dealing with what is already there. It deals with what happens in-the-moment, in spacetime (Boje, 2019). It is the current dynamic state, and in the case of Kate and Elizabeth, it is the current state and

understanding of women in executive leadership roles and the experiences of women today. Understanding the stories and culture of the organizations is helpful to see where we are, but the truth lies in the individual stories that make up the sum of all stories and experiences.

Becoming

Becoming includes moments that link the stories together or help them develop along. This is the opportunity where the information regarding practices, processes, or actions that did not work, those that did work, and the knowledge of those to aid int eh becoming for what is working now and will work for the *Bets*. In these stories, *Becoming* could be the opportune moment for the executives to step out of their "good ole boys" ivory tower and engage in the true stories of what is going on in the now so that they can make a real, ethical difference. *Becoming* is the moral answerability to intervene in the *Beyond* and *Bets* for ethical futuring (Boje, 2019; Boje & Rosile, 2022), in this case around equal and equitable treatment of women in the workplace. This is the part of Kate's and Elizabeth's story that is being told, with their considerations for the future, and has yet to continue to evolve and be told.

Between

We have all heard statements regarding reading between the lines. What exactly does this mean? The *Between* (or staging) is the grounding, specifically Quantum Storytelling Grounding. Boje talks about the 'quantum physics of storytelling' surrounding change management (Boje, 2011). To understand the between, one must have a concept of what quantum storytelling is. Quantum storytelling is about the metaphysical—it is what we do not really know, but would know it if it is in front of us. We do not truly know what is in front of

us today unless we work in that which has been and is what is known from the past present, and the future. It is taking all of that known material and applying it to the story today, including that which involves spatiality, temporality, and sociality (Boje, 2019; Shufutinsky, 2019; 2020). Thus, it is understanding where women have been, where they are, and what will occur or exists in the future, and telling those stories that bring us into the between, providing, perhaps, rich accounting of why women do not advance into executive roles.

Beyond

Beyond is the antenarrative element that deals with fore-grasping. It is the the bet on the future and what the future may hold or could be, but rather it is a way of knowing that addresses a potential *already-there-in-advance* and is consistently tied to *Being* in the world, dealing with not only space, but with temporality. This element can be and often is tied, also, to *Bets*. It may be a world where gender equality exists at all levels of leadership in organizations, and thus this ideal is the narrative by which all other situations in the current space and time are assessed and against which the current story is understood.

Bets on the Future

A *bet*, a proper narrative, can be constituted (Boje, 2019) is a fraction of how antenarrative is defined. Nonetheless, the *Bet* is on of the main components of a story, and of antenarrative. This aspect or dimension of antenarrative is the what describes the bests on the plots that are anticipated. It is the process of foresight and prospective sensemaking, and the bets on some predicted outcome can affect the entire narrative, and the other Bs in the system of the story. In the case of the stories, the *Bets* can be both an idea of the promotion that is to come, and therefore the idea around

remaining in the organization and waiting for retirement or other opportunity to exist. The *Bet* on the future can also be the ideal around equal and equitable treatment of women, both in the specific workplace, but also in work environments in general, as well as the potential that this may not occur within their lifetimes. The stories surround these potential realities—these *Bets*—and decisions are pondered with this in mind.

Considering *Bets* in general, regarding women in executive leadership roles, one should look to organizations that are proving to be leaders in promoting gender diversity. Walmart currently has 33 % women on their executive committee and 42% women in senior leadership roles (Walmart, 2023). This number has increased since Walmart was founded. With Walmart holding the top spot on the Fortune 500 list for the past eleven years (PR Newswire, 2023), organizations will look to emulate their practices. However, will male dominated companies, such as the ones where Elizabeth and Kate work, follow that example or will the "good ole boys" network prevail?

The Antenarrative of Kate's and Elizabeth's Story

The 7-Bs provides a roadmap for analyzing the past, present and future, also providing opportunities for growth and interpretation surrounding the stories or events that are being shared. One can also use the 7-Bs to synthesize organizations and do an analysis of what worked, and what did not work: providing an opportunity for growth and improvement. The 7-Bs can be applied to an individual's story to help them with their growth, and to an organizational story. When talking about why women do not advance into executive roles, one could observe the usage of the term "she needs charm school" that Kate said was used to refer to a candidate for a leadership role in

her organization. These parts of the narrative, and antenarrative, are what drives the truth behind the living story beyond just the lived experience. Individual spheres of influence are so critical to understand because they can help with training and promote more positive future experiences. Women have been *trained*, for lack of better words, for many years to accept what is said to them without question. It has taken many years for women to gain "equality" in the workplace and some can still be afraid to speak up. These are profoundly embedded dynamics in antenarrative for the emergent story.

Conclusions

With the tremendous strides that women have made in the American workforce, there is still a substantial disparity in the number of female leaders in executive (C-suite) positions in corporations (Zillman, 2019). This pilot study set out to examine some of the reasons that these disparities exist, hoping to gain ample insight through specific examples drawn from corporate women study participants. The study used conversational interviewing and some aspects of storytelling processes in order to gain a level of relevant understanding surrounding promotional and positional dynamics in the corporate world. Two women with many years in corporate management were interviewed and their stories told and analyzed.

Summary of Stories

The captured and analyzed stories recounted the lived experiences and dove into the living experiences of two professionally successful women and their desire for equality and equity in opportunity from their employers. Their stories told of their needs for flexibility, their desire for

executive roles, and those fears that prevent progression, in addition to treatment, including discriminatory behaviors or attitudes, explicit or implicit, that stunt upward mobility in their male-dominated workplaces and industries.

The findings identified interesting accounts that collapsed into seven themes, including (a) workplace flexibility, (b) representative mentorship, (c) Personality or Skill; "Needs to…" or "We Should…", (d) underutilization or undervaluation, (e) fraternal favoritism as discrimination, (f) questioning self, and (g) longevity of tenure. Interesting phenomena that emerged among those themes consisted of stories of better mentorship under same-sex representation and supervision, and implicit fraternal favoritism in a male-dominated environment with terminologies such as "good ole boy" networks and the interpretations those words garner, as well as the felt mistreatment of direct phrasing such as "charm school." The disparities in these accounts are visible, and a deeper understanding, as well as a need for even further and deeper exploration, is covered in the rudimentary deconstruction using Boje's 7Bs of antenarrative (Boje & Rosile, 2022) in storytelling science.

Women still experience biases, stereotypes, and discrimination, and this was evident in the stories told in this pilot study. Essentially, Kate's and Elizabeth's stories displayed these phenomena, exhibiting some examples of unconscious or implicit biases against working, professional women or women leaders. What emerges from these stories, and the interpretations and interactions with these stories, as told through this research, is that words, phrases, and attitudes can affect people in ways that may not be easily apparent to others. Nevertheless, it was a pilot study and limited by the amount of data and number of participants. Overall, the stories prompted additional thinking and considerations that

provide some insight, but also promote the availability of additional research to be conducted.

Significance of the Pilot Research

This pilot study provided a few stories surrounding the topic of sex-based disparities in the workplace, yielding some interesting findings that lend, at least, insight that can be pondered and that can be further explored. The impacted audiences include working women, women in leadership positions, corporations, DEIB+ departments in organizations, and organization design and organization development, talent acquisition, talent management, leadership, and HR researchers. All of these audiences stand to gain some insights into the C-Suite sex-based positional disparities that may aid them in decision-making regarding hiring, HR policy, professional development, leading employees, and types of research to perform in the field in the future. This study and its findings does exhibit some limitations, affording ample possibilities for future study and thought leadership.

Thoughts and Considerations

If there is an underlying bias towards women, how can that be overcome? Can being aggressive be a good trait for a woman? Or will it always be perceived as a negative even when the same behaviors are not viewed as negative when exhibited by male leaders? Are we asking the right questions? Should we be examining whether or how to modify how we think and behave towards women in the workplace and focus on their skills and experience? Either way, is it not safe to say that the way we perceive and think about these words is important?

The conversations with Elizabeth and Kate reflect the likely impact that words and phrases have on women in the

workplace, providing perspectives on what may hold women back in their careers. The stories also exhibited that words can have different meanings for different people, and this is where the verification, falsification, and antenarrative processes become critical for further research on the topic (Boje, 2019; Shufutinsky, 2019). Continued research and conversations are needed to expand into these lived experiences and find ways to change the narrative for gender equality in corporate America.

Study Limitations

Although this study yielded interesting stories and provided insight regarding the experiences and dynamics of sex-based disparities in corporate C-suites in the U.S., the study design was limited by numerous aspects. First, the study was designed as a pilot, to understand an prompt additional research in the area of scholarship. As such, the study only used two participants, which limits the amount of information provided, and does not truly get the research to saturation. Second, the qualitative nature of the research limits the ability for generalization and representativeness surrounding women in leadership, as well as the fundamental limit of knowledge regarding women in leadership positions in other sectors, as well as other industries. Additionally, the limitation of depth and richness may be due to a delimitation of methodological approaches, such as the uses of more complex storytelling methodological approaches. Nevertheless, the pilot study served the purpose and leaves considerable room for further research for the author of this article as well as any other researchers interested in the topic.

Future Research Recommendations

Further study was conducted on this topic, with specific attention to imposter phenomenon (Rossi, 2022). However, there are a breadth of opportunities existing for further study on this topic, both from the perspectives of the topic itself and relevant factors as well as from varying methodological approaches for deeper and more accurate exploration.

Although there were interesting stories with some insight provided surrounding the participant experiences and the dynamics surrounding workplace disparities based on sex, there is ample opportunity for further research and deeper meaning-making through robust storytelling methodology. First, the study can be expanded to more participants across different industries. Second, the study of these dynamics can be extrapolated to the government, non-profit, military, and academia sectors to understand the nuances across sectors relevant to C-Suite disparities based on sex. For in-depth methodological exploration, 4th wave grounded theory and 4th wave phenomenological research can be designed using a combination of an abductive-inductive-deductive approach coupled with Peircean self-correcting methodologies. Furthermore, the application of the 7 Principles of True Storytelling (Larsen et al., 2020) may be applied simultaneously with the above-mentioned study designs. These methods can yield richer, thicker stories, accounting for antenarrative (Shufutinsky, 2020) and antecognitive factors (Shufutinsky & Korbal, 2023), with all of the combined bringing the overall story closer to an adductive reasoning (Shufutinsky & Burrell, 2023).

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Stephanie Rossi, PhD is a talent acquisition leader with over ten years' experience in various industries including automotive, retail, and manufacturing. She possesses a passion for building and developing dynamic teams through implementing the principles of good followership. Her passion for organizational development also includes studying women in leadership, specifically surrounding the topic of impostor syndrome. She holds a PhD in OD and Change from Cabrini University.

Storytelling, Technology, and Sociotechnical Systems

Call for Papers
Organizational Storytelling Review Vol. 2 No. 3
(December 2024)

This special journal issue calls on storytelling scholars and practitioners to accelerate our efforts in bridging and expanding our inquiries surrounding technology, sociality, and human-systems integration using quantum and other storytelling methodologies and approaches.

This special issue of *Organizational Storytelling Review* (OSR) focuses attention on the topics of technological advancement, sociotechnical systems, and social & industrial disruption.

Sociotechnical systems theory (STS) surrounds the understanding that organizations and organizational systems operate through the interaction of the social (socio) and the technical aspects within the organization, with the understanding that both social and technical elements are interdependent in complex systems.

It has been more than seven decades since the origination of STS Theory credited to Trist and Bamforth. In that time, industry has continued to evolve exponentially, exceeding the predictions of Moore's Law, and new industrial revolutions have emerged and continued to evolve with the rapid advancement of technology. In the past two decades, we have seen the generative formulation of a 'tech-generation,' and watched and experienced the increasing power of portable computers, smart phones,

and smart devices, as well as advanced industrial systems that aid in productivity, reduce safety incidents, and improve efficiencies. Entire new career fields have emerged, and artificial intelligence and machine learning have disrupted the workplace environments, with both benefits to performance and fears of or emergence of drawbacks and potentially harmful side-effects in professions, industries, or organizations.

An inevitable consequence of the mixing of 'socio' with 'technical' is that the 'socio' does not necessarily behave like the 'technical,' and vice-versa. People are not machines, and yet, paradoxically in this interdependence, the 'technical' can begin to exhibit non-linear behavior and the 'socio' can exhibit more linear behavior.

While many organizational leaders, consultants, and organization development (OD) and design practitioners continue to try to wrap their heads and hands around Industry 4.0, we are well into the 5th Industrial Revolution (Industry 5.0). The movement towards optimization of the technology-human interaction and collaboration is not a simple scenario, impacting productivity, expectations, workplace settings, talent acquisition and retention, workplace safety, organizational culture, relationships, work routines, and many other organizational dynamics.

It is fitting, therefore, that we visit the topic through a storytelling lens in a special issue (Vol. 2, No. 3) dedicated to the exploration of sociotechnical systems and organizational dynamics surrounding technological advancement and disruption. We invite you to submit manuscripts for publication in this special issue. Some interesting areas to explore regarding this topic include, but are not limited to the following.

1. Stories regarding sociotechnical systems across contexts
2. Examining the stories of experiences regarding sociotechnical systems in different sectors and/or industries
3. The utility of storytelling techniques for technological optimization and human-systems integration
4. Examination of relationships of humans and technology across generational lines
5. How are values and beliefs operating paradoxically in terms of technological advancement and disruption?

6. In-depth analysis on the reciprocal of technological advancement and application in the workplace
7. The international, global, indigenous, and other perspectives regarding sociotechnical systems, technological advancement, and
8. Stories surrounding organizational digital transformation
9. Methodological storytelling nuances for studying technology, technological advancement, and sociotechnical systems.
10. Technological antenarratives
11. Other relevant perspectives regarding sociotechnical systems.
Submissions Deadline: August 1, 2024.

For any questions regarding submissions to the journal or this specific issue, please contact the Editor or one of the Associate Editors.

Visit www.storytellingreview.com for submission guidelines and criteria.

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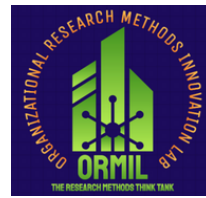Marita Svane (*Aalborg University Business School, Denmark*), and

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ORGANIZATIONAL STORYTELLING REVIEW